

## **POLS 102: Introduction to Political Science**

Instructor: Aaron Gold

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Location: Alumni Memorial Building (AMB), Room 33

Date and Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:40 to 10:55 am

Office Hours and Location: Tuesday from 2:15 to 3:45 pm, McClung Tower, Room 1017

### **Course Description and Purpose**

Welcome to POLS 102: Introduction to Political Science. This course is an introductory overview of the field of political science with a focus on its three subfields, American Government, Comparative Politics, and International Relations. By the end of this course, you should have an introductory understanding of political science as a discipline as well as the American political system and how it differs from the systems of other countries, particularly Russia, China, and Mexico.

### **University/College/Departmental Curricular Objectives Met**

POLS 102 fills a general education requirement and is a prerequisite for 200-level and above political science courses.

### **Program-Level Learning Objectives that the Course Supports**

Students who complete POLS 102 should gain a solid understanding of the various approaches to studying political science as well as knowledge about the discipline's three main subfields. For American government, students will gain an understanding of the American political system, including how elections function, the various actors that participate, and public policy issues that are prevalent. For Comparative Politics, students will gain an understanding of different political ideologies and how the branches of government operate in other countries. For International Relations, students will gain an introductory understanding to theories about why countries choose to go to war or cooperate, and an overview of international political economy and international law and organizations.

### **Expectations**

Students are expected to attend every class period and be on time. **Missing six or more class periods without an excused absence will result in a zero for your participation and attendance grade, which is fifteen percent of your final grade.** Students are also expected to participate in class discussions. This class is mainly lecture-based; however, I will periodically call on students during class discussions, but it is your responsibility to participate.

### **Required Textbook**

Marcus E. Ethridge and Howard Handelman (2013) *Politics in a Changing World: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Boston, Massachusetts: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning

## Graded Assignments

- **Exam #1 (Midterm):** 25%
- **Exam #2:** 25%
- **Exam #3 (Final):** 35%
- **Participation/  
Attendance:** 15%

### **Exam #1 (Midterm) and Exam #2 (25% + 25% = 50% of your final grade)**

Exam #1 (Midterm) will be on **September 22, 2015** and Exam #2 will be on **October 22, 2015**. Exams #1 and #2 will count twenty-five percent each for a total of fifty percent of your final grade. The exams will include a combination of multiple-choice questions and an essay question. For the essay question, you will be given a list of two choices and you will pick one to answer.

### **Exam #3 (Final; 35% of your final grade)**

Exam #3 will be on **Tuesday, December 8, 2015 in AMB, Room 33 from 8 to 10 am.** It will count for thirty-five percent of your final grade. It will be the same format as the previous two exams, except it will include a long and a short essay. It will not be cumulative.

### **Participation and Attendance (15% of your final grade)**

This is mainly a lecture-based class; however, we will have class discussions regarding current events. Student will be required to bring in current events and participate in class discussions. If you miss six or more classes with an excused absence you will be given a zero for your participation and attendance grade.

### **Extra Credit (+3 points maximum on your final grade)**

**Extra credit can be turned in anytime, but is due on December 1, the last day of class.** Extra credit opportunities include going to school-sponsored programs, lectures, and watching videos of important American and international leaders regarding current issues. Afterwards, you will write **two pages, double-spaced** (not including the title page) on your critical reaction. Your extra credit assignments will not be graded for grammar and spelling, but as having been done. If you write two pages double-spaced you will receive full credit. If you turn in one and a half pages I will not count it as extra credit and I will ask you to re-do it. This is to ensure every student is writing the same amount. Throughout the semester, I will post the extra credit opportunities on Blackboard and I will announce them at the beginning of class. Please ask me before going to an event that is not posted.

### **Format for Extra Credit**

I am very particular about paper formatting. This is to ensure every student is writing the same amount and no one is being cheated. I am very good at detecting papers that do not have this format so please follow the directions. Every paper should have the following:

- Title page
- Times New Roman or Garamond font
- Size 12-point font
- Double-spaced
- One-inch margins

- Page number

### **Grading Scale**

93.00-99.99	A
90.00-92.99	A-
87.00-89.99	B+
83.00-86.99	B
80.00-82.99	B-
77.00-79.99	C+
73.00-76.99	C
70.00-72.99	C-
67.00-69.99	D+
63.00-66.99	D
60.00-62.99	D-

### **Blackboard and Communication of Announcements**

I will post your grades on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check your grades periodically in order to keep up with your progress in this class. I will also communicate announcements through Blackboard.

### **Notice on School-Sponsored, Medical, Weather-Related, Family Emergency, or Other Excused Absences**

My personal philosophy, one that I believe very strongly in, is that you should be treated like adults. If something happens and you are not able to make it to class I will be more than happy to work with you; however, you need to communicate with me and keep me informed of your situation. Things happen: you get sick, someone you love passes away, a family member is in need; I consider myself to be very understanding so if you are not able to bring me a note right away, it is okay; just please keep me informed the best you can through email and then later when you are able to, please bring or send me an excused note. If it is a medical note, **please cross out your personal information**. If you bring me an excused note you will be allowed to make up the work that you missed. For long-term situations, I am more than happy to work with you.

### **Policy on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty**

Defined in *Hilltopics*, “plagiarism is using the intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit.” I expect every student to live up to the UT Honor Code (as amended in 1995). I have caught instances of plagiarism and cheating before, and I am good at detecting it. Please do not make the mistake of cheating.

The use of studyblue.com (or similar websites) for anything other than sharing notes or blank study guides will be treated as plagiarism. If a completed study guide or an email chain with answers is put online, the class will not have a study guide for the subsequent exam and the poster(s) will be referred to the Dean of Students for suspension or expulsion.

### **Disability Assistance**

Any student who feels that they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Requests for the use of

the Testing Center must be made at least one week prior to the exam. Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 865-974-6087 in 2227 Dunford Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### **Writing and Class Assistance**

While this is not a writing-intensive class, the writing center is an excellent resource for students on campus. I suggest you make an appointment although they do accept walk-ins.

### **The Student's Role in Improving Teaching and Learning through Course Assessment**

At UT, it is our collective responsibility to improve the state of teaching and learning. During the semester, you may be requested to assess aspects of this course either during class or at the completion of the class. You are encouraged to respond to these various forms of assessment as a means of continuing to improve the quality of the UT learning experience.

### **University Civility Statement**

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

### **Alteration of this Syllabus**

The instructor reserves the right to revise, alter and/or amend this syllabus, as necessary. Students will be notified by email and/or Blackboard of any such revisions, alterations, and/or amendments.

### **Key Resources for Students**

- Political Science Department Website: <http://web.utk.edu/~polisci/>
- Academic Planning: <http://www.utk.edu/advising>
- Arts and Sciences Advising Services: <http://artsci.utk.edu/advising/>
- Student Success Center: <http://studentsuccess.utk.edu>
- Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs: <http://catalog.utk.edu>
- Hilltopics: <http://dos.utk.edu>
- Course Timetable: [https://bannersb.utk.edu/kbanpr/bwckschd.p\\_disp\\_dyn\\_sched](https://bannersb.utk.edu/kbanpr/bwckschd.p_disp_dyn_sched)
- Library: <http://www.lib.utk.edu>
- Career Services: <http://career.utk.edu>

## Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

### **Week 1**

August 20 – Introduction and review of the syllabus

### **Week 2**

August 25 – Defining Government and the Political World: PCW 1-27

August 27 – Conservatism and Liberalism: PCW 28-38

### **Week 3**

September 1 – Ideologies: Marxism, Socialism, Capitalism, Libertarianism, Etc.: PCW 39-52

September 3 – Political Culture and Socialization: PCW 53-78

### **Week 4**

September 8 – Public Opinion: PCW 79-95

September 10 – Elections: PCW 95-112

### **Week 5**

September 15 – Political Parties: PCW 113-141

September 17 – Interest Groups: PCW 142-166

### **Week 6**

#### **September 22 – Exam #1**

September 24 – Legislative Institutions: PCW 167-188

### **Week 7**

September 29 – Executive Institutions: PCW 189-205

October 1 – The Bureaucracy: PCW 205-220

### **Week 8**

October 6 – Judicial Institutions: PCW 221-241

October 8 – U.S. Government: The Dilemmas of Democracy: PCW 243-265

### **Week 9**

October 13 – U.S. Government, Part II: PCW 265-285

**October 15 – No class because of fall break!**

### **Week 10**

October 20 – The Politics of Great Britain: PCW 286-313

#### **October 22 – Exam #2**

### **Week 11**

October 27 – The Politics of Russia: PCW 314-354

October 29 – The Politics of China: PCW 355-393

**Week 12**

November 3 – The Politics of the Developing World, Part I: PCW 394-410  
November 5 – The Politics of the Developing World, Part II: PCW 411-431

**Week 13**

November 10 – The Politics of Mexico: PCW 432-469  
November 12 – Approaches to International Relations: PCW 471-488

**Week 14**

November 17 – International Political Economy: PCW: 488-491  
November 19 – International Law and International Organizations: PCW 492-500

**Week 15**

November 24 – Balance of Power, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: PCW: 501-522

**November 26 – No class because of Thanksgiving!**

**Week 16**

December 1 – Global Terrorism, Globalization, and the Way Forward: PCW 522-534  
**Last day to turn in extra credit!**

**FINAL EXAM on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 in AMB, Room 33 from 8 to 10 am**