

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS

Political Science 2310

Fall 2016

Professor

Gaspare M. Genna, Ph. D.

Department of Political Science

Office: Benedict Hall 301

Office Hours: Mondays 10:30am-noon; Thursdays 1-2pm; and by appointment

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Class Time/Location: MW 9-10:20am Undergraduate Learning Center 126

Teaching Assistants

Name	Office Hours	Email	Office/Phone
Perla M. Galindo	M 3-5pm; T 9-10:30am	pmgalindo@miners.utep.edu	Benedict 206/747-6615
Jason Vickers	M noon-1pm; Th 1:30-3:30pm	jvickers@miners.utep.edu	Benedict 206/747-6615
Zajakala Karolina	M noon-2pm; W noon-1pm	kzzajakala@miners.utep.edu	Benedict 204/747-7972

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

Parsons, Craig. 2016. *Introduction to Political Science: How to Think for Yourself about Politics*. Boston: Pearson.
ISBN-10: 0205056814
ISBN-13: 978-0205056811

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

Response System

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/425931>

Note: our Course Join Code is **425931**

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

Beginning on September 7, quizzes will be given in every meeting using the response system. If you do not register by September 7, you will be automatically dropped from this course.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at each class meeting using UTEP student ID cards. Card readers are located at the entrance of the classroom. When you enter class, simply hold your student ID card against the reader. It may not be necessary to remove the card from your wallet or purse. If the light on the device turns green, your card has been read properly and your attendance has been recorded. If the light remains red, the device was unable to read your card; please present it again gently until the green light appears. If you do not see the green light, you may need to remove your card from your wallet or purse in order to ensure that it is detected. Your attendance will be recorded up to 10 minutes before or after your class is scheduled to start.

Course Obligations

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;
- 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.

There is a mix of obligations you must meet to fulfill the requirements of the course. This includes daily quizzes, weekly reports, and a comprehensive final exam.

Daily Quizzes

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 closed notes and book and will be given throughout the sessions.

Weekly Reports

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, September 2 at 3pm and then each Friday at 3pm afterwards. Study group membership must be given by August 29 by placing your names on a single index card that I will provide. If you do not form a study group by August 29, you will not be able to earn points under this category.

Comprehensive Final Exam

The final exam is closed book/notes and in-class. You must bring an official ID (state, federal, or UTEP), scantron sheet and pencil to each exam. The exam is solely multiple-choice questions that are based on the readings, lectures, and current political developments. The final will be held December 7 from 10am-12:45pm in UGLC 126.

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.

Course Requirement	Due	Weight
Daily Quizzes	Each Meeting	40 percent
Weekly Reports	Each Friday	30 percent
Final Examination	December 7	30 percent

All grades (including the course grade) are based on the following distribution of points:

Points	Letter
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

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/Smart phones use is restricted. You may only use them for daily quizzes and ringers must be turned off during class time.
- 3) There must be complete silence when the instructor is speaking. Please let me know if you have questions during instruction.
- 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 week 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 and Top Hat

August 22 & 24

Orientation; International Politics and Political Science (Parsons Chapters 1 & 2)

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?

August 29 & 31

Views of “What Ought to be:” Normative Thinking (Parsons Chapter 3)

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 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?

September 5 University Closed for Labor Day Holiday

September 7, 12, & 14 (Quizzes will begin on September 7!)

States: Government Organization and Rule (Parsons Chapter 4 & 5)

What is a state and why do we view them as sovereign? How has globalization changed the concept of state sovereignty? 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? How do states get people to obey laws? Why do some states “fail?” What is the difference between a liberal democracy and authoritarian rule?

September 19, 21, & 26

Individual Political Behavior (Parsons Chapter 6)

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? 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?

September 28, October 3, & 5

Voting and Institutions (Parsons Chapter 7)

What are the ways to count votes in a democracy? What are the ways to represent citizens in a democracy? 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? 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? Why do these things matter when talking about making laws?

October 10, 12, & 17

Making Policies (Parsons 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? 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?

October 19, 24, & 26

Political Economy: How do countries govern their economies? (Parsons Chapter 9)

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? What is a centrally planned economy? How does capitalism and command economies differ from mixed economies?

October 31, November 2, & 7

Economic Development: What is good for one, is good for all? (Parsons Chapter 10)

What are some of the current ideas regarding how countries can develop? How successful have these ideas been in reality? What forces are there in convincing a country to adopt one idea over another? Is the “one size fits all” approach to economic development realistic? Why or why not?

November 9, 14, & 16

Democratization: The Magic Cure? (Parsons Chapter 11)

What are authoritarian regimes? Are they all alike? Why do individuals wish to transition from authoritarian rule to democracy? What are some of the ways countries democratize? Why are some democratization efforts violent while others are peaceful? Can democratization solve the problems facing a country? Why do new democracies fail and revert to becoming authoritarian regimes?

November 21 & 23

Global Conflict: International and Civil Wars (Parsons Chapter 12)

What is meant by “major war?” What are some of the causes of major war? Has the number of wars among countries declined since 1945? What about civil wars, have they increased or decreased? What explains the levels of international and civil wars since 1945? How has terrorism changed over time? Is terrorism and economic development connected? How does a government go about preventing terrorist acts?

November 28 & 30

Cooperation in Our Globalizing World (Parsons Chapter 13)

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 international economics? 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: Wednesday, December 7 (10am-12:45pm)