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# **POLS 101: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**Spring 2011: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 to 11:20, L221**

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**Professor:** Tim Jones (Please call me “Tim”)

**Office:** A200B

**Office Hours:** Mondays through Thursdays: 8:45 to 9:15 and 11:30 to 12:15

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**“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it  
expects what never was and what never will be”**

**~Thomas Jefferson**

## **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. The course itself is divided into eleven thematic units: (1) political ignorance, (2) the purpose of government, (3) food politics, (4) the relationship between the government and the economy, (5) civil (dis)obedience, (6) political structures, (7) the legislative and executive functions, (8) the judicial and bureaucratic functions, (9) media and politics, (10) political spin, and (11) patriotism and citizenship.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To develop a basic understanding of the academic field of political science.
2. To develop a more nuanced understanding of the role, power, and functions of government.
3. To become more informed and discriminating consumers of political information.
4. To foster self-reflection about your role as a citizen in a democracy.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

This is a college-level course, which means *you are responsible for your own learning*. I will do my best to teach the class in a fun and interesting way, and to assess your learning fairly. I expect you to do your best to complete assignments in a timely and appropriate fashion, to come to class prepared for the day's work, and to actively participate in classroom discussions and activities. Ultimately, *you are responsible for any material missed due to absence or lateness* so I encourage you to get acquainted with those around you, trade e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers, and make one or more study buddies. Finally, *if you do not understand something you need to take the initiative to find out the answer*—raise your hand, talk to me after class, come to my office, etc. I cannot read minds, so it is up to you to try to seek clarity when it is lacking.

## **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 note that ***all electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom at all times***. This includes cell phones, blackberries, laptops, i-pods/mp3 players, computers, etc. If you need a laptop to take notes, I will need verification. ***Students caught using electronic devices will be marked absent and asked to leave class that day***. This may seem like a harsh penalty, but such behavior is not only disrespectful to me, it is also disrespectful to the people around you. Please use your common sense to avoid any other conduct that might distract or offend the instructor or the other students in class. Thank you!

## **A NOTE ABOUT IDEOLOGY**

I have no intention of trying to convert you to my belief system. The issues we will be exploring are often contentious and sometimes there will be no right or wrong answers. That being said, I believe there are good and bad arguments. Good arguments will be entertained in class (i.e. those that are logically sound and supported by the available evidence); bad arguments will not.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED EXAMS**

All assignments must be typed, printed out, stapled, and handed in at the beginning of class. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. If you are going to be absent on the day that an assignment is due it is your responsibility to get a classmate to turn it in for you. All major due dates are indicated: (a) in the attached course schedule and (b) on the calendar on our course website. Because I believe that one of the major lessons that students learn in college is the importance of meeting deadlines, I will not accept any late work unless it has been approved by me BEFORE the date it is due or you can document some sort of emergency. ***All assignments turned in late will receive a grade of 0.0.*** Likewise, ***missed exams will receive a grade of 0.0.*** Make-up exams will not be administered unless you receive prior permission from me or you can document some sort of catastrophe (such as being medically unable to take the exam).

## **GRADE COMPLAINTS**

If you wish to formally request a grade change, you must wait at least 24 hours and then turn in a written statement explaining why you feel your assigned grade did not reflect your work based on the grading criteria used. We will then make an appointment to discuss your grade in my office. I will only discuss your grade in my office, and not in class. The statute of limitations for a grade complaint is one week.

## **DISABILITY RESOURCES**

If you are a student who has a disability or a learning challenge and you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. The DRC office is located in B132. The phone number is 425-564-2498, and the website is: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc>.

If DRC provides you with documentation indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodation, please present that documentation to me at the beginning of the quarter so that we can begin working together as soon as possible to accommodate your needs in this class. The longer you wait to seek accommodation, the more difficult it will be for me to provide that accommodation.

### **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 ([http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050P\\_Student\\_Code\\_%28Procedures%29.asp](http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050P_Student_Code_%28Procedures%29.asp)).

Such behavior will result in a grade of 0.0 for the assignment/exam in question. Please note that these are serious offences, which can result in possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College and go on your permanent record. If you have questions about academic integrity, please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct and/or come talk to me during my office hours.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

The primary text for the course is Van Belle and Mash's *A Novel Approach to Politics* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). This text is available at the bookstore. Supplemental resources (readings, videos, etc.) will be made available on our class website, which can be accessed at [vista.bellevuecollege.edu](http://vista.bellevuecollege.edu). To access the supplemental materials click on the "Course Documents" button and then the "Supplemental Materials" folder. Please note that you are responsible for downloading (and printing) all supplemental readings and watching all supplemental videos as they are assigned. For those of you who do not have a printer at home you can print for free in the student computer lab in the N-Building. Please also note that ***each reading should 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 or video may be included in examination questions, regardless of whether it is specifically discussed in the classroom. A tentative course schedule is attached to this syllabus—it is also available on our course website. If and when adjustments are made to the reading schedule, you will be informed in class and on our class website. The assigned reading is an important part of this class—if you don't do the reading you are going to find it hard to succeed.

### **READING PROMPTS**

To help you get the most out of the reading, you will be provided with a prompt for nearly every assigned reading in this course. These prompts will be made available at least one class period before the reading is due and they will include a handful of reflection questions as well as a comprehensive list of key concepts. You are expected to engage with these prompts before, during, and after doing the reading. My primary purpose in creating these prompts is to help you focus on what is important in the reading, to help you get ready for our in-class discussions, and to help you prepare for assignments, quizzes, and exams. I expect everyone to bring a copy of each day's reading prompt to class on the day the reading is due. Please note that ***I will be collecting your prompts at the beginning of every class as a way to keep track of attendance***. You are encouraged to write answers to the reflection questions that I have provided on the

prompts themselves as well as to define the key concepts that I have listed. To give you extra incentive to do so, I will return your prompts to you when you take the midterm and final exams—if you’ve written a lot on your prompts they are likely to help you with the exams; if you haven’t they won’t.

### KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS

Please keep up with current political events. Our discussions in class will frequently 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](http://www.nytimes.com)), the *Washington Post* ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)), or the *Wall Street Journal* ([www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)). I also encourage international sources such as the *BBC* ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://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.

### GRADED WORK

Office Hours Visit	(5 pts)	1.25%
Credit/No-Credit On-Line Quiz	(5 pts)	1.25%
News Analysis	(15 pts)	3.75%
Film Review	(20 pts)	5%
Attendance	(20 pts)	5%
Political Knowledge Survey	(20 pts)	5%
Media Consumption Assignment	(25 pts)	6.25%
Participation	(40 pts)	10%
Weekly Journal	(50 pts)	12.5%
Midterm Exam	(100 pts)	25%
Final Exam	(100 pts)	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>(400 pts)</b>	<b>100%</b>

### GRADEPOINT CONVERSION CHART

Grade	Points	Percentage	Grade	Points	Percentage
A	372-400	93-100%	C	292-311	73-77%
A-	360-371	90-92%	C-	280-291	70-72%
B+	352-359	88-89%	D+	272-279	68-69%
B	332-351	83-87%	D	240-271	60-67%
B-	320-331	80-82%	F	0-239	59% & Below
C+	312-319	78-79%			

**OFFICE HOURS VISIT (5 PTS ~ 1.25%) (DUE MAY 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

To fulfill the requirements for this assignment, you need to visit me during my office hours once prior to the midterm. Research shows that making connections with faculty increases students' academic performance and satisfaction with their college experience. My weekly office hour calendar will be taped to my office door. Please come by any time and sign up. If you are unable to make my office hours because of a time conflict, in order to receive full credit you need to send me an email during the first two weeks of the quarter to arrange an alternative appointment time. The purpose of this office visit is twofold: (1) to break the ice so that you feel comfortable visiting my office and (2) for me to get to know you a bit better. See you soon!

**CREDIT/NO-CREDIT ON-LINE QUIZ (5 PTS ~ 1.25%) (DUE APRIL 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

This assignment requires you to read the syllabus and answer some logistical questions about the class. The quiz is available on our course website. To access the quiz just click on the "Assessment" button and you should see it. To get full credit for this assignment, you need to take the quiz before class begins on Monday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this quiz is to get you to read the syllabus and to make sure you can navigate your way around our course website.

**NEWS ANALYSIS (15 PTS ~ 3.75%) (DUE MAY 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

For this assignment you need to relate the topic of a news article (that you find on your own) to concepts that we have addressed in class. The analysis should include a brief summary and analysis of the article based on knowledge that you have gained in class. For example, you could explain how concepts you have learned in this course add insight to the topic of the article. Or, you could use what you have learned to predict the possible consequences or implications of the content of the article. To be more specific, if you were analyzing an article about global climate change you could write about market failures, externalities, the free rider problem, and the tragedy of the commons. Your write-up should be approximately one-page, single-spaced—typed with Times New Roman, 12 pt font, and 1-inch margins.

**FILM REVIEW (20 PTS ~ 5%) (DUE MAY 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011)**

For this assignment you will need to select a documentary film related to the topic of the course and write a one-page, single-spaced review of the film. There are a lot of good documentaries about politics out there. I am happy to offer suggestions if you aren't sure what to watch, but you need to tell me what you are interested in first. Whatever you decide to watch, make sure you clear it with me before completing this assignment. Like the news analysis assignment, in your write-up you should describe the film and discuss how the concepts you have been exposed to in the course relate to it. Your write-up should be approximately one-page, single-spaced—typed with Times New Roman, 12 pt font, and 1-inch margins.

**ATTENDANCE (20 PTS ~ 5%)**

Your presence in class is important as I cover a lot of material in class that cannot be found in the readings. Please note that more than one unexcused absence or late attendance will lower your grade, and continue to do so as you miss more classes. We are

scheduled to meet twenty-one times this quarter. One unexcused absence or late arrival will not adversely affect your grade, but ***starting with your second unexcused absence or late arrival you will be docked one point per day***—thus, if you miss or are late to two classes you will receive 19 out of 20 points, if you miss or are late to three classes you will receive 18 out of 20 points, if you miss or are late to four classes you will receive 17 out of 20 points, etc. To excuse an absence or late arrival, you must discuss it with me beforehand, unless it is the result of an emergency. Excused absences include documented doctor's visits, family emergencies, and sometimes work-related issues. If you miss class, you are expected to connect with one or more of your classmates to find out what you missed. I am happy to clarify what you missed during my office hours, but I will only do so after you have checked with at least one of your classmates first.

#### **POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE SURVEY (20 PTS ~ 5%) (DUE MAY 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011)**

This assignment requires you to administer a survey of fifteen questions to five Bellevue College students who you don't already know. Once you have completed the surveys, you will need to input the data that you collected into the excel template that I will make available to you. Once the data have been inputted, we will analyze the data together as a group. Once we have analyzed the data, each student will need to write their own reflection on the survey process and results. This write-up needs to be approximately one-page, single-spaced. The surveys need to be conducted and the data needs to be sent to me by April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Your write-ups are due on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011.

#### **MEDIA CONSUMPTION ASSIGNMENT (25 PTS ~ 6.25%) (DUE JUNE 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011)**

For the first part of this assignment you need to compile a log of your media consumption on two separate days. For each day, your assignment is to log all media activity, including: listening to the radio, surfing the Internet, reading the paper, talking on the phone, etc. For the second part of this assignment you need to analyze your personal media consumption and write a reflective essay about what it reveals about your relationship to the media environment. The purpose of this assignment is to get you to think critically about the role that media play in your life, the amount of media that you consume, what impact these media have on you as a consumer/citizen, etc. Beyond compiling your media consumption log no additional reading or research is necessary. This assignment is due on Blackboard on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Like all of your writing assignments, your reflection should be at least one page (single-spaced) in length. More specific directions for this assignment will be made available on Blackboard.

#### **PARTICIPATION (40 PTS ~ 10%)**

This class would be extremely dull if I did all the talking so please do your part to participate. It is impossible for you to participate if you are not in class, but participation is about more than just attendance. You are expected to come to every class having done ALL the assigned reading and homework, and you are expected to contribute to our in-class discussions—even if you are shy. Please come to every class with a pen or pencil, some paper, a copy of the assigned reading, and a copy of that day's reading prompt. It is worth pointing out that ***the BC guideline for homework is two hours outside of class for each hour spent in class!***

**\*Success Tip:** Don't be shy. Try to participate every day. If you are confused, ask me questions in class, during my office hours, or via email.

### **WEEKLY JOURNAL (50 pts ~ 12.5%) (DUE EVERY WEEK ON MONDAY)**

As a supplement to in-class discussion, I would like you to keep a reflective journal this quarter. The purpose of this journal is to stimulate your thinking about the material being covered in lecture and in the reading and to serve as a starting point for in-class discussions. You are responsible for writing one outside-of-class journal entry per week for a total of 10 entries. Each journal entry should be at least 250 words in length. Each week's journal prompts will be posted on our course website by 11:59 pm on Wednesdays. You must complete your journal entry by 9:30 am on the following Monday. Each journal entry is worth five points. Please let me know if you have any questions.

**\*Success Tip:** Take the journal prompts seriously and keep up with the assigned entries. Make sure you follow the instructions regarding the number of words.

### **MIDTERM EXAM (100 pts ~ 25%)**

Your *midterm will be held in class on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>*. 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. A study-guide will be made available to you a week before the exam.

**\*Success Tip:** Keep up with the assigned material and do not leave your exam preparation until the night before the exam. Take advantage of the review sheet. Form a study group with your classmates. Come to my office hours if you have questions.

### **FINAL EXAM (100 pts ~ 25%)**

Your *final will be held in class on Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup>*. This exam will not be cumulative; rather, it will cover the assigned readings, movies, lectures, guest presentations, and major current events discussed in class since the midterm exam. Like the midterm, the final exam will consist of a mix of question types, including: true-false, multiple-choice, identifications, short answer, and essay. A study-guide will be made available to you a week before the exam.