

POLS 2310: Introduction to Politics Syllabus

Dr. Marcos Menchaca
Online Class
Fall 2020

Instructor Information

Email

mmenchaca@utep.edu

Office Location

Benedict Hall 308

Office Hours

By appointment

General Information

Description

This class will introduce you to the discipline of political science. You will learn some of the basic methods of the social sciences (this includes a review of basic statistics). The topics will include political theory, comparative politics, and international relations. In essence, you will learn the basics of how to think like a political scientist in their various subfields.

This class has a political economy flavor to it. These parts will be scattered throughout all of the class topics. You will learn such concepts such as collective action problems, Pareto efficiency, rent seeking and other related topics. You may be surprised that political scientists use math to analyze the political world. However, I will always keep the formal theory topics I teach you very simple and easy to understand at an undergraduate level.

Course Goals

After the completion of this course, students should have the following skills or knowledge:

- Have a basic understanding of social scientific principles.
- Have a comprehension of major concepts and principles of political science.
- Have some foundation to analyze politics in an objective manner.

UTEP EDGE

Students will be able to:

- Communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools, media and genres (oral, written, iconographic) in varied contexts for a variety of purposes.
- Demonstrate strategic and adaptable thinking patterns in learning and working conditions.
- Apply analysis, synthesis, and evaluative processes that enable productive problem solving and decision-making to strengthen performance in university and workforce setting.
- Reflect and assess their interests, abilities, responsibilities, cultural understanding, and ethics in order to more effectively pursue their academic, career and life goals.
- Use real world digital tools, research, and resources to access, evaluate, and apply information appropriate for authentic tasks.

Course Details

Quizzes

There will be 9 quizzes worth 5% each. They are meant to take some of the weight and pressure off of the midterms and final. Quizzes will need to be completed at 11:59pm on the day they are due.

Midterms

The midterm exam will cover material since the beginning of class. The second midterm will cover the material since the second midterm until then. All material that is in the assigned book chapters and all lecture material is fair game for the exams. Midterms will need to be completed at 11:59pm on the day they are due.

Final

The final is comprehensive. However, the material covered since the second midterm will be emphasized. The final will need to be completed at 11:59pm on the day it is due.

Class Lectures

The class is all online. The lectures will be prerecorded and uploaded to Blackboard. You may watch them at your leisure—the class is asynchronous. But you will need to watch them before you take the quizzes, midterms, and final if these tests ask you about material in them.

Required Text

[TSOP] Colemer, Josep. (2011). The Science of Politics: An Introduction. Oxford University Press.

Course Schedule

Day	Topic	Reading	Task Due
Aug 24	Class Introduction	Syllabus	
Aug 26	Introduction to Studying Politics	TSOP Intro	
Aug 31	Scientific Analysis of Politics		
Sep 2	Classical Political Theory	Plato, The Republic, ch. 1-2	Quiz 1
Sep 9	Formal Political Theory	TSOP 1	
Sep 14	The State and Authority	TSOP 2-3	
Sep 16	Democracy	TSOP 8	Quiz 2
Sep 21	Freedom and Justice		
Sep 23	Political Ideology		Quiz 3
Sep 28	Political Institutions	TSOP 5	

Day	Topic	Reading	Task Due
Sep 30	Midterm 1		Midterm 1
Oct 5	Constitutions and Federalism	TSOP 6	
Oct 7	Legislatures	TSOP 14	Quiz 4
Oct 12	Executive Politics	TSOP 13	
Oct 14	Agenda Formation	TSOP 11	Quiz 5
Oct 19	Authoritarian Regimes	TSOP 7	
Oct 21	Public Opinion		Quiz 6
Oct 26	The Media		
Oct 28	Elections	TSOP 10	
Nov 2	Midterm 2		Midterm 2
Nov 4	Political Parties	TSOP 16	
Nov 9	Party Systems	TSOP 12	
Nov 11	Interest Groups		Quiz 7
Nov 16	Government Spending		
Nov 18	Global Politics		Quiz 8
Nov 23	Theories of International Relations		
Nov 25	Security		Quiz 9
Nov 30	International Organizations		
Dec 2	International Political Economy		
Dec 4	Human Rights and the Global Environment		
Dec 9	Final Exam		Final Exam

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated with the following elements.

Quizzes	45%
Midterm 1	15%
Midterm 2	20%
Final	20%

Letter grades will be given according to your place in the distribution of the cumulative scores (the class will be curved).

Additional Information and Resources

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, or otherwise seek additional information, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in Union East, Room 106. CASS' staff are the only individuals who can authorize accommodations for students with disabilities. The Student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions before arrangements need to be made for exams, quizzes, or other needs.

Absences During Exams

Since the exams are all online, generally only documented medical excuses will be accepted. Student athletes are able to take the exams before or while on the road for games. The exams (including quizzes) are automatically open for another 24 hours. Please do not use this extra time to wait until the very last minute to take the test.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to abide by the strictest standards of academic integrity. If you are unsure of what this means, please read more about it at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>

Note

I do not plan on making changes to the syllabus. But if I do, I will always inform you of any changes that I make.