

POLS 1333– Introduction to Political Science

Fall 2006
Monday & Wednesday
1:00-2:30
121 SR

Lisa A. Solowiej
Office: PGH 393
Office hours: M 11-12 & W 10 - 12
lasolowi@central.uh.edu

OBJECTIVES:

(1) To examine the nature of the general field of political science, defining and studying political concepts and phenomena. This class aims to develop an understanding of the basic concepts, ideologies, institutions, as well as the actors that are relevant to politics. (2) To provide the building blocks of knowledge to (prospective) majors in political science. This class should assist those students majoring in political science in completing upper level political science classes by understanding how political scientists ask and answer the relevant questions in their field.

Although the majority of the class will be lecture style, students will occasionally be asked to participate in and contribute to discussions, which will be based on the readings for the day.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

(1) Student will master basic concepts, theories and methods of studying political institutions and political behavior. Will also have knowledge of contemporary political issues. (2) Students will be able to locate relevant sources to buttress their arguments, they will be able to properly cite sources, and they will be able to analyze and present quantitative data when called for. (3) Students will write clear and original papers that are directed to the appropriate audience.

READING:

Reading is to be completed by the day it is listed on the reading schedule. The two books for this class are available in the bookstore. They are:

- (1) Etheridge and Handelman. 2004. *Politics in a Changing World: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science. Third Ed.*
- (2) Grigsby. 2005. *Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Political Science. Third Ed.*

GRADING:

Pop Quizzes: 15%
Exam 1 and 2: 50% (2 @ 25% each)
Final Exam: 35% (partially cumulative)

ATTENDANCE and QUIZZES: Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings and every student is responsible for all material presented and any announcements made during any and all class meetings. I will be giving pop quizzes throughout the semester (quizzes will never be given on review days). Your top scores will make up 15% of your final grade. This means that a certain number of quizzes (likely two), missed because of an absence, due to an emergency or even to laziness, will be dropped. Thus, quizzes CANNOT be made up for any reason. The material will be based on both reading and lecture material. Two bonus points are available on your final grade (see extra credit section).

EXAMS: All material from class lectures and all readings (even if not explicitly covered in class) are subject to testing. The exams will be a mix of matching, multiple choice, short essay, and long essay. The instructor reserves the right to not let make-up exams

be taken. This means if you cannot make it to an exam, you need to consult the instructor prior to the time the exam has been given. The final exam will be partially cumulative; about 70% will be strictly new information, while 30% will be on information from the entire semester.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING: Neither plagiarism nor cheating will be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism can be one of two kinds: intentional, which is dishonest, or unintentional, which is the result of ignorance. Both kinds are equally punishable and equally serious breaches of academic integrity. Either type may result in failing an assignment, failing the course, and in some instances, when allowed by the University, expulsion from the University. Students are responsible for being aware of the official policies and procedures of the University and will be held fully accountable for them. Full text of the official university policy regarding plagiarism, cheating, as well as other forms of academic dishonesty is available from the University.

EXTRA CREDIT: Each student has the opportunity for 2 extra points added on to their final grade. In order to earn these points, each student can do one ten-minute presentation at the beginning of one class, as well as turn in a short paper (at least two pages) based on their presentation. The student should choose a news article from a major news source that relates to a major theme from the class. The student should then act as an instructor to teach the class about the news event, while tying the event into the readings and lectures from the class. Successful students will engage the class in their presentation (example- through a question and answer period). Students have to sign up for a time slot at least a week prior to when they would like to present. Please note that only 1-2 students may do this per class meeting, therefore if you want the opportunity to do extra credit you need to sign up early for it or you may lose your chance. Students who explicitly demonstrate a link between class readings/lectures and the article they are discussing will be more likely to earn the full 2 points.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please notify me by the second week of class. You are also encouraged to contact the Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD) at (713) 743-5400. The CSD office makes formal recommendations regarding necessary and appropriate accommodations based on specifically diagnosed disabilities. Information regarding disabilities is treated in a confidential manner.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: In accordance with University policy, I will excuse any absences that result from religious observances, provided that you notify me in advance of your planned absence.

NOTE: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to classroom learning. If students cannot follow simple, normal classroom rules of etiquette they will be asked to leave the classroom. This means that it is not acceptable to come to class late and/or to sleep during class. Attendance is not mandatory, but your grade will suffer if you miss lectures and quizzes. **WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT** let your cell phone ring during class. If your cell phone becomes a reoccurring issue throughout the semester, you will be asked to leave. That means if there is a pop quiz that day, you will miss it and will miss out on those possible points. In addition, you may be barred from doing extra credit.

TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE

August 21– Introduction to the class. What is political science?

August 23 & 28 – The Study of Political Science. Normative vs. Empirical.
Grigsby: Chaps. 1 & 2 / Etheridge & Handelman: Chap. 1

August 30 – Political Theory.
Grigsby: Chap. 4

September 4 – Class cancelled.

September 6, 11, & 13 – Political Ideology.
Grigsby: Chaps. 5, 6, and 7 & Etheridge and Handelman: Chap. 2

September 18 – Public Opinion/Elections
Grigsby: Chap. 9 & Etheridge and Handelman Chap. 4

September 20 – Catch-up and Review.

September 25 – Exam #1

September 27 & October 2 – Interest Groups and Political Parties
Etheridge and Handelman Chaps. 5-6

October 2, 4, & 9 – Legislatures
Etheridge and Handelman Chap. 7 Grigsby Chap. 10

October 11 & 16 – Judiciaries.
Etheridge and Handelman Chaps. 8 - 9

October 18 & 23 – Executives and Bureaucracies.
Etheridge and Handelman Chaps. 8 & 10

October 25 – Catch-up and Review.

October 30 – Exam #2.

November 1 & 6– Case Study: United States and Great Britain.
Etheridge and Handelman Chaps. 11 & 12

November 8 & 13 – Case Study: Russia and China.
Etheridge and Handelman Chaps. 13 & 14

November 15 – Case Study: India & Mexico.
Etheridge and Handelman Chaps. 16 & 17

November 20 – Catch-up and Politics of Developing Nations.
Etheridge and Handelman Chap. 15

November 22 – Class cancelled.

November 27 – Introduction to International Relations.
Grigsby: Chap. 11 & Etheridge and Handelman Chap. 18

November 29– Catch-up and review session for final exam. Class evaluations.

Final exam- Wednesday December 13th

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make any changes she deems
necessary throughout the semester to this syllabus.