

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS

POLS 100

POLITICS DEPARTMENT
Fall Semester 2015
SUNY Potsdam

T, R in Stowell Hall 211
W, F in Timerman Hall 131
at 10:00 – 10:50am

Instructor: Michael Popovic
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Office Hours: Tu 8:30-9:30am, Th 1-2pm, and by appointment
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"A spectre is haunting the world - the spectre of communism."

- Karl Marx (1818 – 1883; German philosopher and revolutionary)

"Whoever desires to found a state and give it laws, must start with assuming that all men are bad and ever ready to display their vicious nature, whenever they may find occasion for it."

- Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527; Italian philosopher and writer)

"Government has no other end but the preservation of property."

- John Lock (1632 – 1704; English philosopher and physician)

"Liberty not only means that the individual has both the opportunity and the burden of choice; it also means that he must bear the consequences of his actions...Liberty and responsibility are inseparable."

- Friedrich Hayek (1899 – 1992; Austrian economist and philosopher)

"The good of the people is the highest law."

- Marcus Tullius Cicero (106BC – 43BC, Greek philosopher and political theorist)

"Politics is supposed to be the second-oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first."

- Ronald Reagan (1911 – 2004, 40th President of the United States)

"Patriotism is when love of your own people comes first; nationalism, when hate for people other than your own comes first."

- Charles de Gaulle (1890 – 1970, French Prime Minister and President)

Course Description: This course introduces the study of politics and the analysis of governments as a political scientist. First, we will reach a basic understanding of the study of social phenomena and different methodologies used by scholars. Then, with a primary focus on the United States, we will investigate different political systems as well as political ideas, ideologies, and theories. A variety of historic and current approaches to understanding politics

will be introduced with an emphasis on their critical evaluation. We will analyze the apparatus of governance in detail and concentrate on the institutional construction and the decision-making processes of the state. This will include a closer look at parties, interest groups, and social movements. In addition, we evaluate a few areas of public policy and the rights and responsibilities of individuals when interacting with the state. A significant amount of this class will be devoted to the study of theories regarding the balance between markets and states. Students will be exposed to these different theories in the historical, contemporary, and international context. Through class discussions, as well as written and oral assignments, students will contemplate the moral premises of these theories as well as evaluate their outcomes in today's world. To complete an introduction to politics and governments, we will briefly study fundamentals of international relations regarding state and non-state actors interactions. After this course, students should have a good understanding of basic and some complex mechanisms and developments in politics and understand the subdivisions in the academic discipline of political science. In addition, students will have engaged in critical and systematic reflection of the root nature of moral and ethical values of high contemporary significance.

Course Requirements: This course is organized as a lecture-based class. You are required to read the assigned material, attend class, complete the library quizzes, participate, take all exams and quizzes, and complete the argument assignment. I expect you to come prepared for class, have thought about the readings, and be ready to answer questions. This class is not concerned with regurgitation of information but should train you in understanding fundamental concepts, critical thinking, and intellectual discourse. When you are presented with materials, you should have a critical "conversation" with them. Deadlines are firm. I expect you to invest at least 8-10 hours per week in addition to class time for this class. You cannot pass this class if any part of the assignment which culminates in the final argument outline and discussion panel, any exam, or more than 3 quizzes are missing. The final grade is determined based on the following key:

Quizzes	10%	ongoing
Topic Proposal	3%	09/22
Model and Causalities	5%	10/23
Theory and Structure	6%	11/06
Final Argument	8%	12/03
Argument Discussion Panel	6%	last week of classes
Exam I	10%	09/17
Exam II	12%	10/09
Exam III	14%	11/12
Final	16%	12/15 from 2:45 to 4:45pm
Participation	10%	ongoing

All assignments are graded on a 100-point scale, which translates into the SUNY Potsdam grading point scale as follows:

100 – 94 = 4.0	81 – 78 = 2.7	69 – 67 = 1.7
93 – 90 = 3.7	77 – 74 = 2.3	66 – 64 = 1.3
89 – 86 = 3.3	73 – 70 = 2.0	63 – 61 = 1.0
85 – 82 = 3.0		60 and below = 0.0

Attendance: Attendance in class is required. I will take attendance every class. Your attendance will influence your participation grade. You will do well in this class if you attend class and participate, do all your assignments, and think critically about the presented material. If you are unable to attend a class for a legitimate reason, you need to email me before the class starts and inform me of your absence. To excuse an absence after class is over, you will need to provide me with written proof, i.e. doctors note, job interview invitation, etc. Any more than 2 unexcused absences will lead to a significant reduction of your participation grade. While attending class no cell phone usage is permitted – this includes texting. If I catch you texting or your phone rings in class, you will have to leave the classroom. Laptops can be used for note taking; however they must not be used for anything else (no online activity). This means all chat programs (e.g. Yahoo, Windows Messenger, Skype, etc.) and all browsers (e.g. Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer, Safari, etc.) have to remain closed for the entire duration of class. If I find any of these programs open, I am going to assume you have used them to chat or browse and you will have to leave the classroom. This laptop usage privilege will be immediately revoked for all students, even if only one student violates this policy. If you choose to use your laptop in class, you agree to allow me to check your activity on your laptop randomly during class.

Readings: You are required to do all the assigned readings before each class for which it is listed. I will always assume that you have come to class well prepared. We will have plenty of time to answer questions you might have from the readings. Even though this is a lecture-based class, I put a strong emphasis on discussions. It is crucial for you to be well prepared and able to answer questions about the readings. Most of your reading is in your textbook. All other readings will be posted on Moodle. There is a possibility that additional readings, not mentioned in the syllabus, may be assigned throughout class.

Lectures: Doing well requires attendance in class. I view the readings as a beginning. Class meetings build upon the readings and introduce new material. The readings provide some history and theoretical arguments. In-class discussion introduces further competing theories and explanations for exploring governments and understanding politics, with a special focus on interaction with markets. My lectures will complement the readings, not regurgitate them. Sometimes I will present you with competing approaches that oppose some of the readings. This should trigger critical thinking and intellectual engagement on your part.

Quizzes: Throughout the semester I will give you short 5-10 minute closed-book quizzes on the assigned reading for that particular week and sometimes a question on a term or concept from my lectures. If you have done the reading and pay attention in class, it should be very easy to answer the questions and you should do very well on the quizzes. The questions will not ask you to regurgitate small details but identify major and important concepts that are discussed in the text as well as point out important countries on a map. If I catch you cheating on the quizzes I will immediately forward your case to the appropriate authority on campus. You will fail the entire class and a note will appear on your transcript that you failed this class due to cheating.

Research Project (Topic, Model, Causality, Theory, Structure): Each student must pick a political topic of her/his choosing that relates to the PI component of this class. Therefore the topic should address the appropriate role of the state within the context of the domestic or international market in the current or historic context (if students discuss their topic ahead of time, certain social issues will be possible as well). For example, if you like the discussion on the welfare state, you could choose moral implications of the minimum wage. If you are fascinated by social movements, you may want to focus on the environmental movement and discuss its role in a globalized economy. In your argument, you are expected to discuss the general topic and relevant theory from the reading. In addition, you must find further scholarly work that looks at the topic but presents a different approach/thesis/analysis etc. (at least 6 sources from peer-reviewed journals or books for the final product). The intellectual engagement with these additional readings should allow you to generate your own argument in response to the topic. You should also include a case study to illustrate your point (here you may rely more heavily on newspaper articles etc.). Your argument should be clear, critical, informative, objective, and scholarly. Creativity in topic choice and good critical reflection of discussed theories, as well as thorough research will be rewarded.

First you must turn in a **Topic** proposal with two potential topics. For each potential topic you have to write one paragraph in which you introduce the overall topic and introduce possible research questions that interest you. Next you have to complete both *library tutorials* (Research in Databases AND Searching the Free Web) and take both associated quizzes at <http://potsdam.libguides.com/tutorialsportal>. This is mandatory, even if you have already taken these quizzes in the context of other classes. I will return the topic proposals during the library session and guide you through the beginning of the research process. After your library help session you must turn in your **Model and Causality** with

- at least four academic sources,
- a statement of your potential argument,
- a model,
- a detailed section explaining underlying causalities between your dependent and independent variables,
- and at least a paragraph on an implicated moral question which you wish to discuss.

Next you have to turn in a revised and significantly expanded version of your argument proposal (now with an APA reference list of at least 6 sources). It should include revised versions of all aspects that were in the proposal in addition to two new parts: **Theory and Structure**. In the **Theory** part you want to first discuss your topic in the context of two theories from the class. What would two authors who we read in class have to say about your argument? Explain if they would agree with you or if they would not? Next you provide **Structure** to your argument to show in great detail the “natural flow” of your argument (as Weston puts it). Organize the different aspects of your argument in the best possible way (don’t forget to think about weak vs strong parts of your argument as well as transitions etc). In addition, you will now also provide some evidence for your argument and integrate it into your structure. Following a peer-review session you will have the opportunity to improve your work before you turn in a final argument. When I read this final version, it should basically be as if I had listened to a presentation by you on the topic. The last component of this assignment is a panel discussion of 3-5 students and me. We will all have read everybody’s argument and will discuss them in the group. You should ask every panel participant critical questions and challenge their arguments (part of your grade).

Toward the end of the panel, I will follow a similar strategy, so be prepared to defend your own argument. The panels are scheduled for the last week of class. You must submit all components of this assignment or you will not pass this class. Please refer to the course requirements section for due dates of the specific components of this assignment. At the beginning of class you will receive more detailed instructions for each part of this assignment.

Exams: All in-class closed-book exams have the same purpose and a similar structure in my classes. In these exams I want to see that you have understood the basic concepts, theories, and terms. Beyond understanding, I want you to reflect on them critically and apply them to new situations. The exams will cover the content of the readings as well as the lectures. Therefore all exams are multiple choice, fill in the blank, multiple select, match the terms, one sentence definitions and short reflections, etc. In part they will ask you exactly what is in the text/lecture, in part it will require you to think about the concept in question critically. Exams will not focus on minute details, but will check if you have understood the important concepts and theories of the class and text. You should use the study terms at the end of the chapters for further guidance. Exam dates are firm and make-up exams will normally not be given, unless extraordinary and well-documented events prevent you from taking the exam. Again, if I catch you cheating on the exams, I will immediately forward your case to the academic honors council and suggest that you should fail the entire class.

Participation: I strongly encourage you to ask questions and participate. Active engagement with a subject proves to be the best approach to learning. Some of your most influential and important teachers will be your colleagues if you engage them. Lively participation makes class more educational and fun for students and teachers. Furthermore, in order to keep up with current events, I will ask 2-3 students to report on interesting current developments concerning issues of politics at the beginning of every class. Therefore, you have to keep abreast of current events in the political sphere by reading a major daily newspaper (i.e. *Financial Times*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, etc) and/or a weekly newsmagazine (i.e. *The Economist*).

General Education Requirements: FC and PI: By passing this class you will receive both a FC (Freshmen Critical Thinking) and a PI (Philosophical Inquiry) general education designator. This puts specific demands on the structure and content of this class as well as your assignments. Since you would have to normally take 2 classes to get these credits, this class is more work intensive than a “normal” introductory level class. In order to ensure you fully understand the structure of this class, read through the requirements for these GE designators.

PI – Philosophical Inquiry:

Engages in critical and systematic reflection on the root nature of a subject matter in a way that explores the most basic questions about it. The subject matter in this particular course is the balance between state and market.

The course must:

1. concentrate on and be primarily devoted to critical and systematic reflection upon moral and ethical values of contemporary significance (moral questions) and
2. include written and/or spoken exercises.

FC – Critical Thinking Experience:

Introduces the standards of good reasoning and strengthens basic reasoning skills. Major course objectives shall include oral and written practice to develop the following abilities: (1) identify the main question, problem, or claim in discourse, and think through it in a critical, creative manner according to the standards of good reasoning, that is, the rules of argument; (2) model the critical thinking processes, or patterns, in the humanities, natural sciences, or social sciences; and (3) self-consciously apply the standards of critical thinking. Skills:

1. Identify the issue or question.
 - Understand what considerations are relevant to the issue or question.
 - Know who bears the burden of proof.
2. Identify the logical structure of arguments:
 - Identify the conclusion.
 - Identify the explicit premises and the implicit premises or assumptions the argument requires for its conclusion to follow.
 - Identify the evidence offered to support the premises.
3. Evaluate arguments and counterarguments, competing hypotheses, or rival explanations:
 - Determine whether the conclusion follows from the premises.
 - Consider whether all the premises are true, and relevant.
 - Evaluate the supporting evidence, data, models, concepts, experimental design, or the reliability of the source providing evidence.
 - Develop skill in formulating counter-examples, alternative explanations, or conceptual models that may account for the evidence, data, etc.
 - Recognize informal fallacies.
4. Use the above standards to construct and evaluate one's own arguments.

Academic Integrity and Needs: I expect all your presented work to be your own (quizzes, exams, and argument). If you were inspired by something that you read or you want to use it to support claims in your work (both direct quotes as well as paraphrased sections), you **MUST** cite your source and include it in the reference list. I will not tolerate plagiarism under any circumstances. If you are unsure if you should cite an article, book, etc. please talk to me in advance. If I suspect plagiarism in your work, I will hand the case over to the Campus Judicial System immediately. I have a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism. Please refer to the SUNY Potsdam Academic Honor Code at:
<http://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/honorcode/index.cfm>.

Any student with special needs regarding academic adjustments or accommodations should speak with me as early as possible and contact Sharon House, Coordinator of Academic Services. She can be reached at 267-3267, in Sisson 112, or at houses@potsdam.edu. Together we will ensure that you will receive any and all the help that you can get. All disclosures will remain confidential.

Required Readings:

Shively, Phillips W. 2011. *Power and Choice. An Introduction to Political Science*. New York, McGraw-Hill. 12th edition. ISBN 978-0-07-340388-5 (referred to in the following as S).

All other readings will be posted on Moodle.

Detailed Class Schedule:Week 1 – Introduction and Political Science as a Social Science

Tuesday 09/01 Intro to the Class

Assignment: -

Wednesday 09/02 Intro to the Social Sciences

Assignment: - *Read the syllabus at home and clarify questions during class*

Thursday 09/03 Intro to Political Science and Political Economy

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 1*

Friday 09/04 Critical Thinking and Good Arguments

Assignment: - *Weston: A Rulebook for Arguments*

Week 2 – Political Ideologies and the State

Tuesday 09/08 Political Ideologies: Liberalism

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 2*

Wednesday 09/09 Political Ideologies: Conservatism

Assignment: -

Thursday 09/10 Political Ideologies: Marxism, Socialism, Communism

Assignment: -

Friday 09/11 State and Nation

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 3*

Week 3 – The State and its Policies

Tuesday 09/15 Policies of the State

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 4*

Wednesday 09/16 Economic Policy and the State

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 5*

Thursday 09/17 **EXAM I**

- *Review chapters 1-5, Weston, and your lecture notes.*

Friday 09/18 Introduction to Capitalism

Assignment: - *Fulcher Ch. 1 and 2*

Week 4 – Markets and Governments

Tuesday 09/22 Introduction to Capitalism (*continued*)

Assignment: - Fulcher Ch. 3

TOPIC PROPOSALS

Wednesday 09/23 Functioning of a Market

Assignment: - Wolf – *The Magic of the Market*

Thursday 09/24 Functioning of a Market (*continued*)

Assignment: -

Friday 09/25 Markets and Governments: Historical Perspective - Liberalism

Assignment: - Adam Smith – *The Wealth of Nations* (*excerpt*)

Week 5 – Theories of Markets & Governments: Historical Perspective; Commanding Heights

(*This week Thursday and Friday and next week Tuesday and Wednesday, the class will divide into two sections. One section will watch the documentary on Thursday and Friday and go to the library on Tuesday and Wednesday. The other section will go to the library on Thursday and Friday and watch the documentary on Tuesday and Wednesday. Attendance in all 4 class sessions is required.*)

Tuesday 09/29 Markets and Governments: Hist. Persp. – Mercantilism/Econ. Nationalism

Assignment: - Alexander Hamilton – *Report on Manufactures* (*excerpt*)

Wednesday 09/30 Markets and Governments: Hist. Persp. – Marxism, Socialism, Communism

Assignment: - Karl Marx – *The Communist Manifesto*

Last day to complete the quiz of the “Searching the Free Web Tutorial” at <http://potsdam.libguides.com/tutorialsportal> and the quiz of the Research in Databases Tutorial at <http://potsdam.libguides.com/tutorialsportal>

Thursday 10/01 State vs. Market/Library Session 1

Assignment: - Work on your “Their Argument” Assignment
Commanding Heights Documentary



Friday 10/02 State vs. Market/Library Session 1 (*continued*)

Assignment: - Work on your “Their Argument” Assignment
Commanding Heights Documentary



Week 6 – Theories of Markets & Governments: Historical Perspective; Library Sessions

Tuesday 10/06 State vs. Market/Library Session 2

Assignment: - Work on your “Their Argument” Assignment
Commanding Heights Documentary



Wednesday 10/07 State vs. Market/Library Session 2 (*continued*)

Assignment: - Work on your “Their Argument” Assignment
Commanding Heights Documentary



Thursday 10/08 Hayek vs. Keynes and Review for Exam

Assignment: -

Friday 10/09 **EXAM 2**

Assignment: - ***Review Fulcher 1-3, Wolfe, Smith, Hamilton, Marx, Commanding Heights Documentary, and your lecture notes.***

Week 7 – Justice

Tuesday 10/13 Fall Recess – Have Fun!

Wednesday 10/14 Distributive Justice

Assignment: - *Nathanson: Economic Justice: Three Views*

Thursday 10/15 Justice and Effectiveness

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 6*

Friday 10/16 Inequality and Poverty

Assignment: - *Wilkinson and Pickett – The Spirit Level (ch. 2 and 3)*

Week 8 – Justice and the Welfare State

Tuesday 10/20 History of the Welfare State

Assignment: - *Baldwin – Introduction: Welfare, Redistribution and Solidarity p. 1-10*

Wednesday 10/21 Welfare State: Analysis and Categorization

Assignment: - *Baldwin – Introduction: Welfare, Redistribution and Solidarity p. 10-21*

Thursday 10/22 Future of the Welfare State

Assignment: - *Baldwin – Introduction: Welfare, Redistribution and Solidarity p.21 – 36*

Friday 10/23 Local Welfare State

Assignment: - *Baldwin – Introduction: Welfare, Redistribution and Solidarity p.36 -54*

MODEL AND CAUSALITY

Week 9 – Forms of Government, Elections, and Parties

Tuesday 10/27 No class

Assignment: -

Wednesday 10/28 Forms of Government

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 7*

Thursday 10/29 Elections

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 10*

Friday 10/30 Parties

Assignment: - *S – Ch. 11*

Week 10 – Parties, Interest Groups, Social Movements

Tuesday 11/03 Coalitions

Assignment: -

Wednesday 11/04 Interest Groups

Assignment: - S – Ch. 12

Thursday 11/05 Social Movements: How People Power Generates Change

Assignment: - S – Ch. 13



Friday 11/06 Social Movements: Organization and Strategies

Assignment: -

THEORY AND STRUCTURE

Week 11 – Institutions

Tuesday 11/10 Parliamentary Systems

Assignment: - S – Ch. 14

Wednesday 11/11 Presidential Systems

Assignment: - S – Ch. 15

Thursday 11/12 **EXAM 3**

Assignment: - *Review Nathanson, Wilkinson and Pickett, Baldwin, Ch. 6, 7, 10-15, and your lecture notes.*

Friday 11/13 International Relations: Anarchy, Sovereignty, and Ordering Principles

Assignment: -

Week 12 – International Relations

Tuesday 11/17 International Relations: Structure and Power

Assignment: - S – Ch. 18

Wednesday 11/18 International Relations: Cooperation and Conflict

Assignment: -

Thursday 11/19 International Organizations: United Nations – History and Structure

Assignment: -

Friday 11/20 International Organizations: United Nations – Decision Making

Assignment: -

Week 13 – International Political Economy and Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday 11/24 International Organizations: WTO, IMF, and World Bank

Assignment: -

Wednesday 11/25 Thanks-

Thursday 11/26 giving

Friday 11/27 Break

Week 14 – International Political Economy and International Organizations

Tuesday 12/01 Markets and Governments: International Perspective – Neoliberalism
 Assignment: - Micklethwait and Wooldridge – *The Hidden Promise of Globalization*

Wednesday 12/02 Markets and Governments: International Perspective – Econ. Nationalism
 Assignment: - Buchanan – *Globalization as Economic Treason*

Thursday 12/03 Markets and Governments: International Perspective – Dependency
 Assignment: - Wallerstein – *The Modern World System as a Capitalist World-Economy*

Friday 12/04 Globalization 3.0?
 Assignment: - Rodrik – *Designing Capitalism 3.0*
 MY ARGUMENT: POLICY PROPOSAL

Week 15 – Argument Discussion Panels

Tuesday 12/08 Argument Discussion Panel 1 + 2
 Assignment: - *Read other students' arguments*

Wednesday 12/09 Argument Discussion Panel 3 + 4
 Assignment: - *Read other students' arguments*

Thursday 12/10 Argument Discussion Panel 5 + 6
 Assignment: - *Read other students' arguments*

Friday 12/11 Argument Discussion Panel 7 + 8
 Assignment: - *Read other students' arguments*

Final: Tuesday December 15th, from 2:45am - 4:45pm
 Review Ch. 18, Micklethwait and Wooldridge, Buchanan,
 Wallerstein, Rodrik and your lecture notes