



POLITICAL SCIENCE 1010: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

Department of History and Political Science,
Utah Valley University
Spring 2009

Jeffrey Alan Johnson, Ph.D.

email: jajohnson@johnsonanalytical.com

web: <http://johnsonanalytical.com>

phone: (801) 998-3818

Class Meetings: TTh 11:30 – 12:45, LA 123

Office Hours: immediately before class or by appointment.

In a world where the height of political debate is found in books with titles like *The Good, the Bad, and the Completely Ridiculous in American Life* and *Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot*, can we say anything more profound, or even anything reasonably sensible, about how politics works? Is it possible to study politics without partisan saber-rattling? Political science is the attempt to do this: we want to explain political things in ways that are reasonably objective. In this course we will study the major questions that political scientists ask and the main ways that they go about finding out the answers, revolving around the problem of how to improve the character of democracy in contemporary industrialized countries.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

Students will demonstrate competency in relation to the following core concepts in political science:

1. the nature of politics, government, and the state including the scientific study thereof.
2. the theory and major practices of democratic government.
3. the types and causes of the behavior of political actors.
4. the operation of political institutions and their influence on the behavior of political actors.
5. the operation and management of public policies.
6. the principles of international relations.

Students will demonstrate the following general intellectual skills:

1. professionalism in the performance of their duties.
2. sound written and oral communication skills.
3. sound critical reasoning skills.

Students will demonstrate the following skills with regard to the subject matter of the course:

4. comprehension of the core concepts of the course.
5. the ability to apply, using analytical and synthetic reasoning, those core concepts such that they can understand, give explanations for, and develop responses to political practices, situations, and outcomes.
6. the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate those core concepts, both in themselves and in practice, such that they add new material to those concepts.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for this course are designed to demonstrate the competencies described above. All assignments are to be completed online.

Multiple-choice quizzes: Quizzes consist of 20 questions and are open book. There is one for each core competency. quizzes are graded pass/fail, with a passing grade of 16. Students may take the quizzes as often as they choose.

Essay exams: Essay exams consist of 300 word responses to case studies requiring that the student explains a concept and uses it in practice. Essay exams will be assigned grades of satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or failing. Satisfactory essays demonstrate (1) comprehension of the concept at issue, (2) an application of that concept to the case that is logically sound and accounts for all available evidence, and (3) satisfactory grammar, style, and organization.

Research paper: Students will complete a 2,000 word paper analyzing a political situation and developing a response as appropriate using at least two of the core concepts of this course, which will be presented to the class. Papers will be assigned grades of outstanding, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or failing. Satisfactory papers demonstrate (1) sound analysis, synthesis, and empirical evaluation of the concepts at issue that, in outstanding papers, develops the concepts beyond the material provided in course, (2) a sound response to political situation that accounts for the major aspects of the situation and the concept as developed and either makes a prediction of the likely outcome or proposes a policy solution, and (3) satisfactory grammar, style, and organization.

Students may resubmit each written assignment once after initial grading. Assignments that are satisfactory on resubmission will be given a final grade of satisfactory if the initial submission was unsatisfactory or a grade of unsatisfactory if the initial grade was failing. Failing assignments will remain failing if the resubmission is unsatisfactory.

Students must complete all assignments in good faith and in compliance with the ethical standards of scholarship in order to demonstrate mastery of competency 1. Failure to submit an assignment, submission of work that does not demonstrate a good-faith effort to complete the assignment as required, or the inclusion of undocumented outside sources (whether or not in violation of academic conduct policies) in an assignment will constitute failure to demonstrate mastery of this competency and result in a course grade no higher than D.

GRADING

This course is based on a system of competency-based grading. Grades will be assigned based on demonstrated mastery of competencies as follows:

- A. Student has demonstrated mastery of all competencies by submitting an outstanding paper, six satisfactory essays, and passing all quizzes.
- B. Student has demonstrated mastery of competencies 1-5 by submitting a satisfactory paper, six satisfactory essays, and passing all quizzes.
- C. Student has demonstrated mastery of competencies 1 and 4 by submitting all work on time and passing six quizzes.
- D. Student has demonstrated mastery of competency 4 with regard to four of the core concepts of the course.

Students who fail to demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of at least four of the core competencies of the course will receive a failing grade.

Plus grades will be assigned on the basis of outstanding class participation. Minus grades will not be assigned.

READINGS

All students must purchase Andrew Haywood, *Politics*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, ISBN 0-333-97131-0) and Gerry Stoker, *Why Politics Matters: Making Democracy Work* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, ISBN 1-4039-9740-3). Both are available from the bookstore and the usual online sources. Other readings are available online through Blackboard and are required reading.

Students whose background in international news is weak are strongly encouraged to purchase M. L. Rossi, *What Every American Should Know About the Rest of the World* (New York: Plume, 2003), ISBN 0-452-28405-8.

WORKLOAD

According to the accreditation standards that validate your degree as a legitimate one, to receive three semester credit hours requires 135 hours of study, including not more than 45 hours in class. In this course, study hours are budgeted as follows: Classes (45 hours), Readings (45 hours), Paper (24 hours), Essays (14 hours), Quizzes (7 hours).

ACADEMIC CONDUCT

All students are subject to the university's policies regarding academic integrity. The University policy on academic dishonesty can be found at the UVU "Student Rights and Responsibilities" Code Section IV, Part D "Academic Responsibilities." Violation of these policies demonstrates a failure to master competency 1, which is a requirement for a grade higher than a D in this course.

If you have questions about whether something would violate these policies, feel free to talk to me about how to avoid that. In general, the assignments permit you to discuss work done outside of class among yourselves, but each student must make one's own argument and write one's own paper. Plagiarism (the use of the ideas of others without attribution, whether quoted directly or indirectly) will especially not be tolerated; while additional research is commended, each student must properly cite ideas from other sources.

EMAIL

All correspondence between students and the instructor is to be treated in a professional manner. I will not respond to any messages from inappropriate email addresses, or to messages with sensitive contents where the address is held by anyone other than the student. All communication should use correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. For useful information on email etiquette, google "What is Netiquette?" and "The Core Rules of Netiquette."

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The institution is committed to the goals and ideals of the ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990). Accommodations are available upon request for persons with disabilities. Please contact the Office of Accessibility Services to make arrangements. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Accessibility Services Department (WB-145) at (801) 863-8747 (TTY users may call (801) 863-0908). Academic accommodations are granted for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the Accessibility Services Department.

STUDENT PRIVACY

Under the United States Family and Educational Rights to Privacy Act, all student records are considered private. Information regarding student performance or behavior will not be communicated except in person directly to the student or in writing to the student's mailing address of record without expressed written consent from the student. Grades will not be communicated by phone or email, nor can they be communicated to anyone other than the student, including parents, without such consent except as required by law.

REVISION OF POLICIES AND SYLLABI

All policies are provisional, and are subject to addition, deletion, change, or waiver with or without notice when, in the sole judgment of the instructor, doing so would further the educational goals of the course. Revision of the documents on the instructor's web site shall constitute notice of changes in policies for which students are held responsible. While the instructor will endeavor to notify students of such changes through announcements in class, students are encouraged to review these policies and

the course syllabus periodically for changes. Changes after the beginning of the term will be identified with a revision date.

Where these policies conflict with university regulations, university regulations shall prevail.

COPYRIGHT

All lectures and other course materials © 2004-2008 Jeffrey Alan Johnson except as noted. The course is not a public event. Neither materials nor accounts or other descriptions of the lectures may be disseminated without the expressed written consent of the instructor. Students enrolled in this class during this term may disseminate course materials, notes, or other accounts to other enrolled members of the class this term for non-commercial purposes only. Any commercial distribution of course materials will be pursued as civil copyright violation.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Jan. 8: Course Introduction

Modern Politics

Jan. 13-18: Politics and Government. Heywood, ch. 1; Stoker, Introduction and ch. 3.

Jan. 20-22: Political Science.

Jan. 27-29: States and Nations. Heywood, chs. 5, 6; Hall, "Nation-States in History."

Feb. 3-10: Democracy. Heywood, ch. 4; Stoker, chs. 1, 4.

Political Institutions

Feb. 12: Studying Institutions: Heywood, pp. 313-316, 337-348.

Feb. 17-24: Governing Institutions. Heywood, chs. 15-17.

Feb. 26-Mar. 3: Linkage Institutions. Heywood, chs. 11, 12.

Mar. 5: Evaluating Institutions. Stoker, chs. 10, 11; Heywood, pp. 291-300.

Political Behavior

Mar. 10-24: Mass Political Behavior. Heywood, ch. 10; Stoker, chs. 7.

Mar. 21-31: Group Political Behavior. Heywood, ch. 13; Stoker, chs. 6, 9.

Public Policy

Apr. 2: Policy Processes. Heywood, ch. 13

Apr. 7-14: Policy Areas. Heywood, ch. 9

International Relations

Apr. 16-28: International Relations. Heywood, ch. 7

Apr. 30: Conclusion