

Introduction to Political Science

Mark David Hall
Center Street House, Room 12
Class time: TR 1:20-2:35
(O) (503) 554-2674, (H) (503) 554-0324

PSC 150
Fall 2009
Stevens 207

Office Hours: Office Hours: MWF 2:00-4:00 TTH 8:15-10:30, or by appointment.

This course provides an introduction to the study of politics. We will consider the nature and purpose of politics, and will look at the different sub-fields within the discipline of political science. A major theme of the course is the proper relationship between Christianity and politics. Students completing the course will be familiar with the basic fields of political science and will have been challenged to approach the subject from a Christian perspective.

Please note: unless I clearly and unambiguously change something on this syllabus, you are responsible for everything on it. You should read it, keep it, and follow it religiously.

Required books:

Plato, The Republic. Trans. Desmond Lee, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Make sure to get the edition published in 2003 with the ISBN number of 0-140-44914-0. Penguin printed other versions of its 2nd edition with different paginations.

The Bible, any version.

Stephen Monsma and Christopher Soper, The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Industrialized Democracies, 2nd ed.

Packet of photocopies, available from GFU Bookstore (version 3.0). Additional material will be available on the web or on reserve.

Other Required Materials:

The New York Times. Students are required to read The New York Times on a daily basis. You can subscribe to the Times free of charge at <http://www.nytimes.com>. (Once you have subscribed, save the page as a bookmark or make it your homepage). Students should read all of the front-page stories dealing with national and international politics. We will discuss these stories regularly.

Course Requirements and Grading:

I expect students to attend class regularly, complete reading assignments on time, and participate in class discussions. Throughout the semester I will give 14 short quizzes at the beginning of class over assigned readings and the preceding week's The New York Times. I will drop 4 of the 14 quizzes under the assumption that students will miss or do poorly on 4 quizzes because of illness, sporting events, travel, job interviews, family emergencies, tardiness, etc. **I will not give make-up quizzes for any reason.** If you think you will miss more than four quizzes this semester, let me know immediately. Combined quiz scores are worth 10% of your final grade. As well, we will have three exams, each of which is worth 20% of your final grade.

Op-Ed Pieces

Finally, students are required to write three opinion pieces based on their reading of The New York Times (each is worth 10% of your final grade). Editorials should be 600-700 words (about two full pages—use the “word count” function under the “tools” bar in Microsoft Word to ensure that you fall within these guidelines) and must argue a clear thesis. One piece should be written for The Crescent, one for The Oregonian, and one for either. I will add three points to your score if you publish your piece in The Crescent, and eight points if you publish it The Oregonian, The Graphic, or a similar paper. You must come and talk with me in my office about your first topic. You may e-mail your topics for the last two editorials.

Each opinion piece should rigorously argue a thesis. You should **not** include footnotes, but you should indicate where you got quotations, statistics, etc (unless they are common knowledge, e.g., the population of Oregon). If you are unfamiliar with the format, you should read columnists such as William Safire or George Will on the editorial page of the Times (or elsewhere). For op-ed pieces, paragraphs should generally not be more than three sentences long. I strongly recommend that you buy, read, and follow religiously Strunk and White, The Elements of Style.

Editorials are due at the beginning of class on **September 22, October 15, November 19**. All written assignments must be turned in by hand and on paper (no e-mail submissions). Late assignments will be penalized 3 points every 24-hour period they are late (excluding weekends). Absolutely no extensions will be given for computer/printer problems.

You may discuss your topic with other students, and they may proofread your essay, but all of your research and writing must be done by you alone. Plagiarism will result in an automatic “F” on the paper or, if flagrant enough, the course. A good definition of plagiarism, with links to sites that show you how to avoid it, may be found at: (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/plag.html>). I encourage you to take your essay to George Fox’s Writing Center for assistance.

A final letter grade based upon the percentage of points you earn in this course will be given based on the following scale:

93-100; A, 90-92.99, A-
87-89.99, B+; 83-86.99, B; 80-82.99, B-
77-79.99, C+; 73-76.99, C; 70-72.99, C-
67-69.99, D+; 60-66.99, D
0-59.99, F

All readings preceded with a “#” refer to excerpts in the photocopied packet.

Readings

September

1. Introduction. What is politics? Why should we study politics? Course outline and requirements.
3. No class. But do the following assignment:
The quest for justice is a key concern of politics. The following selection can be

confusing to first time readers. Don't worry about following every twist of the argument. Instead, focus on the main ideas. The debate between Socrates and Thrasymachus has reoccurred throughout history and is in full bloom today. Can you identify counterparts to Plato and/or Thrasymachus? Plato, Skim part I, sections 1-2 (pp. 1-15); Read part I, section 3 (pp. 15-40).

The organization of society and the need for government. The relationship between theory and good government. Plato, part II, sections 1-3 (pp. 53-66); part VII, sections 7, 1 (pp. 240-248; 189-192).

8. The just state and civil society: the totalitarian solution. Plato on Guardians, education, and family. Plato, part IV, sections 1-3 (pp. 112-129); part VI, sections 1-2 and introduction to section 3 (pp. 157-176).

10. Justice in the state and the individual: Plato, part V, sections 1-4 (pp. 130-156); Skim part IX, sections 6-8 (pp. 290-308).

Plato approached the problem of politics in a deductive manner and arrived at a totalitarian solution. Although Aristotle was Plato's student, he took an inductive approach to politics and arrived at conclusions that are far more palatable for most of us. Selections from Aristotle's *Politics* are available in the photocopy packet.

15. Aristotle on politics: **Packet #1**

Plato and Aristotle illustrate two major approaches to the study of politics and two major conceptions of ideal regimes. They also help show the important implications theoretical ideas can have for real world politics. Christians who affirm the Lordship of Christ in every human endeavor, including politics, should carefully consider the relevance of biblical revelation for politics. Please read the following passages with an eye to questions such as: (1) what basic principles can we derive from the Bible that are relevant to the study of politics (e.g., what can we learn about human nature, justice, etc.)? (2) what is the kingdom of God? (3) how can one take passages like those in the Sermon on the Mount seriously in real life? (4) why and to what extent should Christians obey political authority?

17. Gen. 1-3; Matthew 1-10.

22. Matthew 11-21. **First editorial due.**

24. Acts 4; Rom. 1-2, 13, Mayflower compact **#2.**

We turn now to consider the creation and sustaining of political institutions. In particular, we will examine America's constitutional system of government. Of particular concern to us is how and why political power is distributed in the United States.

29. Read excerpt from Locke, early state constitutions, and Declaration **# 3, 4, 5.**

October

1. **Test #1.**

6. Overview of the U.S. Constitution and Federalist 10, **#6, #7.**

8. Federalism, Congress, Presidency **#8, #9.**

(a) Elections: The following website has a marvelous collection of past advertisements from political campaigns: <http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us> View 5 ads including: 1952 “High Prices” (3rd from top on left); 1964 “Daisy” (2nd from top on left); 1972 “McGovern Defense” (3rd from top on left).

(b) Political Parties: Do your own research to answer the following questions: What is a political party (as opposed to an interest group)? What, specifically, do political parties do? Are they good or bad? What are some major differences between the two major parties?

13. Public opinion and voting behavior: James Q. Wilson and John Dilulio, American Government, 103-127. [*Only on reserve in Center Street House—plan ahead!*]

15. Religion and the 2008 election, #10 and TBA. **Editorial #2 due.**

20. Polling, Interest Groups, and Campaign Finance, read #11.

1. Go to <http://www.pollingreport.com>, pick a topic, and carefully consider three polls on it. Are the polls consistent? Are the questions fairly worded?

2. Look up the websites of two advocacy groups in which you have an interest (e.g., National Right to Life, Family Research Council, National Rifle Association, National Organization of Women). What sort of information do they provide? What do they want you to do? What is a special interest group? Are they good or bad?

22. Judiciary and Constitutional Rights and Liberties: Read #12, 13, 14.

Reflect on differences between state and federal courts, the power of judicial review, and the proper way to interpret the Constitution.

27. Focus on Religion Clauses: Read Monsma and Soper, chapter two.

Go to <http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html> and retrieve and skim full opinions for cases *McCreary County v. ACLU* or *Van Orden v. Perry* (2005) [the Ten Commandments cases].

29. TBA/Review.

November

3. Test #2.

By any realistic measure, the American political experiment has been an enormous success. However, it is foolish to assume there is not plenty of room for improvement. One important tool for helping us understand the strengths and weaknesses of America’s constitutional order is comparison. By comparing different governments, we can better understand the strengths and weaknesses of our own. As well, by comparing public policy in different countries, we can gain insights about what sort of policies America should follow or reject.

5. Monsma and Soper, 1-14, 51-92.

10. Monsma and Soper, 93-168.

12. Monsma and Soper, 169-240.

17. Comparative Government/IR Theory: TBA.

Nations necessarily interact with each other. The sub-discipline of international relations studies their interaction and, of particular concern to us, attempts to develop ways to resolve conflicts peacefully.

19. No class. **Turn in Editorial #3 at Center Street House by 4:00 p.m.**

24. Read Paul Marshall's article "Patterns and Contexts of Religious Freedom and Persecution," #15. Look up and carefully consider correlations on the following two sites:

Civil Liberties:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2008>

Economic Freedom:

http://www.heritage.org/index/downloads/Index2008_EconFreedomMAP.jpg

26. Thanksgiving

December

1. Read Universal Declaration of Human Rights at <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>. Go to www.state.gov and find the most recent annual report on International Religious Freedom. Read the executive summary and look at least three country reports (be prepared to answer questions about these countries in class).

China: Future World Power? Read entries from CIA factbook on China and North Korea <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

3. Terrorism. What is it? Is it effective? How may it best be combated? Read 2008 State Department Report #16.

8. Is war ever an option in international relations? On Pacifism, read: http://www.fum.org/about/resources/COGuide_2001.pdf

10. **Read #17** on Just War Theory

18. Final Exam: Friday, 10:00 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE: I DO NOT GIVE EARLY FINALS. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides all students with free writing consultation, general tutoring, and learning enhancement strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). Students can make an appointment with the ARC Writing Center for guidance and feedback on written projects. ARC consultants can also provide basic tutoring for many general education and other courses. Go to www.georgefox.edu/arc/ for information about consultants' areas of study, how to schedule an appointment, and helpful learning tools. Call Rick Muthiah, Director of the Academic Resource Center, at x2314 if you have questions.

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services office early in the term so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to Disability Services. For more information, contact Rick Muthiah, Director of Disability Services (ext. 2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu), or go to ds.georgefox.edu.

Study Guide

To do well in this class you must read every assignment, think about it, review it, and talk about it. You should come to every class, participate fully, and take the material seriously. If you do these things you should have little trouble with the quizzes. When it is time to take the first test, I suggest you review all of the material two days before the exam, meet with a study group the night before the exam, go to bed early and get a good night's sleep.

What sort of questions will be on the exam? I ask only three types of questions in this class: short answer, short essay, and long essay.

Short answer questions should be answered with a paragraph about 3-5 sentences long. They are usually worth 10 points each. Sample questions include:

1. Briefly describe and explain the significance of Plato's allegory of the cave.
2. Discuss Aristotle's six-fold classification of states. Which of the states are ideal but unrealistic? Which is the best possible state?

Short essay questions should be answered with an essay 2-3 paragraphs long. They are usually worth 25 points each. A sample question:

1. What major principles can be derived from the Bible that are relevant to politics. In your answer make sure to discuss human nature, individual ethics, and political obligation.

A longer essay question should be answered with a very well organized 5-6 paragraph essay. It would be worth 40-50 points. A sample question:

1. Compare and contrast the extent to which the governments of United States, Holland, and England encourage or support religion. Among other things, make sure to discuss how each country approaches public education and the funding of private education. Which approach is best? Why?

Please note: these questions are samples only. They may or may not be on the exam. The best way to prepare for the exam is to master all of the material we have covered.