

POL 101: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Course Materials

- James N Danziger (2016), *Understanding the Political World: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science*, 12th ed.

Course Objectives

“Politics” often gets a bad rap these days. It is often associated with “conflict,” “corruption,” “those jerks in Washington” (that one is my Dad’s favorite), and “gridlock.” But these characterizations all mis-understand what politics really is (sorry Dad...).

Politics is simply just *us* trying to figure out what *we* want. The fundamental questions of politics involve trying to clarify this overly simple definition. For example, who is the “us” of the statement? What mechanisms can we use to figure out what we want? Is one mechanism better than another – is a democratic election better than a dictatorship? Why? There are a lot of questions that need to be answered before we can get to anything as trivial as “Should we invade Iraq?” or “Should we raise taxes?” or “Is torture an acceptable means of protecting our national security?” In Part II of this course we are going to examine these political systems and in Part III we will discuss the political processes that flow out of these systems.

But, before we get to that, in Part I we will discuss political behavior. Before we can ask the question of how *we* should act, we must ask how *I* should act. What I value determines how I will act. The same is true of groups of people. Thus, we will discuss questions of values, power, and limits on that power. We’ll close the course in Part IV by looking at values, behaviors, systems, and processes at the global level.

Thus, when we get done with the readings, lectures, assignments, and discussions (and exams), each student should (1) have a better understanding of how “politics” really works, (2) be exposed to how “political scientists” study politics, (3) know the difference between a politician and a political scientist, (4) begin to ask and answer questions about “what ought to be” and “why it ought to be that way”, (5) gain a broader understanding about what power is and how it operates, and (6) begin to ask what it is in the world that *s/he really* cares about and what *s/he* can actually *do*.

PLNU Mission To Teach – To Shape – To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modelled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Grading

The following is the breakdown of how the final grade will be determined:

25%	Mid-Term Exam
25%	Final Exam
10%	Analysis of Political Belief System
10%	Quizzes
15%	Assignments
15%	Attendance and Participation

Assignments

In order to ensure that everyone is keeping up with the reading, there will be frequent assignments due the following class period. They will not be particularly difficult, but they will ask you to respond to the reading. These assignments must be typed, unless otherwise stated. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

One of the goals of this course is to get you excited about politics and political science. This means actually going out there and getting actively involved. So, you will have the chance to participate politically in our governmental process. A list of approved activities will be distributed, each one worth a varying number of points. We'll talk more fully about this in the second week of class.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is very important in any course since this is the forum in which we discuss all these ideas more in depth. Attendance is 10% of the total grade and will be calculated in the following manner:

# of classes missed	Attendance grade
0-1	10
2	9
3	8
4	7
5	5
6	3
7	1
8	0
9	dropped from course

Participation is a subjective measure of the how involved in class discussions a student is. Quantity does not impress me as much as quality – the student who just talks to be heard better have something that adds to the discussion. However, everyone should participate and 5% of the total grade will be a subjective judgment of how well you added to class discussions.

I expect an academically engaged and professional approach from each of you. At a minimum, this includes being in class when it begins, engaging in active listening and discussion, not texting, emailing or using social media during class, engaging with your fellow classmates with respect and civility, and completing all assignments when due.

Quizzes

Quizzes can cover material from the readings for the day, readings for the previous lecture, and content from the previous lecture. Quizzes will be announced the day the quiz will be given. They will be given at the start of the class session and turned in before the lecture for that day begins. Students can be best prepared for quizzes by (1) keeping up with the reading for each lecture, (2) reviewing lecture notes from the previous lecture before class, (3) attending class regularly, and (4) being on time to class (since quizzes are at the start of class).

Make-ups

NO MAKE-UP EXAMS OR QUIZZES WILL BE ALLOWED WITHOUT A UNIVERSITY-APPROVED EXCUSED ABSENCE OR DOCTOR'S WRITTEN PERMISSION. Any student receiving a university-approved excused absence should contact the professor **BEFORE** the absence to arrange a time to make-up the missed exam.

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the University Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See Disability Resource Center for additional information.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

The readings on this schedule are from the Danziger text. There will often be other assigned readings on Canvas, so visit the site often. All readings should be done before we meet for class.

PART I: POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

1/10 Introduction

1/15 The Science of Politics

ch. 1 (1-24)

1/17 What Should We Do?

ch. 2 (25-40)

1/22 What Do We Believe? How Do We Act?

ch. 2 (40-54), ch. 3 (55-65)

1/24 Power and the Individual

Antigone

1/29 Acting in Groups

ch. 3 (65-81)

1/31 Influences

ch. 4 (82-110)

2/5 What Does Faith Have to do with this?

TBA

2/7 In-class Analysis of Political Belief System

PART II: POLITICAL SYSTEMS

2/12 The Nation-State

ch. 5 (111-34)

2/14 Political Institutions

ch. 6 (135-62)

2/19 Constitutions

ch. 7 (163-79)

2/21 How Democracies Function

ch. 7 (179-96)

2/26 Mid-Term Prep and Review

2/28 Mid-Term Exam

Spring Break

3/12	Democracy: Cool or Not Cool?	TBA
3/14	Political Economy	ch. 8 (197-211)
3/19	Capitalism: Cool or Not Cool?	ch. 8 (211-30)

PART III: POLITICAL PROCESSES

3/21	How Do Governments Act?	ch. 9 (231-56)
3/26	How Do Governments Change?	Ch. 10 (257-87)
3/28	International Relations	ch. 11 (288-95)
4/2	Global Governance	ch. 11 (295-319)
4/4	Political Violence and War	ch. 12 (320-54)
4/9	Human Rights	TBA

PART IV: POLITICS AMONG STATES

4/11	The Rich Countries	ch. 13 (355-78)
4/16	The Poor Countries	ch. 14 (379-415)
4/18	Easter Break	
4/23	The Wannabes	ch. 15 (416-46)
4/25	So What?	

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, April 30, 10:30-1:00