

POLS 2310 Introduction to Politics

Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Taeko Hiroi

Office: Benedict Hall 312

Office Hours: M 3:00-4:00, W 9:30-10:15, and by appointment

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Class Time/Location: MW 1:30-2:50/ UGLC 126

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to major concepts, principles, and questions in the study of politics. Politics affects how society is organized. Politics affects why certain policies are adopted while many seemingly important issues are not even discussed by policymakers. In essence, politics affects every citizen; it affects your everyday life. In a globalized world, moreover, your decisions and actions may affect people living in distant countries; conversely, politics in other countries also impact your life. In order to become an effective citizen of the global community, you therefore need to understand the basics of politics. This course provides an introduction to politics and political science, with an emphasis on learning how to understand political events, political institutions, and political discourse in the United States and around the world.

In this course you will develop global awareness, critical thinking, problem-solving, and social responsibility.

Course Objectives

Upon the successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- 1) define key concepts and principles in political science;
- 2) apply these concepts and theories to real-world problems;
- 3) evaluate different perspectives in politics; and
- 4) describe and evaluate alternative political institutions.

Required Textbook

The following book is a required textbook for the course. I do not recommend older editions of this text. Earlier editions have different content and chapter organizations. Additional readings are available on the course's webpage (Blackboard).

Neal Riemer, Douglas W. Simon, and Joseph Romance. 2015. *The Challenge of Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*, 5th Edition. CQ Press.

Course Requirements

Reading Assignments and Class Participation

You are required to come to every class meeting, complete all assigned readings *before* coming to class, and actively participate in class discussions. Assigned readings are listed on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. Many studies have repeatedly demonstrated that students who regularly attend class and complete assigned readings are more likely to do well in the course. Some of the questions on the exams will be from materials covered in class sessions, which may not be covered in the textbook. Some questions will be from assigned readings, which may not be discussed in class meetings. Therefore, both class participation and assigned readings are mandatory and essential for your success in this course.

Class participation is evaluated through various class activities in the form of bonus points. Please note that some of the class sessions may occur online through Blackboard in order to facilitate and encourage different forms of learning and participation. You will be notified ahead of time when online class sessions are scheduled.

Exams

This course is divided into four parts with a section exam at the end of each section. These exams will be based on assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. The exams will be closed-book and closed-notes, and will consist of multiple-choice questions. You need to bring a **scantron sheet, pencils, and a picture ID** to take the exams. **Please do not be late.** Students arriving late is quite disruptive to other students who wish to concentrate on the exam. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, you will not be allowed to enter the exam room and your exam is considered missed.

No make-up exam will be given for missed exams, including missing an exam due to tardiness. Make-up exams are considered only with a timely presentation of proper documentation indicating a valid emergency situation, such as an emergency visit to the ER and a death in your immediate family (see course policy below).

Throughout the semester, you will have various learning opportunities to earn bonus points for your exams. Points accumulated during each section may be added to the exam for that section only. For example, if you earn 5 bonus points during section 1, these 5 bonus points will be added to your section 1 exam, but not to other exams. In other words, bonus points are not transferable. These points may be earned only during class sessions, and you must be present to take advantage of these opportunities.

Your exam grades posted on Blackboard's grade center will be the sum of the raw exam score and your bonus points.

Exam Schedule

Exam	Date	Time
Exam 1	Mon., September 24	1:30-2:50
Exam 2	Mon., October 22	1:30-2:50
Exam 3	Wed., November 14	1:30-2:50
Exam 4	Wed., December 5	1:30-2:50

Course Grade

The course grade will be based on a weighed sum of the four exam grades that reward your good performance. It is determined as follows:

Assessment	Weight
Highest exam score	35%
2 nd highest exam score	30%
3 rd highest exam score	25%
Lowest exam score	10%
Class participation	Added to the appropriate exam in the form of bonus points

Course Grade Scale	
90% ≤	A
80% ≤ & < 90%	B
67% ≤ & < 80%	C
57% ≤ & < 67%	D
<57%	F

Course Policy

Please comply with the following policies to maintain an effective and pleasant learning environment for everyone.

- **No electronic devices are allowed during the class.** This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, laptops, and tablet computers. If you bring them to class, they must be turned off and stored in your bag at all times. If you need to keep your cell phone on for emergency, please notify the professor *and* TAs ahead of time.
 - **Exception.** You may use your laptop or a tablet computer in class *exclusively for note taking*. You may not use a cell phone to take notes. All laptop and tablet users will need to sit *in a designated area in the front of the classroom*.
- **Please maintain respectful and appropriate behavior within and outside the classroom.** Meaningful and constructive dialogue is encouraged in this class, which

requires mutual respect, willingness to listen, and tolerance of opposing points of view. Respect for individual differences and alternative viewpoints will be maintained at all times. One's words and use of language should be temperate and within acceptable bounds of civility and decency. Disruptive behaviors, including excessive talking, arriving late to class, leaving class early, sleeping, reading newspapers or books, and using unauthorized electronic devices (including taking pictures or video- or voice-recording) during class meetings, are not permitted. Repetitive and/or seriously disruptive behavior, including, but not limited to, fighting, using profanity, personal or physical threats or insults, displaying hostility or rudeness towards other students, TAs, or the professor, and damaging property, may result in your removal from class, and reporting to the Dean of Students and/or the police. Expectation of respectful and appropriate behavior extends beyond the physical classroom.

- Please also be aware that no food or drink is allowed in the UGLC classrooms.
- Please note that some of the class sessions may occur online through Blackboard. You will be notified ahead of time when online class sessions are scheduled.
- Please check the course's Blackboard page often. I may distribute handouts and make announcements on Blackboard as well as in class meetings.
- **Arrive early on the exam days. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, you will not be allowed to enter the exam room unless prior arrangements are made with the professor.** Anticipate potential problems. Traffic and parking are constant problems in El Paso and at UTEP. Tardiness will not be a valid justification for a make-up exam.
- **Make-up exams are considered only with a timely presentation of proper documentation indicating the nature of the emergency, and the make-up exam, if granted, must be taken no later than one week from the date of the missed exam.** Valid emergencies include an unexpected emergency room visit due to illness, death in your immediate family, etc. Regular, scheduled appointments with your doctors are not considered emergencies. No make-up exams will be given for missing an exam due to tardiness. If you miss an exam without a valid documented emergency, please do not request a make-up exam. Due to university policy and fairness to other students, it will not be granted. Please note that make-up exams may have content and style that are different from the original exams.
- As discussed before, throughout the semester, you will have various opportunities to earn bonus points towards your exams. Therefore, please do not ask for additional extra credit opportunities.
- You are welcome to email me if you have questions or need to make an appointment. Please **use your UTEP email and provide your name, your UTEP ID number, and the class to which you are referring.** Please do not call to inquire about your class performance. Due to confidentiality, I will not be able to discuss these matters over the phone.

Course Materials

Course materials are intended for your personal use only. An unauthorized use, dissemination, distribution, publication or replication of course materials is strictly prohibited. Course materials refer to those made available to you for this course by me and teaching assistants. They include, but are not limited to, materials made available on Blackboard (such as power point slides, review materials, lecture outlines, and supplementary readings) and exams.

Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is NEVER tolerated by UTEP or the Department of Political Science. All cases are reported to the Dean of Students for possible disciplinary action. All work submitted must be original and your own; students may not submit graded work from another course. Forms of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. **Cheating** may involve communicating with another student or possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Falsifying research data, reports, or academic work offered for credit is also a form of cheating. **Collusion** involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. One example of collusion is preparing a discussion post for another person or having someone prepare a discussion post for you. **Plagiarism** involves the presentation of another person's work as your own, whether you mean to or not. For example, if you copy parts of or whole papers off the Internet without proper citation of the sources, it is a form of plagiarism. Lack of proper citation of sources is considered plagiarism even if borrowed ideas are paraphrased.

Accommodations

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, 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 UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

Tentative Course Schedule

*The course schedule is subject to change as needed.

August 27	First Meeting—Course Overview
Aug 29, Sep 5	Politics as a Game
	• Reading: Chapter 1
Sep 3	Labor Day—University is closed
Sep 10, 12	Politics and Choice
	• Reading: Chapter 2
	• Reading: Khrushchev Letter to Kennedy, 26 Oct 1962 & 27 Oct 1962 (Blackboard)
Sep 17, 19	Political Science as a Scientific Enterprise
	• Reading: Chapter 3
	• Reading: “President Discusses the Future of Iraq,” 26 Feb 2003 (Blackboard)
Sep 24	Exam 1
Sep 26, Oct 1, 3	Realism, Liberalism, and Conservatism
	• Reading: Chapter 5
Oct 8, 10	Liberal Democracy
	• Reading: Chapter 6
Oct 15, 17	Ideologies of the Left: Communism and Socialism
	• Reading: Chapter 7
Oct 22	Exam 2
Oct 24, 29	Political Values, Public Goods, and States
	• Reading: Chapters 8 & 15
Oct 31, Nov 5	Constitutional Structures
	• Reading: Chapters 9-10
Nov 7, 12	Electoral Systems
	• Reading: Chapter 9, pp. 263-267
Nov 14	Exam 3
Nov 19, 21, 26	Democratization
	• Reading: Chapter 13
Nov 28, Dec 3	International Peace and Conflict
	• Reading: Chapters 11-12
Dec 5	Exam 4