Political Science 101: Introduction to Political Science

Queens College, City University of New York

Fall 2023 Syllabus

Instructor: Tyler Crown
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Office hours: Thursdays 12:05 - 1:05 PM (Powdermaker 200J)

T/Th 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM
Mode of instruction: In-person
Room: Powdermaker 211

Course Description

This course is an introduction to politics and the discipline of political science. The course begins by defining the discipline, its object (politics), its basic concepts, recent history, and the meaning of the *science* in political science. Students will examine topics such as methods, power, the modern state, nationalism, political parties, social movements, democracy, authoritarianism and more. The course takes advantage of its status as an introduction and challenges students to grapple with the arguments of a broad range of major works and statements on the discipline's agenda. The course will equip students with the tools to enhance their writing, social science literacy, and, finally, knowledge and understanding of political life.

Course Objectives

- Critically evaluate arguments and evidence.
- Produce well-reasoned written and oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
- Define and apply fundamental concepts and methods from political science to social and political phenomena.
- Examine how individuals' social and political relations relate to experiences, values, and choices.
- Engage with local, national, and global events and ideas, and analyze their impact on individual and collective decision-making.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Course requirements include completing assignments and attending class. Every member of the class is expected to be respectful to one another.

Assessment will be based on the following:

1. Introductory Survey (5%)
2. Participation (10%)
3. Weekly reflections (20%)
4. Reading quizzes (15%)
5. Midterm paper (25%)
6. Final paper (25%)

1. Introductory Survey (5%)
Simply complete the introductory survey under the Assignments tab. There are no wrong answers. The survey is due at the beginning of the second week of class.

2. Participation (10%)
Since attendance is required for meaningful participation in class, you need to attend each class session prepared to discuss the assigned materials. If you are having issues attending, accessing the materials, or if you have an emergency, please notify me and I will attempt to reasonably accommodate you.

3. Weekly reflections (25%)

This class requires that you write reflections on 8 weeks of content and post them to the class discussion board on Blackboard. This means that you do not need to write reflections *every* week, but if you choose to write reflections for more than the required 8 weeks of material they count for extra credit. You may earn up to 3 points of extra credit this way, but no more. Reflections should (1) *identify the thesis or main idea of the reading*, (2) *give your thoughts on the thesis or main idea*, and (3) *pose a question inspired by the reading*. **The reflections are due *before class on Thursdays***. You may only respond to readings the week they are assigned. In each reflection, you may respond to one, some, or all of the readings for the corresponding week.

4. Multiple-choice Reading Quizzes (5 total) (15%)
You must complete a few quizzes throughout the semester. They will be short and simple. They will appear on Blackboard and their due dates are on the schedule below. The content of the quizzes corresponds to the material assigned for the week they are due.

5. Midterm paper (25%)
Prompts TBA. Due 10/27 by 11:59 PM

6. Final paper (25%)
Prompts TBA. Due 12/15 by 11:59 PM

If you have any questions about writing papers, formatting, etc., please feel free to ask me. Also see this department resource on writing political science papers by Prof. Liberman. You have another valuable resource in the Writing Center.

Pathways Information:
This course satisfies the Individual and Society requirement for Pathways' Flexible Core.

Emails:
Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns. I am usually able to promptly respond to student emails. Make sure to indicate in the subject line that you are a student in this course. (For example, you may simply write "PSCI101" before the actual subject of the email.)

Late Assignments:
Late assignments will receive reduced credit. If you are having issues submitting an assignment to Blackboard, email me a copy of the assignment at the given email address before the deadline so that your grade will not be affected.

Accessibility:
I am committed to making this course as accessible as possible. This commitment extends to the safety and learning experience of students. Regarding course materials, I guarantee that all readings for which you are responsible will be accessible on Blackboard or otherwise free online. I have also attempted to use free resources to provide as many of the other materials as possible (videos, films, etc.).

If you require disability accommodations, please contact the Office of Special Services for Students with Disabilities, Frese Hall 111, (718) 997-5870. If you have a letter from OSS indicating that you require accommodations, please present the letter to me as soon as possible so that we can discuss how to best accommodate you..

Political Science Department Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:
Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism and other forms of cheating, is unacceptable. You never present someone else's work as your own and you must always credit others for their work. "The Political Science Department policy is that incidents of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will be penalized. Penalties will vary from an F in the assignment to a grade of F in the course and will be reported to the Dean of Students. Students should be aware that the College may impose additional penalties, including requiring special coursework on intellectual honesty, temporary suspension, or dismissal from the college. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own." You may use this link to view a full statement of CUNY's policy on academic integrity. You may also visit the department's page here for a list of examples of academic dishonesty.

Extra Credit:
As I have indicated above, reflections completed after you have met the minimum requirement will net you extra credit. Plus, I am always on the lookout for opportunities for engagement and learning outside of class. In the past, I have offered attendance at talks or events relevant to the course or hosted by the department as extra credit opportunities.

Other Resources:
I expect that class members will regularly read reputable news sources and be aware of current events. At Queens College, you have access to *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. See here for details on how to access your subscriptions.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic/Readings	Assignments Due
Week 1 **8/29, 8/31**	**Introduction** Tues: - Syllabus Thurs: - Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk 1. Ch. 1-2 (p. 1-5) - C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, Ch. 1 (5 p.)	
Week 2 **9/5, 9/7**	**Politics and Political Science** Tues: - Immanuel Wallerstein, "Open the Social Sciences" *SSRC* (p. 1-7) Thus: - David Easton, "Political Science in the United States: Past and Present" in *The Development of Political Science: A Comparative Survey* (1991) p. 275-290.	**Introductory assignment due Thurs 9/7**
Week 3 **9/12, 9/14**	**Social Science Explanations** Tues: - Jon Elster (1989) *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, Chs. 1, 13, 16. Thurs: - Elster cont.	**Quiz 1 due Thurs 9/14**
Week 4 **9/19, 9/21**	**Power** Tues: - Hobbes, *Leviathan*, excerpt (p. 150-151) - Weber, *Economy and Society*, (p. 53-54) Thurs: - Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, Introduction (p. 1-13)	

Week 5 **9/26, 9/28**	**The State** Tues: - Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chs. 13 and 17 (p. 183-188, 223-228) - Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Introduction (p. 1-19) Thurs: - Weber, *Economy and Society*, (p. 54-56) - Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime" (18 p.)	**Quiz 2 due Thurs 9/28**
Week 6 **10/3, 10/5**	**Nations and Nationalism** Tues: - Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chs. 1 and 3 (p. 1-7, 37-46) Thurs: - Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Ch. 7	
Week 7 **10/10, 10/12** **10/10 Classes follow Monday schedule.**	**International Relations** Tues: - Snyder (2004) "One World, Rival Theories" (12 p.) Thurs: - Robbie Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics*, Ch. 5 "International Relations" (30 p.)	**Quiz 3 due Thurs 10/12**
Week 8 **10/17, 10/19**	**Political Ideologies** **Part I: Liberalism and Conservatism** Thurs: - John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Introductory (p. 5-17) - Bobbio, *Liberalism and Democracy*, Ch. 4 (p. 15-19). - Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Introduction (p. xi-xvi, 39-45, 49-53)	
Week 9 **10/24, 10/26**	**Political Ideologies** **Part II: Socialism/Communism and Fascism** Tues: - Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Preface to the 1883 German Edition and Chs. 1-2. Thurs: - Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Introduction (p. 3-24)	**Midterm due Friday 10/27 by 11:59 PM**
Week 10 **10/31, 11/2**	**Regimes** **Part I: Democracy** Tues: - Bobbio, *Liberalism and Democracy*,	

	Chs. 6-7 (p. 25-35) - Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy is… and is Not" (14 p.) Thurs: - Grumbach, "Laboratories of Democratic Backsliding," *APSR* (August 2023) (18 p.)	
Week 11 **11/7, 11/9**	**Regimes** **Part II: Authoritarianism** Tues: - Svolik (2012) *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, Ch. 1 "The Anatomy of Dictatorship" (18 p.) Thurs: - Mittiga (2021) "Political Legitimacy, Authoritarianism, and Climate Change." (14 p.) - Wedeen, Interview: "How does authoritarianism survive in Syria?"	**Quiz 4 due Thurs 11/9**
Week 12 **11/14, 11/16**	**Parties** Tues: - Duverger, *Political Parties*, Introduction: The Origin of Parties (p. xxiii-xxxvii) Thurs: - Piketty at al. (2022) "Brahmin Left Versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies 1948-2020" (just read sections I, III, V, and VI—about 30 p.)	
Week 13 **11/21, 11/23** **Thanksgiving Break 11/22 - 11/26**	**Politics and Language** Tues: - George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (1946) - Nick Turse, "When is a Coup Not a Coup? When the U.S. Says So," *The Intercept* (August 19, 2023) **Thanksgiving Break 11/22 - 11/26**	
Week 14 **11/28, 11/30**	**Social Movements** Tues: - Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Introduction (p. 1-15) Thurs: - Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Ch. 1 (p. 16-34)	**Quiz 5 due Thurs 11/30**

<u>Week 15</u> **12/5, 12/7**	**Class, Race, and Gender** Tues: - Barbara and Karen Fields, *Racecraft*, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the USA" (p. 111-148) Thurs: - The Combahee River Collective Statement (11 p.)	
<u>Week 16</u> **12/12, 12/14** **No class.** **12/12 Reading Day** **12/14 Final Exams Begin**	**Reading Days 12/12 - 12/13** **Final Exams 12/14 - 12/20**	**Final due Friday 12/15 by 11:59 PM**
<u>Week 17</u>	**12/20 End of Fall Term** **12/26 Final Grade Submission Deadline**	