

Political Science Senior Seminar

Mark David Hall
Center Street House, Room 12
Class time: 8:40-9:30 MWF
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Office Hours: Office Hours: MWF 9:40-12:00.

PSC 490
Spring 2009
CEN 101

This course is intended to be the pinnacle of your major at George Fox University. Over the past four years you should have taken at least 10 courses on politics, completed an internship, and thought deeply about a variety of political issues. Hopefully your horizons have been broadened, your knowledge increased, and your critical skills sharpened. Most significantly, you should be convinced of the need for Christians to approach politics in a thoroughly Christian manner. This course is designed to help you think through some of the implications of your course of study to date and to plan for the future.

More than any course you have taken thus far, this class is designed to be a seminar where you will join me in discussing texts and issues. I will seldom lecture, and you are expected to regularly attend class and be prepared to contribute to class discussion. As well, you will be required to make a variety of public presentations. Your participation and preparation (not eloquence) is worth 6% of your final grade.

Each student will write five four page papers (10% of grade each) on topics noted below (each is worth 10% of grade). Papers are due at the beginning of the class days as indicated on the syllabus.

As well, you will write a marvelous 16 page research paper on a topic of your choosing but subject to my approval. Papers must be meticulously researched and documented. Your thesis should be clear and your arguments rigorous. If your subject overlaps with other work you have done or are doing, you must clearly explain the overlap to me. You may discuss your topic with other students, and they may proofread your essay, but all 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. See my style guide for additional information. Due dates include: January 28—paper topic; February 20—thesis and one page list of sources (1% of grade); March 18—outline (3% of grade); April 8—draft (10% of grade), April 20—final paper (30% of grade).

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. 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.

Required book:

George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*.

Other Required Materials:

The New York Times. Students are required to read The New York Times on a daily basis.

Please note: I have kept the reading assignments for this course quite light for a 400 level course. I expect you to supplement it regularly by doing your own outside reading and research. I expect this work to be reflected in your classroom participation and papers.

Reading Assignments

January

12. Introduction.

14. No class

16. No class. I'm out of town.

19. No class—MLK day

21. Paper #1 due. Present Assignment #1, discuss Marsden. You must have your biography selected by the beginning of class.

Assignment #1

Write a paper evaluating Marsden's *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. Identify strengths and weaknesses of the book. Your paper should be well-thought-out, tightly written, and persuasive.

23. Discuss Marsden. **Over the next two weeks you must visit with me about your major paper topic.**

26. No class.

28. No class.

30. No class.

February

2. Paper #2 due. Student presentations on biographies.

Assignment #2

On February 2, students will turn in a review of, and begin presentations on, a biography of a Christian statesperson. To what extent does your subject attempt to integrate his/her faith with politics? Did he/she succeed? Biographies must be solid books, ideally critical biographies, and at least 200 pages long. They should cover the entire life of your subject. Possible subjects include: Abraham Kuyper, William Wilberforce, Roger Williams, John Winthrop, Theodore Frelinghuysen, William Lloyd Garrison, William Jennings Bryan, Pope John Paul II, Charles Colson, William Penn, William Gladstone, John Bright, etc. Note: You may not read a biography an American in the Founding Era, about a current political leader (e.g. Barak Obama), or about a person with whom you are already very familiar.

Let me know what biography you would like to read. Students may not pick the same biography—I will approve them on a first-come-first served basis. The specific book must be approved by me.

4. Student presentations.

6. No class.

9. No class.

11. Paper #3 due. Begin presenting assignment #3.

Assignment #3

Turn in: (1) resume, (2) descriptions and contact information for four *real and realistic* entry level jobs for which you could apply (you may simply cut and paste the advertisement), and (3) your obituary (c. 4 pages). The latter should describe your ideal career, accomplishments, and reflect on the extent to which you balanced your career with other parts of life [assume you live to be at least 70 years old]. You will be graded upon the care you take with your resume, the usefulness of the job listings, and the thoughtfulness of your obituary.

13. Present assignment #3. Let me know by today which book you want to read for assignment #4. Students may not read the same book (books will be approved on a first-come-first served basis).

16. No class.

18. No class. Outline due. You must visit with me by noon today about the work you have done to date on your major paper.

20. No class.

23. Paper #4 due. Begin student presentations.

Assignment #4

Each student will read, review, and report on a recent book on international relations or comparative government. Among other things, the review should critique the book from a Christian perspective. Students may not review the same book. Books must be approved by me. Your book must be at least 200 pages long and it must be substantial, but not necessarily academic. You may not read a book you have read before or will use in another class. Please do not pick an edited volume. You *may* pick a book that you will use in your final paper.

Examples:

- (1) Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat*.
 - (2) Peter A. Smith, *Democracy in Latin America*.
 - (3) Bryan Starr, *Understanding China*.
 - (4) Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*.
 - (5) John Foran, *Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions*.
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25. Presentations.

27. No class.

March

2. No class. You must let me know what book you would like to read for assignment #5. Students may not read the same book (books will be approved on a first-come-first served basis).

4. No class.

6. No class.

9. No class.

11. No class.

13. No class.

16. Assignment #5 due. Begin student presentations.

18. Presentations.

20. No class.

Assignment #5

Each student will read, review, and report on a recent book on contemporary American politics. Among other things, the review should critique the book from a Christian perspective. Students may not review the same book. Books must be approved by me. Your book must be at least 200 pages long and it must be substantial, but not necessarily academic. You may not read a book you have read before or will use in another class. Please do not pick an edited volume. You *may* pick a book that you will use in your final paper.

Examples:

1. Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper, *Faith, Hope, and Jobs: Welfare-to-Work in Los Angeles*.
 2. Patrick J. McGuinn, *No Child Left Behind and the Transformation of Federal Education Policy, 1965-2005*.
 3. Kay S. Hymowitz, *Marriage and Caste in America: Separate and Unequal Families in a Post-Marital Age*.
 4. Earl and Merle Black, *Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggles in American Politics*.
 5. Stanley A. Renshon, *The 50% American: Immigration and National Identity in an Age of Terror*.
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23-27 Spring Break.

30. No class.

April

1. No class. Visit with me today or tomorrow about your paper.

3. No class.

6. No class.

8. No class. Draft Due.

10. No class. Good Friday.

13. No class.

15. No class.

17. No class.

20. Paper Due. Begin student presentations of major papers: each should be 20 minutes long, followed by 10 minutes for Q&A. Presentations should be very professional.

22. Presentations.

24. Presentations.

April 27-May 1, Finals Week. Complete presentations, if necessary.

May 2, Graduation!

Please note: I reserve the right to change any aspect of this syllabus, **especially to hold class on days that are currently designated “no class” days.** If I make a change I will announce it clearly and unambiguously in class and I will send an e-mail to everyone in the course.