

Political Science 100: Introduction to Politics

Winter 2012, Wednesday's 1000 – 1250

Room: Abbotsford Campus D117

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Office Hours: Wednesday's 1.15pm – 4pm in B164 (*NOTE: this is not my office but the Centre for Social Research*), or by appointment.

Course Description

Political Science 100 will introduce you to the key concepts and ideas of western politics. It offers an introduction to major areas of study in the discipline, including Political Theory, Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics and Gender & Politics. The main theme of the course is **power** – what power is, who should wield it, how it should be shared and exercised, uses of power, and struggles of power. In order to examine how politics involves power, various case studies and examples will be used to make the discussions specific, concrete and relevant.

The course consists of a combination of lectures, readings, and class-based discussions. Each week you will be required to attend the lecture and keep up with the required readings. Students are encouraged to bring in resources that are potential learning tools for the study of politics (examples might include: website information, a relevant newspaper article, a book etc.). This is optional but will enhance learning and help students make connections to the world outside the classroom.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to correct, change or modify the syllabus as the course progresses.

Course Objectives

1. To introduce students to the study of politics in its many dimensions.
2. To provide the basis for subsequent courses in political studies.
3. To stimulate interest in various contemporary political ideas, institutions and processes.
4. To explain and clarify the fundamental concepts, theories, and analytical frameworks used by political scientists.
5. To develop and foster analytical writing and critical thinking skills.

Required Text and Course Package

The course material for each week is ideally read before you attend the class (except week 1 material which should be read after the first class).

1. **Janine Brodie and Sandra Rein eds., *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics, Fourth Edition*** (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2009). This book is abbreviated as CC below with the relevant chapter. It contains a list of further reading, web links for each topic, and a useful glossary in the back.
2. A **required course package (CP)** is also available for purchase in the University bookstore. It provides a collection of articles and chapters put together specifically for this course.

Assessment

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|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Critical Digest (15%) | February 1 |
| 2. Midterm Examination (20%) | February 29 |
| 3. Research Essay (30%) | April 11 |
| 4. Final Examination exam (35%) | TBA |

1.Critical Digest (15%): This assignment requires you to choose ONE of the following academic texts and provide a critical digest by **February 1**:

- Corntassel, Jeff and Chaw-win-is T’lakawadzi. 2009. “Indigenous Storytelling, Truth-Telling, and Community Approaches to Reconciliation”. *English Studies Canada* 35:1, pp137-159.
- LaRocque, Emma. 2007. “Métis and Feminist” in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* edited by Joyce Green. Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood.
- Monture-Angus, Patricia. 1997. “Standing against Canadian Law: Naming Omissions of Race, Culture, and Gender” in *Locating Law: Race, Class and Gender Connections* edited by Elizabeth Cormack. Halifax: Fernwood. Pp 76-97.
- Thobani, Sunera. 2003. “War and the politics of truth-making in Canada”. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 16, No.3, pp399-414.

All the readings are available through the UFV library and are also posted on the POSC 100 course page through myufv.

Note: some of the authors listed above are also scheduled to do public lectures at UFV (see page 4 of syllabus). You are not required to attend these lectures, but it would give you additional insight into their work if you attended.

Your digest should be between 250-350 words (approximately 1-2 pages), typed, double-spaced, with a standard 12 point font and one inch margins. **DO NOT EXCEED THE SPECIFIED LENGTH OF THIS PAPER.** Critical digests have two components: a) short summaries or ‘abstracts’ of the material, which should identify the main arguments and conclusions, b) a brief assessment of the material, such as whether you agree or disagree

with the author(s) and why, and what the article tells us about power, democracy, and Canada. At the end of the digest, you must specify a question that the reading raises for you regarding political life in Canada. The purpose of this assignment is to develop your reading comprehension skills, practice writing short documents, and become familiar with topics relevant to the course.

2. Mid-Term Exam (20%): The mid-term exam will consist of multiple choice questions. The exam will be based on material from the textbook, course package readings, and lectures. It will cover material from week 1 to week 6, and be held on **February 29**. The purpose of this exam is to ensure that you have reasonable familiarity with the material covered thus far.

3. Research Essay (30%): An essay handout listing essay topics, requirements, and guidelines for writing essays will be provided early in the term. Essays will be due at the beginning of class on **April 11**. This assignment is intended to increase your reading, research and argumentative writing skills. An essay writing workshop will also be held during the course. You are expected to attend this workshop. Anyone who does not attend the essay writing workshop will have 5 marks deducted from their mid-term exam.

4. Final Exam (35%): The final exam will be scheduled by the University. It will be 2 hours in length, and will cover material covered in the entire course (i.e. textbook readings, course reading package, and lectures). You are required to take the final exam as scheduled.

Lecture Topics and Readings

1. January 11 What is Politics?

CC, Chapter 1 'Power and Politics'

(CP 1) Plato 'The Allegory of the Cave'

(CP 2) Niccolò Machiavelli 'How far human affairs'

(CP 3) Thomas Hobbes 'Of Power, Worth, Dignity, Honour, and Worthiness'

(CP 4) Michel Foucault 'Truth and Power'

(CP 5) Taiaiake Alfred, 'Indigenous Pathways of Action & Freedom'

Discussion: What approaches enable you to explore the issues that interest you?

2. January 18 Democracy

CC, Chapter 4 'Democracy'

(CP 6) Angela Davis, 'Abolition Democracy'

Discussion question: Democracy is the dominant value of our age. What values are or should be embedded in democracy?

3. January 25 The Modern State: Legislature and Executive

CC, Chapter 6 'The Modern State'

(CP 7) Andrea Smith, 'Native American Feminism, Sovereignty and Social Change'

Discussion Question: How much power does the state need to have over its citizens?
Citizens over states?

JANUARY 25, 4PM-5.30PM, Room F125: Professors Taiaiake Alfred & Jeff Corntassel (University of Victoria) will do a public lecture on colonialism and environmentalism.

JANUARY 30, 4PM – 6PM, Room B121: Professors Sunera Thobani (UBC) and Ron Dart (UFV) will be speaking at UFV on issues related to race, human rights, and the 'war on terror'.

I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO ATTEND THESE LECTURES AS WE WILL BE EXAMINING THESE TOPICS LATER IN THE COURSE, AND THE TOPICS MAY BE RELEVANT TO YOUR POSC 100 ASSIGNMENTS.

4. February 1 CRITICAL DIGEST DUE & Constitutions and Constitutional Politics

CC, Chapter 8 'Constitutions and the Rule of Law'

(CP 8) Jackson & Jackson, 'The Origin and Evolution of the Canadian Constitution'

(CP 9) Native Women's Association of Canada, 'Aboriginal Women and the Constitutional Debates'

Discussion Question: How do institutions affect the distribution of power?

11. March 28

The Politics of Multiculturalism and Race

CC, Chapter 15 'Culture as a (Contentious) Critical Concept'

(CP 15) Minelle Mahtani 'Interrogating the Hyphen-Nation: Canadian Multicultural Policy and "Mixed Race" Identities'

(CP 16) Edward Said 'Orientalism'

Discussion question: Does special recognition of cultural interests lead to national fragmentation, or does the lack of recognition lead to national fragmentation?

12. April 4

Global Politics & International Relations

CC, Chapter 20 'The West and the Rest'

CC, Chapter 22 'International Relations'

CC, Chapter 23 'International Organizations'

Discussion question: What evidence is there that we live in a new world (dis)order?

13. April 11

Preparing for the Exam & ESSAYS DUE

Course Policies (*Please read the following notes very carefully before week 2*)

Expectations

- Your marked assignments will be returned to you in a timely fashion.
- If you are unsure how to document your work or if you have any questions about the lectures, readings, and issues discussed in class or assignment expectations, *please come and see me*. I will do my utmost to respond promptly to your concerns.
- All assignments should be handed to me *at the start of class*.
- I will be using power point during the lectures. These are outlines and not adequate for study or research purposes alone. The lectures and readings are essential aspects of the course. You do not need to copy down every word on these slides.
- Please be advised that I will not discuss the course or your performance in the course with your parents or any other advocates.

Late Policy & Absences

- As you are ultimately responsible for your own learning, if you are absent from class on a given day, you are still responsible for any material covered as well as any handouts, assignments discussed, videos presented, guest lecturers, etc.
- Late essays will be penalized 2.5% per day (including weekends). Essay extensions will be granted only in cases of illness or personal tragedy and not because of academic or employment conflicts or workload. All extensions will require a note from a doctor or another authority that can vouch for your circumstances. Extensions will **NOT** be given in the event of computer problems or software incompatibility.
- Assignments submitted 7 days after the due deadline will not be marked, unless an extension has been granted in writing by the instructor.
- Students will be excused from exams only in the instance of illness or a grave family emergency. In such cases, make up exams will be scheduled, as long as a doctor's note is provided. Absences from exams will not be permitted for any other reason, including work conflicts or travel plans.
- You must be available to write the final exam in the allotted slot at the end of term. Do not make any other commitments until the university has announced the final exam schedule. Conflicts with other exams must be brought to the attention of the instructor by the last class.

Electronic etiquette in the classroom

- All cell phones are to be turned off at the start of class, except with the permission of the instructor in the event of emergency situations. Please do not text messages or check your voice mail during lectures; do not use your laptop in class unless it is directly required for the course; and do not listen to portable music players in class. Students who fail to abide by these rules will be asked to leave the class.

University Support & Policies

- The University of the Fraser Valley is committed to providing an environment that fosters the fair treatment of all members of the university community. The basis for interaction among all members of the university is mutual respect, co-operation and understanding.
- Please be aware that academic and personal support is available from various units at UFV including Aboriginal Access Services, Disability Services, and Student Services. Information can be found on the web.

- UFV is in the process of establishing an Early Alert System to support student success. This system will enable instructors to identify students who may require additional support to enhance their success, and to refer at-risk students to ensure they receive timely and targeted support.
- Plagiarism occurs when paragraphs, phrases, sentences or ideas within the work are taken from another source without referencing or citing the author. Make sure you reference or cite work by someone else! UFV’s policy regarding Student Conduct and Plagiarism can be viewed at www.ufv.ca/studentaffairs.htm.
- Test and assignment grades may be appealed. See the university policy manual for appeal process. The grading process will start anew. It is possible that the revised grade will be lower than the original; the second grade will be final.
- Any changes to your status in the course after final withdraw dates must be made through the Office of Student Services. If you need to withdraw from a course and don’t want a “W” grade on your transcript, you need to do it before the UFV assigned deadline (check the current UFV calendar for the exact date each term). If you withdraw after that date, a “W” will appear on your transcript. If you don’t withdraw formally, you will be assigned an NC (no credit) grade.

Guidelines for Grading

A+ = 90%+ A = 85-89% A- = 80-84%	EXCELLENT	Evidence of original thought, and exceptional writing skills (i.e. superior composition, no grammatical errors/typos)
B+ = 77-79% B = 73-76% B- = 70-72%	GOOD	Mastery of material and solid writing skills (i.e. good syntax and no more than one or two typos)
C+ = 67-69% C = 63-66% C- = 60-62%	SATISFACTORY*	Clear understanding of material and adequate writing skills (less than five typos, grammatical errors and or awkward sentences)
P = 50-59%	UNSATISFACTORY	Limited understanding of material and/or deficient writing skills (i.e. awkward syntax and or frequent errors)
F = below 50%	INADEQUATE	Misunderstanding of material and or unacceptable writing skills (i.e. terrible syntax and copious errors)

***NOTE:** The UFV calendar describes grades in the C range as “average.” **The conversion of numeric grades to letter grades at the end of the course will also be made according to this chart.**