

POLS 101: INTRO TO POLITICAL SCIENCE



POLS 101: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

BELLEVUE COLLEGE, FALL 2014

MTWTh 1:30pm-2:20pm (Fridays online 1:30pm – 2:20pm)

DR. DAVID SPATARO

DAVID.SPATARO@BELLEVUECOLLEGE.EDU

PHONE: 425.564.3161

OFFICE: A200F

OFFICE HOURS: TH 1-130PM & BY APPOINTMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course that is designed for students who are new to the study of politics. The purpose of this course is to provide you with a broad introduction to the field of political science and to help you to sort through and develop informed opinions about a variety of political topics. Some of the specific topics of study include: civic ignorance, the purpose of government, the functions of government, citizenship, democracy, the relationship between the government and the economy, civil disobedience, the media, and comparative politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a basic understanding of the academic field of political science. This includes developing an understanding: of the central concepts of the discipline; of the scientific methods used in the study of political science; and of the major sub-fields in the discipline.
2. To understand the role, power, and functions of government. This includes developing an ability to: identify the functions of the U.S. government; identify how governments exert influence over the economy and their citizens; and compare these attributes of the U.S. with that of other countries.
3. To understand the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship, and to begin to critically examine the political structures that distribute such rights and to whom. This objective involves developing an understanding: of civil rights (and struggles over such rights); and of the role citizens play in political structures and institutions.
4. To become more informed and discriminating consumers of political information in order to constructively engage in the political process. This involves developing the skill to critically analyze current political issues.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS

This course involves the discussion of controversial political issues. Remember that reasonable people often disagree. Your challenge and responsibility is to maintain civil discourse. We will achieve this by being respectful of each other and avoiding inflammatory, derogatory and insulting words, phrases and labels. Please use your common sense to avoid any other conduct that might distract or offend me or your classmates.

DISABILITY RESOURCES

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or a learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC staff as soon as possible. The DRC office is located in B132 and the reception desk phone number is 425-564-2498. For application information and other helpful links the DRC website is <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc>. Deaf students can reach the DRC by videophone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Finally, if you have either an apparent or non-apparent disability and require assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc., please let me know early in the quarter so that we can develop an appropriate safety plan for you. Thank you.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating and plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Such behavior will result in a zero grade for the assignment/exam in question. If you have questions about academic integrity, please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct and/or send me a message via email. <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050p/>

COURSE MATERIALS

The primary text for the course is Danziger's *Understanding the Political World: An Introduction to Comparative Politics* (10th Edition). It is available in the campus bookstore beginning around the second day of class, but it can also be purchased online. Supplemental materials will be made available on our Canvas website or in-class. You are responsible for downloading and engaging with all supplemental materials. ***Each assigned reading is to be completed before the class session for which it is scheduled***, so that you can participate in any discussion or other classroom activity we do that day. Any material covered by an assigned reading may be included in examination questions, regardless of whether it is specifically discussed in the classroom. A complete course schedule is attached to this syllabus. If and when adjustments are made to the course schedule, you will be informed via an announcement on our class website. Please note that the assigned reading is an important part of this class—if you don't do it you are going to find it hard to succeed.

KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS

Please keep up with current events related to politics. Our discussions will sometimes touch on current events and it is important that you keep up-to-date on the major political goings-on. Please find a few news sources that work for you (representing different mediums and viewpoints) and make a habit of reading, listening, and/or watching them throughout the quarter. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a particular news source for this class, please ask me sooner rather than later. I suggest that at least one of your sources be a national newspaper such as: the *New York Times* (www.nytimes.com), the *Washington Post* (www.washingtonpost.com), or the *Wall Street Journal* (www.wsj.com). I also encourage international sources such as the *BBC* (www.bbc.co.uk) and *Al Jazeera* <http://english.aljazeera.net>. If you speak another language I encourage you to follow the news in that language and bring that perspective to class.

GRADE CONVERSION CHART:

A	94-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A-	90-93%	B	84-86%	C	74-76%	D	60-66%
		B-	80-83%	C-	70-73%	F	59% & Below

GRADING:

Attendance and Participation	10.00%
How We Know What We Know Assignment	10.00%
5 Response Papers	25.00%
Political Essay Based Upon Response Papers	15.00%
Midterm	20.00%
Final	20.00%
	100.00%

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION:

This class will involve lectures, facilitated discussions, group work, and in-class activities. You are required to come to class and participate. If you are tardy to class, please enter quietly and begin to listen or participate where appropriate. **I require that each student meet with me once during the semester during my office hours or by appointment or video chat if you cannot be on campus during my office hours.**

ASSIGNMENTS:

In this class you will write short response papers 5 times during the course of the semester, each due on the date outlined in the syllabus. In these short papers you will reflect critically upon the course material (readings, discussions, lecture) and develop your skills of communicating effectively about political subjects. Each of these responses is worth 5% of the grade, totaling 1/4 of the course grade. Additionally, you will select 1-3 of these responses and use them to write an essay on a topic covered in the course. I will provide the instructions for both the response papers and the essay. In addition, we will have one assignment in the beginning of the semester that is designed to get us to reflect upon where we get our information about the world, and what we do with it once we've read or watched or listened to a piece of information. I will also provide instructions on this assignment.

TESTS:

Your midterm will be held in class. This exam will cover assigned readings, movies, lectures, guest presentations, and major current events discussed in class. The exam will consist of a mix of question types, including: true-false, multiple-choice, identifications, short answer, and essay. Make up exams will only be available for individuals with legitimate and documented reasons for missing the midterm. The final exam will be in class on December 8th, 2014. The final will also consist of a mixture of questions, and it will cover the entire quarter of course content. Make-up final exams will only be available for extreme cases. In such cases, you need to contact me as soon as possible.

SECTION ONE:

"All the world's a stage": Politics beyond the spin, spectacles, and pseudo-events

Week 1: Sept. 22nd – Sept. 26th

Monday

- Syllabus and Class Policies

Tuesday

- Introduction to the study of political science

Wednesday

- Political Ignorance and the Theater of Politics
- **Read:** Shenkman, "Gross Ignorance" (pg. 13-36)
- **Read:** Romano, "How Dumb Are We?" (pg. 1-4)

Thursday

- Spin, Pseudo-events, and Spectacles
- **Read:** Jackson and Jamieson, "Tricks of the Deception Trade" (pg. 43-62)
- Bernays, "The Engineering of Consent" small group work

Friday

- Online discussion starts next week, no class

Week 2: Sept. 29th – Oct. 3rd

Monday

- A Case Study of Staged Politics: The Presidential Debates
- **Read:** Jackson and Jamieson, "Finding the Best Evidence" (pg. 103-125)
- **Read:** Farah, "Debate Cartel" (pg. 1-22)

Tuesday

- **Read:** Farah, "Candidate Exclusion" (pg. 39-74)

Wednesday

- **Read:** Danziger, "Chapter 1: Politics and Knowledge"

Thursday

- **How We Know What We Know Assignment Due**
- In-class activity

Friday

- Online discussion

SECTION TWO:

THE ROLE and FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT

Week 3: Oct. 6th – Oct. 10th

Monday

- Sovereignty and the role of government in the Westphalian System
- **Read:** Danziger "Chapter 5, States and Nations"

Tuesday

- Nationalism (not Patriotism) and Nation-States
- **Read:** Anderson, selections from "Imagined Community" (pg. TBD)

Wednesday

- Role of the Nation-State Today & the Birth of New Nations
- **Read:** Anderson, selections from "Imagined Community" (pg. TBD)
- **Read:** Palestinian Statehood at the UN
<http://www.cfr.org/palestine/palestinian-statehood-un/p25954>

- **Read:** South Sudan Profile
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14069082>
- **Watch:** South Sudan Independence on BBC
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14054589>

Thursday

- Globalization and the Rise of Supra-National Bodies
- **Read:** Danziger, "Chapter 11, Politics Across Borders"
- In-class activity

Friday

- Online discussion
- **1st Response Paper Due**

Week 4: Oct. 13th – Oct. 17th Executive and Judicial Functions of US Government

(NOTE: we will cover legislative functions in more detail in our section on the mid-term elections)

Monday

- The Executive Function
- **Read:** Danziger, "Chapter 6, Political Institutions I"

Tuesday

- **Read:** (cont.) Danziger, "Chapter 6, Political Institutions I"

Wednesday

- The Judicial Function
- **Read:** Danziger "Chapter 7, Political Institutions II"

Thursday

- **Read:** (cont.) Danziger "Chapter 7, Political Institutions II"
- In-class activity

Friday

- Online discussion

Week 5: Oct. 20th – Oct. 24th Functions of Govt. (continued): Political Economy

Monday

- Comparing Institutions Between Nations
- **Read:** TBD

Tuesday

- Political Economy
- **Read:** Danziger "Chapter 8, Political Economy"

Wednesday

- College Issues Day, No Class

Thursday

- Introduction to Keynesian and Post-Keynesian Political Economy
- **Read:** Palley "From Keynesianism to Neoliberalism" (pg. TBD)
- In-class activity

Friday

- Online discussion
- **2nd Response Paper Due (on content from either of the previous two weeks)**

SECTION THREE:

Citizenship, Representative Democracy, the Midterm Elections, and Beyond

Week 6: Oct. 27th – Oct. 31st

Monday

- The Legislative Function and the Midterm Elections
- **Read:** TBD

Tuesday

- How Representation Works in the Legislative Branch
- **Read:** TBD

Wednesday

- Understanding Voter Turnout and Disenfranchisement
- **Read:** TBD

Thursday

- **MIDTERM IN CLASS**

Friday

- Online discussion

Week 7: Nov. 3rd – Nov. 7th

Monday

- Representative Democracy, Direct Democracy, and Participatory Democracy
- **Read:** TBD

Tuesday

- Examples of Direct Democracy in the U.S.
- **Read:** TBD

Wednesday

- Democracy, the Athenian *Agora*, and Free Speech
- **Read:** TBD

Thursday

- Participatory Budgeting at the Municipal Level
- **Read:** TBD
- **Watch:** TBD
- In-class activity

Friday

- **3RD Response Paper Due**
- Online discussion

Week 8: Nov. 10th – Nov. 14th

Monday

- The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship
- **Read:** Bellamy, "What is citizenship and why does it matter" (pg. 1-26)

Tuesday

- Holiday, No class

Wednesday

- **Read:** Liu: "Great Citizenship" (pp. 41-73)
- **Read:** Zinn: "The Optimism of Uncertainty" (pp. 63-72)

Thursday

- Dreamers, and the contemporary fight for citizenship
- **Read:** TBD
- **Watch:** TBD
- In-class activity

Friday

- Online discussion
- **4th Response Paper Due**

SECTION FOUR:

POLITICAL VIOLENCE and POLITICS "FROM BELOW"

Week 9: Nov. 17th – Nov. 21st

Monday

- States, and the "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force"
- **Read:** Weber, selections from "Politics as a Vocation" (pg. TBD)
- **Read:** Fanon, selections from "The Wretched of the Earth" (pg. TBD)

Tuesday

- **Read:** Danziger, "Chapter 12, Political Violence"

Wednesday

- Political Violence and White Supremacy
- Read: TBD

Thursday

- Political Violence and Male Supremacy
- Read: TBD
- Watch: TBD
- In-class activity

Friday

- Online discussion

Week 10: Nov. 24th – Nov. 28th Case Study of Political Violence: Mass Incarceration

Monday

- **Read:** Gilmore, selections from "Golden Gulag" (pg. TBD)

Tuesday

- **Read:** Alexander, selections from "Lockdown" (pg. TBD)

Wednesday

- Introduction to Political Action From Below
- **Read:** Danziger, "Chapter 3: Political Action"
- **5th Response Paper Due**

Thursday

- HOLIDAY, no class

Friday

- HOLIDAY, no online class

Week 11: Dec. 1st – Dec. 5th

Monday

- Political Action Beyond the Ballot
- **Read:** TBD

Tuesday

- The Politics of the Crowd
- **Read:** TBD

Wednesday

- Direct Action and Civil Disobedience
- **Read:** Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (pg. TBD)
- **Read:** de Cleyre, "Direct Action" (pg. TBD)

Thursday

- Political Action and New Media
- **Read:** Pollock, "How Egyptian and Tunisian youth hacked the Arab Spring" (15 pgs)
<http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/425137/streetbook/>
- in class activity

Friday

- REVIEW for the exam

Week 12: Dec. 8th – Dec. 10th

Monday

- FINAL EXAM

Tuesday

- No class

Wednesday

- Last Day of Fall Quarter, no class
- **Political Essay Due**