



Department of History and Political Science

Political Science 101: Introduction to Political Science

Fall 2016 Syllabus



Meeting Days: Tuesday and Thursday	Instructor: Professor Shawn E. Fields
Meeting Times: 3:30 – 4:45 p.m.	Email: sfields1@pointloma.edu
Meeting Location: Evans 122	Office location: Clara Colt Hall 118
Midterm Exam: October 20 from 3:30-4:45 p.m.	Office Hours: Thursday from 2:00-3:00 p.m.
Final Exam: December 15 from 4:30-7:00 p.m.	Course Website: https://canvas.pointloma.edu

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 modeled 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 DESCRIPTION

As a General Education Course: This course is one of the components of the GE Program at PLNU, under the category of “Exploring an Interdependent World.” By including this course in a common educational experience for undergraduates, the faculty supports an introduction to the natural and social sciences as tools for exploring the world, with emphasis on collecting and interpreting empirical data for both theoretical and practical purposes.

Specifically: Has there ever been a more exciting – or important – time to study politics? Our nation is in the midst of one of the most historically significant and unprecedented presidential elections in nearly a century. The Supreme Court stands locked in a 4-4 ideological tie as a vacancy remains unfilled in this bitterly partisan political environment. And beyond our borders, one nation shatters a seemingly unbreakable European economic community (United Kingdom), while another drifts ever closer to the type of authoritarian antagonism reminiscent of the Cold War (Russia). Entire regions of the world remain beset by economic turmoil (Latin America, particularly Venezuela and Brazil), crippling insecurity (the Middle East), or both (increasingly, the entire Euro Zone). Truly, one must study the science of politics to understand this rapidly changing world and to become responsible and engaged citizens within it.

But what is “political science” exactly? What does it mean to “be political”? And can politics really be regarded as a “science” in the traditional sense of the word? There are no easy answers to these questions, and debates rage on each of these issues in the academic community and beyond. But this course, with your help and involvement, will attempt to get at the heart of these questions.

It is important for all students to understand two basic precepts about this course. First, Political Science is a gigantic field of study, with many different sub-disciplines, including political theory, American government, comparative politics, international relations, and public administration. Second, this is a one-semester survey course, meaning that our time is limited. This course is designed to provide you with an overview introduction to the discipline of Political Science as a whole, meaning we will not have time to delve as deeply into any one area as we might like. However, I hope this course piques your interest in the study of politics, and I encourage you to observe which portions of the course you find most engaging and seek out upper level courses in those fields.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- 1) Possess a factual and theoretical understanding of political knowledge, behavior, theories, systems, processes, structures, and outcomes
- 2) Think critically, analytically, and synthetically
- 3) Sharpen their communication skills
- 4) Exhibit a heightened sense of personal political efficacy and civil responsibility
- 5) Be encouraged to become thoughtful participants of the political world
- 6) Be exposed to some of the most pressing political problems of the day, including poverty, voting rights, gender inequity, lack of freedom, and declining participation rates.

COURSE READINGS

Required Texts: Kevin L. Dooley, Why Politics Matter (2d ed. 2015).

Selected Readings on Canvas (see Syllabus and Canvas for details)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

As budding political scientists and citizens, you should regularly follow current political events at the local, national, and international level. Make it a habit now that continues throughout your lifetime – you wake up, grab a cup of coffee, and read the news (and no, Facebook feeds, other social media outlets, and BuzzFeed quizzes and listicles do not count as “news”). I’d love to see you explore more sophisticated news outlets, such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *International Herald Tribune*, NPR, BBC News, *The Atlantic*, and *The Economist*. I strongly recommend you peruse these media sources on a regular basis and contribute what relevant information you learn with class.

COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

Politics is an inherently interactive endeavor, and it has been shown time and again that the best learning methods involve hands-on, interactive practice of new concepts. Therefore, this class will involve a lot of student-directed learning, group engagement, and critical thinking that goes well beyond the assigned reading. However, for this learning model to succeed, it is critically important that students **COME TO CLASS** and **COME TO CLASS PREPARED**. We cannot build on the readings and engage in higher level critical thinking without students being present and prepared.

For that reason, I expect the following from all my students:

1. **Attend Class:** Attendance is mandatory and will only be excused with both prior notice and a good justification for the absence. I recognize that each of you are extremely busy during the semester and that life happens from time to time, so if you must miss a class for some reason please provide with as much advance notice as possible. Attendance will be taken each class.
2. **Come to Class Prepared:** I have intentionally assigned very short readings for each class, so that each student can have time to read, review and critically think about the course materials **BEFORE** class. For example, many classes have only 10-20 pages of reading, whereas my introductory political science class in college averaged 150 pages of reading per week. It is very important that you complete all the assigned reading and come to class prepared to participate in a discussion about the reading and its main concepts.
3. **Complete all Coursework:** To guide you in your readings and assist you with your class preparation, I will regularly assign “Course Preparation Assignments” (CPAs) for you to complete and turn in 24 hours before class. These CPAs are short worksheets with questions about the reading designed to help you identify the salient points in the materials and to begin critically thinking about the concepts before class so you are ready to dive in and participate. I ask that you complete these CPAs 24 hours before class (due dates and times will be provided with each CPA) so that I can review the class’s work and assess understanding of issues and address any misunderstandings or deficiencies more efficiently in class.
4. **Engage:** Our class will be interactive, meaning that I expect to do less talking than in a typical lecture survey course. I will expect each of you to participate, and I will work hard to facilitate a safe space for discussion and a respectful exchange of ideas.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

The following components of the class count towards your final grade:

1. **CPAs:** At regular intervals throughout the semester I will provide these worksheets to guide you through the reading, and these CPAs must be returned 24 hours before the start of the next class. The CPAs will not be given an individual letter grade, but will be assessed on a +, -, or 0 grade scale. A “+” grade is achieved if the student shows a good faith effort at understanding the material and completing the CPAs thoroughly and timely. A “-” grade is achieved when a student turns in a CPA late or without the requisite good faith effort at critical thinking. A “0” grade is given to any CPA that is not turned in by the time class begins.

2. **Student Response Papers:** Six times throughout the semester I will draft a hypothetical political scenario and ask for high level critical thinking to apply the concepts learned in class to that hypothetical situation. These response papers are not designed to regurgitate vocabulary or definitions, but to apply your knowledge to a new set of facts. **You will be required to complete three of these six assignments, and you may choose which three to complete.**

3. **Midterm:** The midterm exam will test your knowledge and understanding of concepts discussed through the first few weeks of class, and will consist of a mix of short response questions and higher level critical thinking essays. More details about the structure of the exam will be discussed closer to exam time.

4. **Final:** The final exam will test your knowledge and understanding of concepts discussed through the entire semester and will consist of a mix of short response questions and higher level critical thinking essays. More details about the structure of the exam will be discussed closer to exam time.

5. **Optional Assignments:** There are four nationally televised political debates taking place this semester: three Presidential debates and one Vice-Presidential debate (dates listed below). You may choose to watch/listen to any of these debates and submit a short (2-3 page) response paper to the debates answering some questions I provide. These assignments are optional but provide some “buffer” points for you. More detail about these assignments will be discussed in class.

6. **Attendance and Participation:** As discussed above, attendance and participation are both essential and mandatory for the class.

GRADING

The final grade is weighted as follows:

Assignment	Point Value
CPAs	40
Student Response Papers (total of 3)	45 (15 points each)
Midterm	75
Final	100
Attendance and Participation	40
TOTAL	300
Optional “buffer” points (Debate response papers)	5 each (up to 20)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Given the topical nature of this course, the schedule below is flexible and subject to change. Teaching a Political Science course during an election year is always an exciting challenge, and even more so in as dynamic and unpredictable a presidential campaign we have had this year. Over the course of the semester there will be three presidential debates, a vice-presidential debate, and a California senate race, as well as one of the most historically significant federal elections in our nation's history. I want to be sure we have the flexibility and freedom in our schedule to discuss current events as they relate to the overarching themes of this course. Accordingly, the timing and substance of assignments and readings may change, as well as class days and times. Revisions to the syllabus will be provided and distributed as they become necessary.

PART ONE: WHAT IS POLITICAL SCIENCE?

Week 1: Sept. 1 **Introduction and Welcome; What is Political Science?**

NOTE: **There is no class on Tuesday, August 30**

Reading: Dooley pp. 2-21

PART TWO: POLITICAL THEORY

Week 2: Sept. 6 & 8 **The Moral Foundations of Politics: Ancient Greece**
The Birth of Modern Political Theory: Machiavelli and Hobbes

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 23-51

For Thursday: Dooley pp. 53-72

Week 3: Sept. 13 & 15 **The Social Contract: Locke, Rousseau, and Burke**
Rights and Utilitarianism: J.S. Mill and Bentham

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 73-81
Selected primary source readings on Canvas TBD

For Thursday: Selected primary source readings on Canvas TBD

Assignment: Student Response Paper #1 Assigned Sept. 15 (due Sept. 22)

Week 4: Sept. 20 & 22 **Political Economic Theory: Hegel, Marx, and Adam Smith**
Ideology and -Isms

Reading: For Tuesday: Selected primary source readings on Canvas TBD
For Thursday: Review Table 1.4. in Dooley pp. 7-8
Selected primary source readings on Canvas TBD

Assignment: Watch First Presidential Debate on September 26 (optional)

Due: Student Response Paper #1 (due Sept. 22 before class)

PART III: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Week 5: Sept. 27 & 29

The Origins of American Democracy The Constitution: Ratification and Structure

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 84-95
For Thursday: Dooley pp. 105-118
The U.S. Constitution (available on Canvas)

Assignment: Student Response Paper #2 Assigned Sept. 29 (due Oct. 6)

Week 6: Oct. 4 & 6:

Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, and Federalism The American Presidency

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 96-104
For Thursday: Dooley pp. 163-170

Assignment: Student Response Paper #3 Assigned Oct. 4 (due Oct. 11)
Watch second Presidential Debate Oct. 9 (optional)
Watch Vice-Presidential Debate Oct. 4 (optional)

Due: Student Response Paper #2 due Oct. 6 before class

Week 7: Oct. 11 & 13

The American Congress The American Judiciary

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 121-135, 141-144
For Thursday: Dooley pp. 190-205
Listen to More Perfect Podcast “Kittens Kick the Giggly Blue Robot All Summer” (link on Canvas)

Due: Student Response Paper #3 due Oct. 11 before class

Week 8: Oct 18 & 20

**Midterm Review
Midterm Exam**

Assignment: Watch third Presidential Debate on Oct. 19 (optional)

Reading: For Tuesday: Review Midterm Review Handout on Canvas
For Thursday: No Reading – STUDY STUDY!

PART IV: ELECTIONS

Week 9: Oct. 25 & 27

**Political Parties
The Electoral College and Referendums**

Reading: For Tuesday: TBD

For Thursday: TBD

Assignment: Student Response Paper #4 Assigned Oct. 27 (due Nov. 3)

Week 10: Nov. 1 & 3

**Voting Rights: Voter ID, Gerrymandering, Disenfranchisement
Mass Media, Money in Politics, and Campaign Finance Reform**

Note: Students will have a Computer Assisted Legal Research training with LRC librarians this week – time and date TBD

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley, pp. 135-140
Other readings TBD

For Thursday: TBD

Assignment: Student Response Paper #5 Assigned Nov. 3 (due Nov. 10)

Due: Student Response Paper #4 due Nov. 3 before class

PART V: CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Week 11: Nov. 8 & 10

**The Bill of Rights
The Politics of Protest**

Reading: For Tuesday: The Bill of Rights (on Canvas)

Other readings TBD

For Thursday: "Letters from a Birmingham Jail" (on Canvas)
Excerpt from "Civil Disobedience" (on Canvas)

Due: Student Response Paper #5 due Nov. 10 before class

PART VI: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Week 12: Nov. 15 & 17 Comparing Executives: Presidents and Prime Ministers Comparing Legislatures: Congresses and Parliaments

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 170-185

For Thursday: Dooley pp. 145-161

Week 13: Nov. 22 Judicial Review Versus Legislative Supremacy

NOTE: **There is no class on Thursday (Happy Thanksgiving!)**

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 187-190, 206-214

Assignment: Student Response Paper #6 Assigned Nov. 22 (due Dec. 1)

PART VII: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Week 14: Nov. 29 & Dec. 1 The Theory of International Relations Contemporary International Relations

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 250-283

For Thursday: Dooley pp. 285-310 (skim for historical background)
Dooley pp. 312-336

Due: Student Response Paper #6 due Dec. 1 before class

Week 15: Dec. 6 & 8 Monarchies, Theocracies, Dictatorships: Is There a Place for Authoritarian Rule? Final Exam Review

Reading: For Tuesday: Dooley pp. 216-248

For Thursday: Review Final Exam Handout (on Canvas)

FINAL EXAM: **December 15, 2016 from 4:30-7:00 p.m.**