

Introduction to Political Science

PSCI 150-A

Fall 2015

MWF, 11:00-11:50 a.m.

Stevens 208

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 12-2 p.m. and 4-5 p.m.; also by appointment

Introduction

This foundational course will introduce students to the study of politics through a survey of key concepts and sub-disciplines within the field of political science. The course will challenge students to consider the purpose of political institutions and how these institutions influence political outcomes in practice. How is political power derived and maintained via these institutions and what implications does this have for human rights and social justice?

The first part of the course will focus on defining core concepts within the field, such as democracy, justice, and freedom. Students will be challenged to analyze and critique these definitions and consider how these conceptualizations differ across states and societies. In the second part of the course, students will use these core concepts to compare states on a number of different institutional and cultural dimensions, including judicial systems, executive-legislative relations, and civil society. Do some political arrangements work better than others for achieving a particular outcome?

The last part of the course will introduce students to the study of international relations with a particular emphasis on collective security problems (terrorism, civil war, nuclear proliferation, etc.). Students will consider how sovereign states make decisions together—and attempt to enforce those decisions—in the absence of a global governing body. If each state must consider its domestic interests first, is international cooperation possible?

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Explain the purpose of institutions and why they are important for studying politics
- Describe key concepts in political science and why these concepts are often hard to define succinctly
- Outline common political ideologies and articulate key differences among them
- Identify and control for problems of inference when comparing two or more countries
- Explain how international institutions facilitate cooperation among sovereign states with diverse interests

Textbook and Course Readings

- Garner, Robert, Peter Ferdinand, and Stephanie Lawson. 2012. *Introduction to Politics*. 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press. (*GFL*)
- Additional readings will be assigned on FoxTale. Students will be responsible for these readings on tests.
- Students should read national and international headline stories from a major newspaper on a daily basis and be prepared to discuss current events in class.

CLASS SCHEDULE*(Approximate—subject to change as deemed necessary)*

Week of August 31	Course Introduction <i>Syllabus, GFL Introduction and Chapter 1</i>
Week of September 7	Institutions, Authority, and the State <i>GFL Chapters 2 and 7</i>
Week of September 14*	Democracy <i>GFL Chapter 3</i> *Sept. 18: Quiz 1
Week of September 21	Freedom and Justice <i>GFL Chapter 4</i>
Week of September 28*	Political Ideologies <i>GFL Chapters 5-6</i> *Oct. 2: Exam 1
Comparative Politics	
Week of October 5	Domestic Legal Institutions <i>GFL Chapter 8</i>
Week of October 12*	Legislatures, Executives, and the Bureaucracy <i>GFL Chapters 9-10</i> *Oct. 16: No class
Week of October 19*	Electoral Politics, Civil Society, and Political Culture <i>GFL Chapters 11-13</i> *Oct. 23: Comparative Institutions Paper Due
Week of October 26*	Electoral Politics, Civil Society, and Political Culture, continued *Oct. 30: Quiz 2
Global Politics	
Week of November 2	History of International Relations <i>GFL Chapters 14-15</i>
Week of November 9	International Security <i>GFL Chapters 17-18</i>
Week of November 16*	International Security, continued *Nov. 20: Exam 2
Week of November 23*	Foreign Policy and International Organizations <i>GFL Chapters 18-19</i> *Nov. 27: No class
Week of November 30	International Crisis Simulation Week
Week of December 7*	International Political Economy <i>GFL Chapter 20</i> *Dec. 7: Simulation Response Paper Due

Final Exam scheduled for Thursday, December 17, 2015 from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in Stevens 208

Assignments and Tests

Quizzes:

There will be two online quizzes throughout the semester. Students may use their textbooks and notes for these quizzes but **should not** work together or share information related to quiz content.

Comparative Institutions Paper:

Students will write a short paper comparing two countries that differ on one of the following dimensions: (1) domestic legal tradition, (2) level of centralization, or (3) structure of executive branch. As part of the comparative analysis, students will be asked to discuss how these institutional differences impact government accountability and responsiveness. Papers are due **Friday, October 23**—please submit one paper copy in-class and one electronic copy uploaded to FoxTale. More details on this assignment will be posted on FoxTale.

In-Class Simulation and Response Paper:

At the end of the semester, students will participate in a two-day “international crisis” simulation designed to illustrate the role political institutions play in problem-solving at the domestic and international levels. Students will be expected to participate in this simulation and submit a summary response paper due **December 7**. In order to receive credit for the simulation, students must attend class on both days of the simulation and submit two copies of the response paper—one paper copy in-class and one electronic copy uploaded to FoxTale. Students should **not** work together on response papers. Response paper guidelines will be distributed via FoxTale along with information for the simulation.

Exams:

There will be two semester exams and one final exam. Exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions drawn from the textbook, class discussions (including current events), and additional course readings. Assigned readings may or may not be discussed in class, so you are responsible for reading the textbook and additional material. The final exam will draw from material throughout the semester.

Grade Distribution			
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Point Value (each)</i>	<i>Percentage (each)</i>	<i>Overall</i>
Quizzes (2)	25 points	5%	50 points (10%)
Comparative Institutions Paper (1)	75 points	15%	75 points (15%)
Simulation Participation & Paper (1)	75 points	15%	75 points (15%)
Semester Exams (2)	75 points	15%	150 points (30%)
Final Comprehensive Exam (1)	100 points	20%	100 points (20%)
Attendance	--	--	50 points (10%)
Total			500 points (100%)

Grading Scale

A 10-point, +/- grading scale will be used for this class:

A+ 97-100	A 93-96	A- 90-92	B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72	D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-62
F 59 below					

Attendance and Make-up Policies

- Attendance is expected and required, and I will take roll regularly. For each absence after 3, you will lose 10% of your attendance grade unless you provide documentation such as a doctor's excuse, letter from GFU-sponsored program, etc. All documentation is due to me no later than the end of class on Friday, December 11. Please keep in mind that I reserve the right to reject all non-university related and non-medical excuses.
- Students in attendance may be marked as absent for the following reasons: arriving to class halfway through lecture, continually arriving late, leaving class early without speaking to me before class, or using electronic devices for purposes other than note-taking or class-related activities.

- Students who miss exams or quizzes will be allowed to take make-up tests only if they have provided me with a legitimate reason for missing the test at least 24 hours before the test (if the absence is foreseeable), or a valid excuse no later than 24 hours after having missed the test. Students who do not meet these criteria will be given a score of zero for the missed test. Make-up tests will differ from the original test.
- Students who miss in-class assignments will be allowed to make up the assignments only if they have provided me with a legitimate reason for missing the in-class assignment at least 24 hours before the class (if the absence is foreseeable), or a valid excuse no later than 24 hours after having missed the in-class assignment. Students who do not meet these criteria will be given a score of zero for the missed assignment. Make-up assignments will differ from the original assignment.
- Written assignments not turned in on time will lose 10 percent of the total points for the assignment for each weekday they are late. Assignments are considered on time if they are turned in during class or by 5:00 p.m. of the day they are due.
- If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to find out what material and assignments you have missed. Try to get to know a classmate who can provide you with notes and information. I do not email class slides or class notes.

Other Notes

- If you send me an email and do not get a response after two days, please email me again. I want to ensure that I am responsive to all your questions, but it is reasonable to assume that communication errors can occur. I prefer that you send emails to gmler@georgefox.edu.
- I reserve the right to make modifications to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Any modifications to the assignment or test schedule will be announced in class, and a revised syllabus will be posted to FoxTale.

Students with Disabilities

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Office as early as possible so that your learning needs can be appropriately met. For more information, go to ds.georgefox.edu or contact Rick Muthiah, Director of Learning Support Services (503-554-2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu).

Academic Resource Center (ARC)

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) on the Newberg campus provides all students with free writing consultation, academic coaching, and learning strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). The ARC, located in the Murdock Learning Resources Center (library), is open from 1:00-10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:00-4:00 p.m. on Friday. To schedule an appointment, go to the online schedule at arcschedule.georgefox.edu, call 503-554-2327, email the_arc@georgefox.edu, or stop by the ARC. Visit arc.georgefox.edu for information about ARC Consultants' areas of study, instructions for scheduling an appointment, learning tips, and a list of other tutoring options on campus.