

## **POLS 1000: Introduction to Politics**

**Instructor:** Wm McCormick, SJ

**Office:** McGannon 127

**Office Hours:** Mon, 12-2 & by appt

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**Semester:** Spring 2019

**Class Location:** McGannon 122

**Class Time:** MWF 11-11:50 A.M.

Political science studies the most controversial topics in the US and the world: racism, abortion, gun rights, free speech, democracy, Trump, Obamacare, dictatorship, taxes, global warming, economic inequality, communism, intersectionality, same-sex marriage, war, women's rights, fascism, Reagan, drone warfare, immigration, school choice, housing discrimination, the USSR, campaign finance, polarization, the Clintons, voting rights, populism, religious freedom, free trade, and terrorism, just to name a few examples.

Is it possible to talk about any of this in a rational and dispassionate matter? We'll find out. In this course we will explore how political scientists attempt to make sense of these and other problems, and ask whether their findings can be of value to ordinary citizens coping with these realities.

### **Readings**

I. Grigsby, Ellen. *Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*, 6th ed., Cengage Learning (2015).

II. Primary texts available online or on Blackboard.

Students should bring to class and be prepared to discuss the week's assigned readings.

### **Assignments**

Participation: 10% grade

DQs: 5% grade

Office hour visits: 5% (2.5% each)

Three exams: 45% (15% each)

Political Philosophy Paper & Presentation: 15%

Democracy debate: 10%

IR presentations: 10%

Attendance is critical to your success in this class, and will be checked regularly. Poor attendance will result in a reduced participation grade. Active participation is highly valued, and will be graded based upon quantity and quality. Please do not confuse participation with attendance: if you come to class and say nothing, you will earn no participation credit. I realize that some people struggle to speak in class and interact with other students, but an introductory course like ours is a wonderful opportunity to confront that struggle. Please talk with me if you find this difficult. I will encourage class participation in the early weeks of the semester by regular small group activities that are meant to engage our material in practical, concrete ways.

Part of your grade will include submitting answers to discussion questions (DQs). I require students to submit hard copies of answers to questions according to the schedule I post on Blackboard. Writing answers to these DQs means that you will have ready material for class discussion, and a basic mastery of the reading. I will not require DQs for every week.

I require every student to visit my office hours at the beginning and in the middle of the semester, and will distribute a sign-up sheet for each visit. Feel free to come with questions about the readings or the class, or just to chat about your interests and background.

The three exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short-answer questions.

This course includes three presentations. First, you will present briefly your paper on political theory. Second, you will work together in groups to present a lesson in our IR section. Third and finally, you will debate in groups the most important component of democracy. As you can see, the presentations build in skills: the first is a simple solo presentation, the second involves group work, and the third will involve both group work and responding to other groups. In some cases I will ask you to evaluate other students' presentations, primarily so you can learn from them. All of this should be fun!

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-70
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	below 60
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

### **Learning objectives**

Students will be able to distinguish among the diversity of traditions in the political science discipline. Students will be able to use their knowledge of political systems to engage effectively in political and social life. More generally, students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will become more effective agents for positive and intelligent change. Students will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists. Most importantly, students will learn to think reflectively upon what they think they know and believe about politics.

### **E-mail**

Please check your SLU e-mail daily. The University communicates all official messages through e-mail, and I will do the same.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours are for your benefit. Professors have set this time aside specifically to listen to your questions and concerns and respond to them. Take advantage of that. Make a habit of going to office hours early on in each course you take, particularly if you are interested in the material, think that you might have difficulties in the course, or if the professor might

later write letters of recommendation for you. Do not be shy about asking to set up an appointment with a professor if the scheduled office hours conflict with your schedule.

### **Electronics**

Consider this class a digital vacation. All electronic devices, including laptops, cell phones, tablets, Blackberries, PDAs and Tamagotchis, should be turned off and stowed before the beginning of class. An exception is when we have online readings, in which laptops are permitted. Please speak to me if think you should be exempt from this rule.

### **Student Success Center**

The Student Success Center assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite 114).

### **Disability Services Academic Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at [disability\\_services@slu.edu](mailto:disability_services@slu.edu) or 314-977-3484 to schedule an appointment.

Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

It is the student's responsibility to contact instructors to discuss how academic accommodations can best be implemented in each class. If a student does not do so, I will assume that the student does not want to use his or her accommodations in my class.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed here:

<https://www.slu.edu/the-office-of-the-provost/academic-affairs-policies>. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals.

### **Title IX (of the United States Education Amendments of 1972)**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member

must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314.977.3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus. If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314.977.TALK. View SLU's sexual misconduct policy: <http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy>

### **Tentative Schedule** (subject to change)

“AP” refers to our textbook, *Analyzing Politics*. “BB” refers to the “Readings” folder on Blackboard.

## **I. Introduction: Politics & Political Science**

Week 1 (14 Jan): Syllabus / Political Literacy Quiz / Jesuit Education

Small group discussion: Why is Jesuit education important to you?

No class Friday, 18 Jan (WMSJ @ Conference)

No class Monday, 21 Jan (MLK, Jr Day)

Week 2 (23 Jan): What is Politics?

AP, Ch. 1

Preamble of US Constitution (BB)

Small group discussion: What role does politics play in your life?

Week 3 (28 Jan): What is Political Science?

AP, Ch. 2

Small group discussion: How is political science a “science”? How is it not?

Week 4 (4 Feb): Political Science: Key Concepts

AP, Ch. 3

Small group discussion: How do different forms of power shape the classroom?

### ***Exam 1: Monday, 11 February***

## **II. Political Theory**

Week 5 (13 Feb): Political Theory & Philosophy

AP, Ch. 4

Small group discussion: What is political theory good for?

Week 6 (18 Feb): Liberalism, Conservatism and Socialism

AP, Ch. 5

Small group discussion: When does ideology become a bad thing? Can we escape it?

Week 7 (25 Feb): Fascism

AP, Ch. 6

Small group discussion: Why is fascism popular today?

***Paper: Monday, 4 March***

Week 8 (4 Mar):

In-class paper presentations

No class 11-15 March (Spring Break)

**III. International Relations (IR)**

Week 9 (18 March): Presentation Preparation

Week 10 (25 March): Models & Issues in IR analysis

Presentation 1: *AP*, Ch. 11

Presentation 2: *AP*, Ch. 12

Week 11 (1 April): IR & Religion

Presentation 3: Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" (BB)

Presentation 4: Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion" (BB)

***Exam 2: Friday, 5 April***

**IV. Comparative Politics**

Week 12 (10 April): Democracy

*AP*, Ch. 8

Debate preparation

Week 13 (15 April): 5 Components of Democracy

Debate on most important component of democracy

No class Fri-Mon, 19-22 April (Easter)

Week 14 (24 April): Interests & Electoral Institutions

*AP*, Ch. 9

Week 15 (29 April): Governing Institutions

*AP*, Ch. 10

***Exam 3: Friday, 3 May***