

POLS 105: Introduction to Politics (Section: 001)
Fall 2017: MWF 10-10:53 a.m., MOLN 107
Department of Politics, Philosophy, and Law
University of Wisconsin-Parkside

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Office Hours: MWF 11 a.m. - noon., MW 4 p.m. - 5 p.m., and by appointment

Course Description

Politics is simply the process of how things get done to solve public problems. How public problems get solved is at the heart of ancient and modern society. This course serves as introduction to the study of political science through American and global perspectives as an academic discipline. During the semester, we will cover basic political concepts such as power, authority, legitimacy, the state, nationalism, political systems that exist throughout the world, and various approaches to the study of politics.

Course Objectives

This course satisfies a Social and Behavioral Sciences (SS) General Education requirement. At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Acquire and demonstrate knowledge of politics and law, and how they interoperate.
2. Critique political/legal arguments using both supporting and opposing viewpoints, and able to determine what are appropriate sources of information.
3. Develop written and oral communication skills to communicate viewpoints to others.
4. Critically analyze course readings to answer questions regarding politics.
5. Respect diversity in many contexts and able to work collegially with others despite differences.

This course also fulfills the university's general education requirements in the following areas:

- Communication/literacy: Students will write a minimum of 12-16 double-spaced pages throughout the course. Students also will be expected to read approximately eight hours of course material per week.
- Reasoned judgment: Students will be able to recognize a problem, analyze information, identify assumptions, and make conclusions based on a range of information.
- Social and persona responsibility: Students will identify major global concepts, issues, processes, and systems. Students will recognizes the interconnected nature of the world and the importance of global citizenship.

Required Text

Parsons, Craig. 2017. *Introduction to Political Science*. Boston: Pearson (ISBN: 978-0205056811)

The textbook is available at the University Bookstore as well as online retailers (e.g., amazon.com, barnesandnobles.com, half.com, etc.). It is also available as an e-book.

The university offers a free digital subscription to the New York Times for as long as you are a student. You have to re-register every year, but it is a great way to know what is going on in the world. Visit <http://libguides.uwp.edu/nytimes> and follow the instructions. As a student, you can also receive a discounted subscription to the Wall Street Journal. A 15-week subscription is only \$15 (\$1 per week). Visit <http://r.wsj.net/j8wrm> to sign up.

Student Responsibilities

Please come to class prepared. This means you need to read and take notes on the assigned readings beforehand. Attending class and participating is important, as there will be material discussed only in lectures that will be tested on exams and quizzes. You are also responsible for treating your fellow classmates with respect, especially during class discussions. We each come to this course with diverse backgrounds and different ideas regarding various issues and how government should work. Please respect your classmates by not talking when others have the floor.

If you have an excused absence and need to make up an exam, you must notify me as soon as possible after the absence. You are responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor the next class session after your absence. Please refer to the student handbook for more information regarding excused absences.

Technology Policy

Cell phone use in class is inappropriate and distracting to both myself and other students. If you use a laptop or tablet to take notes, please do not surf the Internet during class or use social media. If you need to call or text someone in an urgent situation, quietly leave the room. However, do not make calling and texting a habit. I reserve the right to ask students to leave if you are using your cell phone, or a laptop/tablet, if not used for note-taking purposes.

Attendance

Class attendance is important and affects your final grade as exams cannot be made up unless an absence is excused (e.g. approved university activity, funeral for immediate family, religious observance). Absences related to your academic workload, illness, work schedule, car problems, etc. are not usually excused absences. You are allowed up to three unexcused absences during the course. After four unexcused absences, your grade for the course being lowered by one-third a grade level (e.g. A- to B+, or B to B-), and will be lowered again after four additional unexcused absences. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining the missed material

(e.g., notes) from another student, as my notes/PowerPoint slides will not be made available. In-class assignments cannot be made up, but exams may be made-up if you have an approved excuse or an emergency. If you have an emergency that causes you to miss an exam, you must contact me as soon as possible (within 24 hours unless there is a **valid** reason why you could not contact me sooner) to arrange a make-up exam that will be given in an alternative format from the exam taken in class.

Instructor Responsibilities

As part of being your instructor, I have responsibilities to you. I will help answer questions regarding the course, and help you understand the material. I will be available during office hours and also available by appointment if you cannot make office hours. I will also try to answer questions via email within 48 hours (does not include weekends). All questions regarding grades must be asked in person, either after class or during office hours.

My responsibility to you is to provide clear guidelines as to what is expected. I will be using D2L to communicate and post grades. Please check your campus email and D2L regularly to make sure you can view course announcements and review your grades as the semester progresses. I am also responsible for ensuring the classroom provides an environment for everyone to learn and to express themselves.

Grading

Midterm exams: 30% (Two at 15% each)

Final exam: 25%

Reaction papers: 30% (Three at 10% each)

Quizzes: 15%

Final grade scale: A = 94% and above, A- = 90%-93%, B+ = 87%-89%, B = 84%-86%, B- = 80%-83%, C+ = 77%-79%, C = 74%-76%, C- = 70%-73%, D+ = 67%-69%, D = 60%-66%, F = 59% and below (Note: I do not round up final grades if you are just below the cutoff, such as having a 93.8%. I have to define the scale at some point, and some people are always going to fall on the other side of the divide).

Final exam (25%): A final exam will be given at the end of the course. This exam is cumulative. The format of the exams will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay. The exam will be given in class and alternative exams are only allowed with an approved excuse.

Two midterm exams (Two at 15% each): Two midterm exam will be given during the course. The format of the exams will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay. The exam will be given in class and alternative exams are only allowed with an approved excuse.

Reaction papers: (Three at 10% each): During the course, you will have the opportunity to write three short (3-4 page) reaction papers that address an issue related to what you will be learning at the time. You will apply the concepts you have learned in the class to shortly summarize the issue and propose a solution. You should also attempt to address weaknesses in existing

solutions. Topics will be posted on D2L. You will be required to use outside academic and high-quality news sources (Examples include: *NY Times*, *The Economist*, *The Atlantic*, *Foreign Affairs*). Four papers will be assigned, but you will only have to complete three. If you have missed three or more classes, which lower your grade, you may write a fourth that will raise your grade by one-third of a grade level (e.g. A- to B+, or B to B-).

Quizzes (15%): Several unannounced quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Quizzes will cover readings for day and will measure how prepared you are for that day's lecture and activities. The lowest two quizzes will be dropped. Quizzes cannot be made up.

Grading notes: Proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure will be part of your research paper grade. Students need to develop the ability to write clearly and in common political science style that includes a research question, literature review, methodology, and results section, as well as a conclusion. Students are expected to carefully read, edit, and proofread their written work. If English is not your native language, or even if it is and you would like further assistance, there are on-campus resources that are there to help you. The university offers assistance in various subjects through the Parkside Academic Resource Center (PARC). Assistance is free and is available in Wylie D180. If you need help with this course, please make an appointment. Help with writing assignments is available on a walk-in basis. Visit the PARC in-person or online at <https://www.uwp.edu/learn/academicsupport/parc/> for hours and more information.

All exercises, research proposals, etc. must have the following information displayed at the header: student's first and last name; course number (e.g. POLS 105); and assignment name (e.g. Homework 1).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Use of the intellectual property of others without attributing it to them is considered a serious academic offense. An academic misconduct can lead to a disciplinary hearing where sanctions can include a failed grade, or suspension or expulsion from the university. The University of Wisconsin-Parkside's policy on academic misconduct can be found at <https://www.uwp.edu/live/offices/studentaffairs/upload/14.pdf>.

Student Accessibility

Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact me the beginning of the semester with a copy of your accommodation letter so I can make the needed accommodations. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility and receive an accommodation letter from Disability Services. Please visit <https://www.uwp.edu/live/offices/disabilityservices/> for more information.

Registration Requirement

The official registration deadline to add this course with a permission number is Tuesday,

September 12. The deadline to add the course with a permission number is Tuesday, September 19. Course drops must be completed by Tuesday, October 3 to not receive a Grade “W”, and the last day to withdraw with a Grade “W” is Tuesday, October 24. Please refer to the university’s policies regarding pro-rated tuition refund dates. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Please confirm enrollment in Solar. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the posted deadlines.

Class Schedule

Readings will come from the *Introduction to Political Science* textbook. You should be prepared to discuss the assigned reading on the day listed below. I retain the right to make changes to the schedule as needed.

Week 1 – Introduction, (Sept. 6, 8)

Topics: Syllabus discussion, Is politics to blame?, Approaches to political science

Readings:

- Parsons, chapter 1

Week 2 – Introduction, Political Philosophy, Political Science (Sept. 11, 13, 15)

Topics: Alternative methods, Political theory

Readings:

- Parsons chapters 1-2

Week 3 – Political Science, Ideologies (Sept. 18, 20, 22)

Topics: Political theory, emergence of social and political science as disciplines, What is an ideology?

Readings:

- Parsons, chapters 2-3

Week 4 – Ideologies, States (Sept. 25, 27, 29)

Topics: Liberal tradition, classical and modern liberalism, socialism, fascism, political Islamism, environmentalism, defining the state

Readings:

- Parsons, chapters 3-4

Important dates:

- First reaction paper due (Sept. 29)

Week 5 – States, Governments (Oct. 2, 4, 6)

Topics: Challenges to the state, political ideologies and the state, authority and legitimacy

Readings:

- Parsons, chapters 4-5

Week 6 – Governments, Midterm review and exam (Oct. 9, 11, 13)

Topics: Liberal and illiberal democracies, authoritarianism, political ideologies and liberal

democracy, midterm review and exam

Readings:

- Parsons, chapters 5

Important dates:

- Midterm review (Wednesday, Oct. 11)
- First midterm (Friday, Oct. 13)

Week 7 – Individual participation and collective action (Oct. 16, 18, 20)

Topics: Forms of collective action Patterns of political participation, ideologies and participation,

Readings:

- Parsons, chapters 6

Important dates:

- Second reaction paper due (Oct. 20)

Week 8 – Representation (Oct. 23, 25, 27)

Topics: Voting rules, political parties, presidential models, parliamentary models,

Readings:

- Parsons, chapter 7

Week 9 – Power and Policymaking (Oct. 30, Nov. 1, 3)

Topics: Executives and legislator policymaking roles, bureaucracy, judiciary

Readings:

- Parsons, chapter 8

Week 10 – Political economy, Midterm review Nov. 6, 8, 10)

Topics: Overview of economic systems, comparison of economic systems, political ideologies and political economy, midterm review

Readings:

- Parsons, chapter 9
- Third reaction paper due (Nov. 10)
- Midterm review (Nov. 10)

Week 11 – Midterm exam, Economic development and growth (Nov. 13, 15, 17)

Topics: Midterm exam, economic growth,

Readings:

- Parsons, chapter 10

Important dates:

- Second midterm (Nov. 13)

Week 12 – Economic development and growth (Nov. 20, 22)

Topics: Economic development, ideologies and economic growth

Readings:

- Parsons, chapter 10
- Constitution, Article I

Important dates:

- No class Nov. 24 (Thanksgiving break)

Week 13 – Political change (Nov. 27, 29, Dec. 1)

Topics: How authoritarian governments fall, challenges of democratization, democracy promotion, Arab spring

Readings:

- Parsons, chapter 11

Week 14 – Political violence, Globalization (Dec. 4, 6, 8)

Topics: War, terrorism, roots of political violence, changing global economy, international law

Readings:

- Parsons, chapters 12-13
- Constitution, Article II

Important dates:

- Fourth reaction paper due (Dec. 8)

Week 15 – Globalization, Final exam (Dec. 11, 15)

Topics: Effects of globalization, globalization and political ideologies

Readings:

- Parsons, chapters 13

Important dates:

- Final review (Dec. 11)
- Final exam (10:30 a.m. – 12:30 a.m., Dec. 15)

Grading Standards for Written Assignments

A – OUTSTANDING. An "A" essay or test is clearly written and contains no grammatical errors. It demonstrates mastery of the relevant material and offers significant insight into the topic at hand.

B – GOOD. A "B" essay or test is clearly written but may contain a very few grammatical errors. It clearly relates the facts, gives sound analysis, and provides some interesting insight.

C – MEDIOCRE. A "C" essay or test is clearly written but may contain some grammatical mistakes. It adequately relates the facts and offers some analysis, although it probably does not offer much insight.

D – POOR. A "D" essay or test is intelligible but probably contains some serious grammatical errors. It often relates the facts poorly, offers little analysis, and provides no real insight.

F – UNACCEPTABLE. An "F" essay or test is poorly written and makes no coherent argument. It struggles to relate the facts and offers little or no analysis. It often creates confusion instead of providing insight.