

POLS 1000: Introduction to Politics

Instructor: Wm McCormick, SJ

Office: McGannon 127

Office Hours: M, 2 - 5:00 P.M. & by appointment

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Semester: Spring 2020

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. Is it possible to talk about them in a rational manner? 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: 15% grade

DQs: 10% grade

Office hour visit: 5%

Three exams: 40% (Exam 1: 10%; Exams 2 and 3 15% each)

Political Philosophy Paper & Presentation: 10%

IR presentations: 10%

Democracy debate: 10%

Attendance is critical to your success in this class, and will be checked regularly. More than three unexcused absences will result in a participation grade of 0. The University has set out in full attendance policies here:

<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/academic-policies-procedures/attendance/>

Active participation is highly valued, and will be graded based upon quantity and quality. Please do not confuse participation with attendance: the former is a necessary but insufficient condition of the latter. If you come to class and say nothing, you will earn no participation credit. In general, students must make at least one substantive comment a week for a participation grade of B. An A requires contributing on roughly a daily basis.

Please speak with me if you are going to be late for class regularly. Frequent unexcused tardiness (3+ times) will bring your participation grade down a letter grade.

Part of your grade will include submitting answers to discussion questions (DQs). I require students to submit hard copies of answers to questions at the beginning of class 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 of the semester. Feel free to come with questions about the readings or class, or just to chat about your interests.

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 develop your skills: the first is a simple solo presentation, the second involves group work, and the third involves 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!

Participation in the group presentations is essential for you and for your group. If you know that you will not be present for some or all of the IR and Comparative Politics presentations, please tell me immediately. Last-minute excuses will not be accepted.

Grading Scale

A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D=60-69; F=below 60.

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.

Writing

The University offers writing help at Busch Student Center, Suite 331, or online:

<http://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/university-writing-services/index.php>

Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit the Student Success Center to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.

Disability Services

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314-977-3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

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 via 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 was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Finally, as Professor Ruth Groff says on her syllabi: "Cheating is bad for your soul."

Title IX

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; anna.kratky@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. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the Office of the General Counsel.

Basic Needs Security

Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.

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 (13 Jan): Syllabus and Jesuit Education

McCarthy, “The Uncertain Future...”

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

Week 2 (20 Jan): What is Politics?

Political Literacy Quiz

Preamble, US Constitution (BB)

Small group discussion: What role has politics played in your life?

Week 3 (27 Jan): What is Political Science?

AP, Ch. 2 (skim)

Putnam, “APSA Presidential Address”

Small group discussion: Should political science try to be useful to politics? How?

Week 4 (3 Feb): Political Science: Key Concepts

AP, Ch. 3

Small group discussion: How have different forms of power shaped your life?

Exam 1: Monday, 10 Feb

II. Political Theory

Week 5 (13 Feb): Political Theory & Philosophy

AP, Ch. 4

Week 6 (17 Feb): Liberalism, Conservatism and Socialism

AP, Ch. 5

Small group discussion: Is ideology always a bad thing?

Week 7 (24 Feb): Fascism

AP, Ch. 6

Small group discussion: Why is fascism popular today?

Paper: Monday, 2 Mar

Week 8 (2 Mar): Ideology Papers

In-class paper presentations

III. International Relations (IR)

Week 9 (16 Mar): Presentation Preparation

Class Discussion: What makes a good class presentation?

Week 10 (23 Mar): IR Presentations

Presentation 1: *AP*, Ch. 11 (23 Mar)

Presentation 2: *AP*, Ch. 12 (25 Mar)

Presentation 3: Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" (BB) (27 Mar)

Week 11 (30 Mar): IR Presentations

Presentation 4: Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence" (BB) (30 March)

IR Review: 1 April

Exam 2: Friday, 3 April

IV. Comparative Politics

Week 12 (6 April): Interests & Electoral Institutions

AP, Ch. 9

Week 13 (15 April): Governing Institutions

AP, Ch. 10

Week 14 (20 April): Democracy

AP, Ch. 8

Debate preparation

Week 15 (27 April): 5 Components of Democracy

Debate: Most important component of democracy

Exam 3: Monday, 4 May