INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS
Political Science 2310
Spring 2015

Professor
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Department of Political Science
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Class Time/Location: TTh 1:30-2:50 Undergraduate Learning Center 116

Teaching Assistants

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<th>Email</th>
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Peer Tutors

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<tr>
<td>Victoria Ramirez</td>
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Catalogue Description
An overview of the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions. The course may employ an international, comparative, or theoretical focus. Prerequisite: Freshman standing.

Course Content
This is an introductory course in the study of politics, with an emphasis on understanding politics in an international context. The international context will be broken down into political behavior within various domestic settings (comparative politics) and relations among countries (international relations). This course will introduce some fundamental concepts and issues in the study of politics by focusing on institutions, culture, ideas, and political economy with attention on their global transformations. We will also closely view the politics of various countries drawn from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The goal for the semester is to give you grounding in the study of politics, increase your powers of analysis and argument, and further your ability to make sense of the world around you.

At the end of this course you will:
1) have a knowledge base regarding politics and government in general;
2) be able to analyze political activity scientifically in the world today; and
3) be able to hold factually based perspectives on important current issues.
Course Text


The book is available at the UTEP Bookstore and online at www.utepbookstore.com.

Response System
The Lecture Tools Response System is an innovative technology that aids in the evaluation of in-class student performance. In order for you to remain in the course, you will need to register with the Lecture Tools. The printed access code needed for registration is included with the purchase of the Ethridge and Handelman custom textbook. Follow the following link to begin the registration process:
https://my.lecturetools.com/users/generic_invite/b87a600c80ecf0149705d22e8b6638ff

Beginning on January 29, class participation will be evaluated in nearly every meeting using the response system. If you do not register by January 29, you will be automatically dropped from this course.

The best resource for resolving problems with the response system is to contact the publisher directly: http://www.cengage.com/support.

It is very important that you check your official email on a regular basis. During the semester you will receive emails regarding your academic performance and attendance through this system. It is required that you read these emails. We hope that this approach will help ensure your success in this class and at UTEP.

Course Obligations
There is a mix of obligations you must meet to fulfill the requirements of the course. This includes 1) class participation; 2) three exams; and 3) a comprehensive final exam.

Class Participation
Students are expected to actively participate in the learning process. What does this mean? You will need to

1) complete the reading assignments (found in this syllabus) before the beginning of class;
2) review your lecture notes before the beginning of class; and
3) follow current political developments around the world in the media. Some suggested periodicals include the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, or Christian Science Monitor. If you have knowledge of one or more foreign languages, you are encouraged to read international newspapers on the internet.
The assessment of your continuous participation will take the following forms:

1) Each day, you will be given a short quiz of 3-5 questions (using the response system) to assess your active participation in the course. Quizzes are open notes (not open book) and will be about 5-10 minutes long, depending on the number of questions.

2) You will form study groups of 3-4 students and report on your group’s weekly activities on Black Board. Each weekly report (approximately 300 words) must include:
   a. The study goals achieved during the week;
   b. Content reviewed during the week;
   c. The learning goals you will achieve the following week.

   The first report is due by Friday, January 30 at 3pm and then each Friday afterwards. Study group membership must be given by January 22 by placing your names on a single index card, which I will provide. If you do not form a study group by January 22, you will not be able to earn points under this category.

Exams
There are four exams for the course: three unit exams and a comprehensive final. All exams are closed book/notes and in-class. You must bring an official ID (state, federal, or UTEP), scantron sheet and pencil to each exam. All exams are multiple-choice questions that are based on the readings, lectures, and current political developments. Exam dates are February 5, March 5, and April 16 for the unit exams and May 14 for the final.

There are no make-up exams in this course. However, only the two best mid-term exams will count toward your final grade. Everyone will be required to take the final exam.

Grades
Each obligation is worth up to 100 points. The following weights are used in determining students' final grades. No “extra credit” points will be given in this course.

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<tr>
<th>Course Requirement</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Examination #1</td>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Best of two; 30 percent each.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Examination #2</td>
<td>March 5</td>
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<td>Unit Examination #3</td>
<td>April 16</td>
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<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Each Meeting</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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All grades (including the course grade) are based on the following distribution of points:

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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>80-89</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>70-79</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course Policies
The following policies are in place in order to better manage the learning environment in a large class room:

1) Students may tape class lectures for personal use. However the sale or exchange of such tapes is not permitted unless prior permission is given.
2) Cell phones must be off during class hours. They are allowed under emergency circumstances, but please notify the professor ahead of time.
3) There must be complete silence during the lecture. Please let me know if you have questions during the lecture.
4) You may use your laptop in class in order to take notes. However, chatting, texting, e-mailing, internet browsing, or any activity not related to official class activity is prohibited. All laptop users will need to sit in a designated area in the front of the auditorium.
5) Some communication from me will be posted on BlackBoard. Please monitor our course webpage on BlackBoard regularly.
6) Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. For further information, please refer to http://admin.utep.edu/LinkClick.aspx?link=HOOP-Section+II.pdf&tabid=30181&mid=63285
7) Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally within the first two weeks to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) (formerly known as the Disabled Student Services Office) in 302 Union East within the first two weeks of classes. CASS can also be reached in the following ways:
Web: http://sa.utep.edu/cass/ E-Mail: cass@utep.edu
Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY
Outline of Lecture Topics

I. Orientation and Introduction

II. Basic Concepts of Political Science
   A. The Science of Politics
      i. Ought vs. Is
      ii. Variables
      iii. Theories
      iv. Hypotheses
      v. Hypothesis Testing
   B. Ideology
      i. Conservatism
      ii. Liberalism
      iii. Socialism
      iv. Fascism
      v. Fundamentalism

III. Individual Political Formation and Transformation
   A. Political Culture
      i. Values
      ii. Attitudes
      iii. Opinions
      iv. Socialization
   B. Individual Political Behavior
      i. Prisoners’ Dilemma
      ii. Political Psychology
      iii. Legal Constraints for Participation
      iv. Incentives for Participation

IV. Group Politics
   A. Interest Group Politics
      i. Types
      ii. Functions
      iii. Extra-Constitutionality
   B. Revolutionary Groups
      i. Dissatisfaction
      ii. Organization
      iii. Success over time
   C. Political Parties
      i. Variations in Parties
      ii. Functions of Parties in a Democracy
      iii. Party Behavior when in Power
   D. International Political Activity
      i. International Actors
      ii. Interaction of Actors
      iii. Conflict and Cooperation
V. Domestic and International Political Institutions
   A. Law Production
      i. Legislative Systems
      ii. Chief Executives
      iii. Public Policy Formation
      iv. Judiciary
   B. Domestic Governmental Organization
      i. Unitary States
      ii. Federalism
      iii. Sub-national Government
   C. International Institutions
      i. Regimes
      ii. Supranational Organizations
      iii. International Organizations
   D. Globalization
      i. Liberalization
      ii. Democratization
      iii. Winners and Losers

VI. Conclusions

Readings and Presentations

All presentation slides are posted on Black Board

January 20
Orientation; International Politics and Political Science (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 1)

Why is generalizing important? How does one go about developing a generalization? What is the difference between a dependent and an independent variable? What is meant by the comparative method? How are comparative politics and international relations different? What is meant by critical thinking? What is the difference between a description, an explanation, and a prediction?

January 22 and 27
Views of “What Ought to be:” Normative Thinking (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 2)

What is the difference between a scientific theory and an ideology? What is the difference between the way the term liberalism is used in the US and how it is used around the world? What about conservatism? What is the difference between socialism and social democracy? What did Lenin add to the ideology of Marxism? What did Mao add? What happened to Marxism in countries that adopted it? Is fascism the same as communism? What is the connection between religious fundamentalism and ideology? Is Islam the only religion that some practice like an ideology?
January 29 and February 3
The Cultural Dimension of Politics (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 3)

What part(s) of a country’s culture would be important to the study of politics? How are values acquired? Are attitudes purely cultural? Are religious conflicts only about religion, or are there other factors? What types of attitudes are important to the study of politics? Does political culture change over time?

Unit Examination #1 February 5

February 10 and 12
Individual Political Behavior (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 4)

Why is the Prisoners’ Dilemma important to understanding individual behavior? Do all individuals behave in a rational manner? How can political psychology help us to understand behavior? How is this useful in understanding politics? Why are electoral rules important? Can you describe the electoral systems of various countries? What other factors help us understand why individuals participate in the political process?

February 17 and 19
The Politics of Political Parties (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 5)

What forms do political parties take? What are their functions? What are the major differences between the political parties found in various countries? What is the difference between a political party and an interest group?

February 24, 26 and March 3
Group Politics (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 6)

What is meant by mass participation? How important is this for a democracy? Why do people not get involved in political action even if it is in their best interest to do so? What forms do they take? Are interest groups important for a democracy? Are group dynamics different in violent organizations?

Unit Examination #2 March 5

Spring Break! March 10 and 12

March 17 and 19
International Political Activity (Pearson Custom chapter 1)

What are the most important actors on the international scene? Has the state lost power in international activity over the last fifty years? Why do some states cooperate while others are in conflict?
March 24 and 26
Political Institutions (I): Legislative Systems (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 7)

What is a parliamentary government? Which country exemplifies this type of government? How is that different from a presidential system? What is a ruling coalition? Is it possible to have both a presidential and a parliamentary system? Does any country have this form of governance? Why do these things matter when talking about making laws?

Cesar Chavez Day (No Classes)- March 31

April 2 and 7
Political Institutions (II): The Work of Chief Executives (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 8)

What is the difference between a head of state and the head of government? What influence does the head of government have in domestic politics? What role does the bureaucracy have in executive power? Are they autonomous?

April 9 and 14
Political Economy and Policy (Pearson Custom chapter 2)

Why is it important to look at political economy? What are the economic concepts that are important to the basic understanding of political economy? What are some of the basic tenets of the capitalist system? How popular is capitalism today? Why is the centrally planned economy not popular? Is there a future for mixed economies?

Unit Examination #3 April 16

April 21 and 23
Law and Justice (Ethridge & Handelman chapter 9)

What are the components of a country’s judicial system? Are all judicial systems the same? How are judges chosen? Is it important for a country’s judiciary to be autonomous? What are the various sources of law?

April 28 and 30
Domestic Governmental Organization (Lawson chapter 12 (posted on BB))

What is the difference between unitary and federal systems? Which countries are federal and which are unitary? Why do some countries adopt one form over the other? How is power distributed in a federal system?
What differentiates an international regime from other types of international organizations? What is the source of legitimacy of international organizations? Are all supranational organizations successful? Why or why not? Why would we connect globalization with democratization? Is liberalism important for the spread of globalization? How has the world been transformed over the last fifteen or so years? What were some of the failures that led to these transformations? Does globalization benefit everyone? Why or why not?

Final Examination: Thursday, May 14 (1:00-3:45pm)