

Introduction to Political Science

**Political Science 1000-099 (Honors Program)
University of Nebraska Omaha
Fall 2016**

**Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-3:45 pm
Arts and Sciences Hall 279**

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Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the world of politics—both domestic and international. It seeks citizen education. It covers fundamentals of government and politics and how to study politics scientifically. Political science approaches big questions of the human experience: Who guards the guardians? Why do countries democratize? Why do countries go to war? We will examine basic political concepts and ideas as well as processes, behaviors, and institutions found in different types of political systems around the world. This course seeks to guide you in understanding politics through systematic, scientific study and to help you to develop the skills necessary to think critically about political issues that you observe in your daily lives. My goal for you as citizens is to be savvy political actors—mature consumers of quality political information and active participants in politics. Citizenship in a democratic society comes with both rights and obligations. You can best fulfill both by being critically engaged, thinking globally, and acting locally.

Course Materials

Orwell, George. 1945. *Animal Farm*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Cooper, Marc. 2001. *Pinochet and Me*. London: Verso Publishers.

Lederer, William J. and Eugene Burdick. 1958. *The Ugly American*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com>)

Individual class readings are available on the UNO online system, Blackboard.

I also recommend signing up for the Quartz Daily Brief (<http://qz.com/daily-brief/>), a high-quality daily news digest.

Evaluation: Your course grade will be based on the following:

Attendance and Participation: 20% (including in-class written assignments, activities, and discussions)

Analytical Essays: 45%

Midterm and Final Exams: 35%

Attendance and Participation (20%)

The course will require active student participation. Students are expected to do the assigned readings and come to class prepared to share your questions, comments, and ideas. Plan to ask and answer questions, clarify readings, to discuss course material, and to participate in activities. The classroom offers you a forum to engage with your peers and to learn from each other. I expect everyone to promote an active learning environment by supporting each other intellectually, asking questions, and by being an aggressive learner.

We will routinely have in-class discussions, activities, and written assignments (both in-class and take-home) that are part of your participation grade. **A standing assignment for each class session is to have read the politically relevant news** in *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/>) before coming to class. We will often cover current events in class.

A few basic ground rules:

- Always be present, physically and mentally—**Laptops, phones, texting devices are not allowed during class**—(Remember *A Deadly Wandering*? Let's reclaim our brains...)
- Treat everyone in the class with patience and respect
- Be curious and ask questions of your classmates, of our readings, and of me
- When you speak, remember that you are in dialogue with the entire class. Speak to and listen to all of your classmates
- You are responsible for your own learning and accountable for your own work—you are ultimately in charge of your own educational experience

Analytical Essays (3 total, 15% each)

During the semester, you will read three texts: *Animal Farm* (1945), *Pinochet and Me* (2001), and *The Ugly American* (1958). Each of these books pairs with a sub-field of political science we will cover in the course—Political Theory, Comparative Politics, and International Relations, respectively. Along with these books you will read assigned newspaper articles and scholarly journal articles that relate to the texts and to the lecture material. For each book and section of the course, you will write a brief essay in which you analyze a fundamental issue of the particular sub-discipline of political science and articulate the connections between the texts and other course materials. I will provide a question or writing prompt to guide your analysis in the essays. Each essay must be 3-4 pages in length (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font). Further details will be distributed in class.

Midterm and Final Exam (35%)

Mastery of both the lecture material and the assigned readings will be necessary for the exams. *Do not miss exams. If an emergency arises and you cannot make it, please contact me beforehand to request a makeup exam. The ability to make up work missed will be at the discretion of the instructor. Make up exams will be more challenging in format and content than*

the in-class exams. Un-excused absences from exams will result in a grade of “zero” for that exam.

UNO Writing Center

The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter or visit them at their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall, Room 150. I strongly encourage you to meet with the Writing Center to explore what they have to offer and to see how they can support your success here at UNO.

Academic Integrity

You must maintain academic integrity at all times. Plagiarism/cheating are serious academic crimes, and I will pursue any infringements seriously and actively. At a minimum, any infringement will result in a grade of “zero” on the assignment. For more information on University of Nebraska Omaha policies on academic integrity, please see: <http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/achievement/student-conduct-and-community-standards/policies/academic-integrity.php>

Special Accommodations

Accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Disability Services and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact Disability Services (MBSC 111, Phone: 402-554-2872, TTY: 402-554-3799) or go to the website: www.unomaha.edu/disability.

Late Policy

Daily assignments will not be accepted late. Any late analytical essays will be penalized by two-thirds of a letter grade per day late. For example, an “A+” paper one day late would receive a grade of an “A-.”

Schedule of Class Meetings

Week One

August 23-25: Introduction and orientation to the course

- Neal Reimer, Douglas W. Simon, and Joseph Romance, eds. *The Challenge of Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*, “Political Science: Components, Tasks, and Controversies” (2015)

Week Two

August 30-September 1: The Importance of Politics

- William Finnegan, “Leasing the Rain,” *The New Yorker* (April 8, 2002)
- Vanden & Prevost, “Bolivia,” *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, fifth edition (2015)

Week Three

September 6-8: Key Concepts in Political Science

- “Iraqi Kurdistan Profile,” *BBC News* (February 5, 2016)
- “Who are the Kurds?” *BBC News* (March 14, 2016)
- “Turkey v Islamic State v the Kurds: What’s going on?” *BBC News* (September 15, 2015)
- Ghia Nodia, “The Impact of Nationalism,” *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 12, No. 4 (October 2001), 27-34
- “To avoid another Brexit let’s stop treating citizenship as a birthright,” *Quartz* (August 16, 2016)
- [Recommended: James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, Introduction and Chapter One (1998)]

Week Four

September 13-15: The Collective Action Problem

- **Animal Farm*, I-V
- Mancur Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 87, No. 3 (Sept. 1993), 567-676
- [Recommended: watch Akira Kurasawa’s *Seven Samurai* (1954), John Sturges’ *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), or John Lasseter’s *A Bug’s Life* (1998)]
- **Thursday, September 15: Guest talk: John Kretzschmar, Director of the UNO William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies**

Week Five

September 20-22: The Collective Action Problem, continued

- **Animal Farm*, VI-VII
- Greg Quinn, “Climate Change is Hell on Alaska’s Formerly Frozen Highways,” *Bloomberg* (August 2, 2016)
- Coral Davenport, “Signs Are Promising That Economies Can Rise as Carbon Emissions Decline,” *The New York Times* (April 5, 2016)
- Chris Mooney, “World Bank: The way climate change is really going to hurt us is through water,” *The Washington Post* (May 3, 2016)
- Justin Gillis, “Short Answers to Hard Questions About Climate Change,” *The New York Times* (November 28, 2015)
- **Thursday, September 22: Guest talk: Dr. Elizabeth Chalecki, Assistant Professor of International Relations, UNO Department of Political Science**

Week Six

September 27-29: Political Theory and Ideologies

- **Animal Farm*, VIII-IX
- Neal Reimer, Douglas W. Simon, and Joseph Romance, eds. *The Challenge of Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*, “The Quest for the Good Political Life” (2015)

Week Seven

October 4-6: Ideologies and Social Revolution

- **Tuesday, October 4: Library Class Session (Class will meet in Criss Library today)**
- Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*, Introduction and Chapter One (2008)
- Theda Skocpol, "France, Russia, China: A structural analysis of social revolutions," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (1994)

Week Eight

October 11: In-class review

- ***Animal Farm* analytical essay due in class**

October 13: Mid-term exam

Week Nine

October 18: Semester Break (NO CLASSES)

October 20: Comparative Politics I: Democracy and Non-democracy

- **Pinochet and Me*, ix-xiii, 1-54
- "Hundreds Vanishing in Egypt as Crackdown Widens, Activists Say," *The New York Times*, February 17, 2016
- "Iran elections: Hardliners lose parliament to Rouhani allies," *BBC News*, April 30, 2016

Week Ten

October 25-27: Comparative Politics I: Democracy and Non-democracy, continued

- **Pinochet and Me*, 55-110
- "Why is Thailand under military rule," *BBC News* (November 9, 2015)
- "Thai referendum: Military-written constitution approved," *BBC News* (August 7, 2016)
- "Turkey failed coup: Tens of thousands in pro-democracy rally," *BBC News* (July 24, 2016)

Week Eleven

November 1-3: Comparative Politics II: Interest Groups, Political Parties, Elections

- **Pinochet and Me*, 111-143
- Aamna Mohdin, "There is a way democracies can create better-informed voters—but you're probably not going to like it," Quartz (August 1, 2016): <http://qz.com/746737>
- Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Indispensability of Political Parties," *Journal of Democracy* 11(1): 48-55 (2000)

Week Twelve

November 8-10: Comparative Politics III: Presidential and Parliamentary systems

- **November 8 (Election Day, U.S.)**
- Christopher Allen, "The Case for a Multi-Party U.S. Parliament?" (2007)
- **November 10 – *Pinochet and Me* analytical essay due in class**

Week Thirteen

November 15-17: International Relations I: Realism, Idealism, Constructivism

- **The Ugly American*, 7-92
- Elizabeth Chalecki, *Environmental Security*, Chapter One (2013)
- Tim Fernholz, "The Next Big Thing in Space Business is Tiny Rockets," *Quartz* (August 6, 2016): <http://qz.com/747513/the-next-big-thing-in-space-business-is-tiny-rockets/>

Week Fourteen

November 22: International Relations II: U.S. Foreign Policy

- **The Ugly American*, 93-190
- Howard J. Wiarda, *American Foreign Policy: Actors and Processes*, Chapters 1-2

November 24: Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASSES)

Week Fifteen

November 29-December 1: International Relations III: Geopolitics, Contemporary Issues

- **The Ugly American*, 191-285
- Adam Entous, Gordon Lubold, and Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Military Proposes Challenge to China Sea Claims," *Wall Street Journal* (December 15, 2015)
- "Beaten up by China for going fishing," *BBC News* (January 11, 2016)
- James Bamford, "The world's best cyber army doesn't belong to Russia," *Reuters* (August 9, 2016)
- "Four billion people face severe water scarcity, new research finds," *The Guardian* (February 17, 2016)
- [Recommended: Luke Patey, *The New Kings of Crude: China, India, and the Global Struggle for Oil in Sudan and South Sudan* (2014)]

Week Sixteen

December 6-8: International Relations III, continued: Model Diplomacy and Conclusions

- Council on Foreign Relations, Humanitarian Intervention in South Sudan scenario: <https://modeldiplomacy.cfr.org/#/>
- **December 8 – *The Ugly American* analytical essay due in class**

In-class final exam on Tuesday, December 13 at 2:30 pm