

Political Science 100: Introduction to Politics

Fall 2008, Monday 8.30am-11.20am

Room: (AB) A261

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Office Hours: Tuesday's 2pm-3.30pm, 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 and International 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.

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

1. Janine Brodie, ed., *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics*, Fourth Edition (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2004). This provides you with background information on the political concepts and institutions which underpin modern western politics. It also 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 in the University bookstore. It provides a collection of articles and chapters put together specifically for this course.

Assessment

Students will be assessed in the following ways:

1. News story review (10%) due 22 September
2. Midterm Examination (20%) 20 October
3. Essay (35%) due 1 December
4. Final Examination exam (35%) TBA

News Story Review (10%): This assignment requires you to find an English language news article from the month of September 2008 and write a short paragraph no more than 200 words outlining what makes the news story relevant to the study of politics. You do not need to do a summary of the article. The paragraph should be in complete sentences and not in note form. You must attach the news article. This is due week 3, **22nd September**, at the beginning of class. The purpose of this assignment is to make concrete the relevance of politics, and assess how you link the theory to a current political topic.

Mid-Term Exam (20%): The mid-term exam will consist of multiple choice questions and short-answer 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 5, and be held on **20 October** at the start of class. The purpose of this exam is to ensure that you have reasonable familiarity with the material covered thus far.

Essay (35%): An essay handout listing essay topics, requirements, and guidelines for writing essays will be provided in the third week of term. Essays will be due at the beginning of class on **December 1**. 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.

Final Exam (35%): The final exam will be **scheduled by the University**. It will cover material covered in the entire course (i.e. textbook readings, course reading package and lectures). It will be divided into 2 parts: 1) identify and explain the significance of certain key concepts and ideas; 2) choice of one essay-style question. You are required to take the final exam as scheduled.

Lecture Topics and Readings

1. 8 September What is Politics?

Brodie Chapter 1 'Power and Politics'

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

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

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

(CP 4) Foucault 'Truth and Power'

Discussion Question: What issues interest you in politics? What approaches enable you to explore these issues?

2. 15 September Democracy

Brodie Chapter 4 'Democracy'

(CP) Angela Davis, 'Abolition Democracy'

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

3. 22 September NEWS STORY REVIEW DUE & The Modern State

Brodie Chapter 6 'The Modern State'

(CP) Michael Omi and Howard Winant 'The Racial State'

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

4. 29 September Institutional Powers of the Executive, Legislature & Judiciary

Brodie Chapter 8 'Constitutions and the Rule of Law'

Brodie Chapter 10 'Representation'

(CP) Dickerson & Flanagan Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms

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

5. 6 October The Power of Ideas: Political Ideologies & Political Parties

Brodie Chapter 3 'Liberalism'

Brodie Chapter 5 'Radical Politics'

Brodie pp. 144-148 'Political Parties'

Discussion Question: Which political ideologies most strongly shape Canadian life? In what ways do these shape differences in power? Why?

6. 13 October Thanksgiving – university closed.

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

- 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, 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.
- 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.
- 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, 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.
- 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.
- 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. Please note that final exams may be scheduled on Saturdays.
- Please be aware that academic and personal support is available from Disability Services and Student Services on campus. Information can be found on the web.
- All cases of cheating will be reported to the Director of Student Services and a grade of zero will be awarded for the assignment. Please consult the University policy.
- 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.ucfv.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. Please be aware of official course withdrawal dates.
- Please be advised that I will not discuss the course or your performance in the course with your parents or any other advocates.

Guidelines for Grading

A+ = 90%+ A = 85-89% A- = 80-84%	EXCELLENT	Evidence of original thought, and exceptional writing skills (i.e. superior composition and no grammatical errors or 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 UCFV 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.