

**POLS 2310 Introduction to Politics  
Spring 2014**

**Instructor: Dr. Taeko Hiroi**

Office: Benedict Hall 312

Office Hours: MW 10-11, 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 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.

**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. Additional readings are available on the course's webpage (Blackboard).

Neal Riemer, Douglas W. Simon, and Joseph Romance. 2014. *The Challenge of Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. CQ Press.

**Course Requirements**

**Reading Assignments and Class Attendance**

You are required to come to every class having completed all readings assigned for the class. 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 on the exams. Some of the questions on the exams will be from materials covered in class, which may not be covered in the textbook. Some questions will

be from assigned readings, which may not be discussed in class. Therefore, both class participation and assigned readings are mandatory and essential for your success in this course.

### **Section Exams**

This course is divided into four parts with a section exam at the end of sections 1, 2 and 3. The final exam incorporates the assessment of your knowledge of the materials covered in section 4. These exams will be based on assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. Of the three section exams, I will drop your lowest exam score and count your two highest scores toward your course grade. The exams will be closed-book, closed-notes and will consist of multiple-choice questions. You will need to bring a scantron, pencils, and a picture ID to take the exams. Each section exam is worth 30 percent of your course grade.

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 6 bonus points during section 1, these 6 bonus points will be added to your section 1 exam, but not other exams. In other words, bonus points are not transferable. These points may be earned only during a class, and you must be present to take advantage of these opportunities.

### **Final Exam**

All students must take the comprehensive final exam given on **Wednesday, May 14 at 4-6:45 pm**. As with the section exams, it will be a closed-book, closed-notes exam and you will need to bring a scantron, pencils, and a picture ID to take the exams. It is worth 40 percent of your course grade.

### **Exam Schedule**

| <b>Exam</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Time</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Exam 1      | February 17 | 1:30-2:50   |
| Exam 2      | March 19    | 1:30-2:50   |
| Exam 3      | April 16    | 1:30-2:50   |
| Final Exam  | May 14      | 4:00-6:45   |

### **Grades**

Course grades are determined as follows:

| <b>Course Requirement</b>               | <b>Weight</b>               |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Section Exams (each of the two highest) | 60 percent (30 percent x 2) |
| Final Exam                              | 40 percent                  |

| Course Grade Scale |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 90% ≤              | A |
| 80% ≤ & < 90%      | B |
| 68% ≤ & < 80%      | C |
| 58% ≤ & < 68%      | D |
| <58%               | 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 not limited to, cell phones, laptops, netbooks, and tablet computers. If you bring them to class, they must be turned off and stored in your bag all the time. If you need to keep your cell phone on for emergency, please notify me ahead of time.
- No chatting, napping, e-mailing, internet browsing, or any activity not related to class is allowed during class hours. Those activities disturb other students who want to learn. If you need to do these things, please leave the classroom.
- Please also be aware that no food or drink is allowed in the UGLC classrooms.
- Please check the course's Blackboard page often. I may distribute handouts and make announcements on Blackboard as well as in class.
- **Arrive early on the exam days.** No student will be allowed to enter the classroom after 10 minutes past the beginning of the scheduled exam time unless prior arrangements are made with me.
- **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 missed an exam, it will be the lowest score that will be dropped.
- As discussed before, throughout the semester, you will have various opportunities to earn bonus points towards your section and comprehensive 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 identify your name and the class to which you are referring.

## **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, lecture outlines, and supplementary readings), study guides, and exams.

## **Academic Dishonesty Policy**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own. And, 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 Office of Student Life for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> for further information.

## **Disabilities**

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/dsso/>  
Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY

E-Mail: [dss@utep.edu](mailto:dss@utep.edu)  
Fax: (915) 747-8712

## Tentative Course Schedule

\*The course schedule is subject to change as needed.

January 22: First Meeting—Course Overview

### Part I: Politics and Political Science

January 27-29: Politics as a Game

- Reading: Chapter 1

February 3-5: Politics and Choice

- Reading: Chapter 2
- Reading: Khrushchev Letter to Kennedy, 26 Oct 1962 & 27 Oct 1962 (Bring to class) (Blackboard)
- Reading: “President Discusses the Future of Iraq,” 26 Feb 2003 (Blackboard)

February 10-12: Political Science as a Scientific Enterprise

- Reading: Chapters 3
- Reading (read again): “President Discusses the Future of Iraq,” 26 Feb 2003 (Blackboard)

February 17: **Exam 1**

### Part 2: Political Beliefs and Ideologies

February 19-24: Realism, Liberalism, and Conservatism

- Reading: Chapter 5

February 26-March 3: Liberal Democracy

- Reading: Chapter 6

*Note: Spring Break March 10-14*

March 5-17: Ideologies of the Left: Communism and Socialism

- Reading: Chapter 7

March 19: **Exam 2**

### Part 3: Political Systems and Constitutions

March 24-26: Political Groups, Political Values, and Public Goods

- Reading: Chapters 9 & 16

March 31: **Cesar Chavez Day (No Class)**

April 2-7: Constitutional Structures

- Reading: Chapters 10-11

April 9-14: Electoral Systems

- Reading: Re-Read Chapter 10

April 16: **Exam 3**

### Part 4: Issues in Politics and Political Science

April 16-21: Democratization

- Reading: Chapter 14

April 23-28: International Peace and Conflict

- Reading: Chapter 13

April 30-May 5: The Global Community and Globalization

- Reading: Chapter 12

May 7: Wrap-Up and Review

May 14: **Final Exam (4-6:45)**