

POLS 2310 Introduction to Politics

Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Taeko Hiroi

Office: Benedict Hall 312

Office Hours: MW 9:15-10:00 am; and by appointment

E-mail: thiroi@utep.edu

Class Time/Location: MW 1:30-2:50/ UGLC 116

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce to you the 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.

UTEP Edge: In this course you will develop global awareness, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, 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.

Course Requirements

Reading Assignments

Most of the required readings for this course will be assigned from Gaspare Genna and Taeko Hiroi's *Political Science: A Concise Introduction*. I will provide assigned chapters on the course's Blackboard website. There will be additional readings, which will also be provided on Blackboard.

Readings are due *before* the class session for which they are assigned. Assigned readings are listed on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Class Participation

You are required to come to every class meeting and actively participate in class discussions. 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 reading are mandatory and essential for your success in this course.

Class participation is evaluated through various class activities. Please note that some of the class sessions will 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

There will be three exams that are not cumulative. 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 Part I, these 5 bonus points will be added to your Exam 1, 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	Weds, October 2	1:30-2:50
Exam 2	Mon., November 4	1:30-2:50
Exam 3	Wed., December 4	1:30-2:50

Course Grade

Assessment	Weight
Top two exam score	35 % each
Lowest exam score	15 %
Class participation	Ranked-choice voting online session, 10 % Current debate online session, 5 % Bonus point in-class activities—bonus points are added to relevant exams

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 class meetings.** 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*. If you are found to be doing activities that are not explicitly permitted by the professor, you will lose your laptop/tablet privilege and will not be allowed to use it during class sessions for the rest of the semester.
- **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 the course, 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 will occur online through Blackboard. You will be notified ahead of time when online class sessions are scheduled.
- The professor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus and course schedule. If changes are made, students will be notified in class or on Blackboard.
- 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 immediately.** 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 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.

Course Schedule

*The professor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus and the course schedule. If changes are made, students will be notified in class or on Blackboard.

Aug 26 **Overview**
Aug 28 *American Political Science Association Meeting--No class*

Part I: Fundamentals

Sept 4, 9, **Analyzing Politics**
 Chapter 1. Analyzing Politics
 Khrushchev Letter to Kennedy, 26 Oct 1962 & 27 Oct 1962

Sept 11 **Studying Politics**
 Chapter 2. Studying Politics
 "President Discusses the Future of Iraq," 26 Feb 2003

Sept 16 **Guest Speaker: Dr. Paul Finkelman**, President and Professor, Gratz College,
 "A Well Regulated Militia: Understanding The Original Meaning of the
 Second Amendment"

Part II: Political Values and Behavior

Sept 18, 23 **Ideologies**
 Chapter 3. Ideologies

Sept 25, 30 **Political Culture and Political Behavior**
 Chapter 4. The Cultural Dimension of Politics
 Chapter 5. Trust, Identity, and Political Behavior

Oct 2 **Exam 1**

Part III: Political Institutions, Political Leaders, and Policy

Oct 7 **States, Nations, and Varieties of Political Regimes**
 Chapter 6. States, Nations, and Varieties of Political Regimes

Oct 9, 14, 16 **Elections and Political Parties**
 Chapter 9. Elections and Political Parties
 October 14&16 online sessions--State of Maine's ranked-choice voting

Oct 21, 23 ***Institutions of Government***
Chapter 8. Institutions of Government

Oct 28, 30 ***Interests, Policy, and Public Goods***
Chapter 7. Interests, Policy, and Public Goods

Nov 4 ***Exam 2***

Part IV: Issues in Politics and Political Science

Nov 6, 11 ***Chapter 11. Democratization***
Chapter 11. Democratization
Re-read: Chapter 6. States, Nations, and Varieties of Political Regimes

Nov 13, 18 ***International Peace and Conflict***
Chapter 12. International Peace and Conflict

Nov 20, 25 ***Our Globalizing World***
Chapter 13. Our Globalizing World

Nov 27 ***Current Debate***
Online session

Dec 2 ***Catching Up and Wrapping Up***

Dec 4 ***Exam 3***