

## INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS

POLS 200

Spring 2017

Wed/Fri 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Multipurpose classroom building 207

**Instructor: Dr. Matthew Rhodes-Purdy**

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Office: Environmental Research Building 2157

Office Hours: Wed/Fri 2:00 – 3:00 PM or by appointment

### Course Overview

This course is designed to introduce students to the discipline of political science, as well as to the political science major at Boise State. Students will learn about applying the scientific method to political science research, as well as an overview of the four major subfields of political science (political theory, international relations, comparative politics, and American politics). Students will learn about the different emphases of the political science major at Boise State, and also become familiar with career opportunities for political science majors.

### Requirements

Your grade in the course is based on the following:

Exams (50%)

Research Paper (25%)

Research Presentations (15%)

Participation (10%)

**Exams:** There are three exams in this course. These exams will include content from both the readings and the lectures. Each exam is weighted equally and the exams are not cumulative. Each exam will ask you to respond to **seven** short answer (1-2 paragraphs); each exam will include **ten** questions. In other words, you will be able to choose three questions not to answer on each exam. **Please bring a blue book to each exam.**

**Research Paper:** You will be required to submit one roughly 10 page research paper. In this paper, you will apply concepts learned in this course. You will be asked to submit your topic and scholarly sources early in the process; failure to do so by the date indicated on the syllabus will result in your final research paper grade being docked by a full letter grade.

**Research Presentation:** You will be required to make one research presentation in this course. This will be a short presentation of your final paper. You should use this presentation to describe the outcome you are interested in and how you applied concepts from the course to this outcome.

Presentations should about 5 minutes long, and PowerPoint slides are highly recommended, though not required. You should email me the slides prior to class on the day you present.

Presentations are not covered under the late assignment policy. Barring a major emergency or illness, missed presentations will receive a score of 0.

I will circulate a sign up sheet later in the semester for you to schedule your presentations.

**Research Presentation Feedback:** During research presentations, you are expected to attend class and follow each student's presentation. During each presentation, there will be a brief question and answer session. For each presentation, you are required to submit 1 comment or question for the presenter. These should be taken down during the presentation and submitted via email to me once all presentations are completed. **This assignment requires attendance for all scheduled research presentations.** Your grade on this assignment will be based on the written assignment and your willingness to ask questions in class – I will moderate the Q and A sessions to ensure that all students who volunteer to provide feedback in class will have the opportunity to do so for at least 2-3 presentations.

**Participation:** This course is discussion based. Participation requires active participation in the class – this involves you doing the readings and participating in class discussions. Simply attending the class does not count towards participation credit. You are evaluated based on the *quality* of your participation rather than the *quantity*. Thoughtful or insightful comments that advance the class discussion and show understanding of the course concepts exemplify outstanding class participation.

Some students are extremely uncomfortable speaking up in class. Participation can also be fulfilled by coming to office hours to discuss course material.

### **Class Policies**

All assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of **10% off of the grade each day the assignment is late**. Excused late assignments will only be granted with proper documentation, and you must contact me PRIOR to the assignment due date. Out of class assignments will be turned in via Blackboard.

You must comply with the University honor code (<http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>). Violations of the honor code will be referred to the honor council and receive a grade of 0.

Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC. Please stop by Administration 114 or call 208-426-1583 to make an appointment with a disability specialist. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit their website at <http://drc.boisestate.edu>.

### **Materials**

Grigsby, Ellen, Thomas M. Magstadt, James Q. Wilson, John J. Dilulio, Jr., and Meena Bose. 2015. *Introduction to Politics, POLS 200 at Boise State University*. Belmont: Cengage Learning.

## Schedule (Subject to Change)

### Week 1 & 2 (Jan 9 - 20): Introduction to the Course; Political Science, an Overview

#### Introduction to Class; Political Science, an Overview

- Covers Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapters 1-2

#### Basic Concepts in Political Science

- Covers Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapter 3

NOTE: Class will be cancelled on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, for Martin Luther King Junior Day.

## PUBLIC LAW AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY EMPHASIS

### Week 3 (Jan 23 – Jan 27): Political Theory

#### Political Theory

- Covers Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapter 4

### Week 4: Political Theory Continued (Jan 30 – Feb 3);

#### Political Theory

- Covers Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapter 5

### Week 5: Exam 1: Basic concepts and Political Philosophy (Feb 6 – Feb 10);

Wednesday, Feb 8: Exam review

#### Friday, Feb 10: Exam 1

- This exam covers content from:
  - o Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapters 1-5

# **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/ COMPARATIVE POLITICS** **EMPHASIS**

## **Week 6: Comparative Politics (Feb 13 – Feb 17)**

### **Introduction to the Comparative Politics**

- Cover Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapter 9 & 10

## **Week 7: Comparative Politics Continued (Feb 20 – Feb 24)**

### **Advanced democracies: varieties of democracy and capitalism**

### **Developing countries: democratization, authoritarianism and conflict**

- Covers Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapter 5 & 6

## **Week 8: International Relations (Feb 27 – Mar 3)**

### **Theories in International Relations**

- Covers Introduction to Politics, Understanding Politics, Chapter 17

## **RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS AND SOURCES DUE MAR 3<sup>RD</sup>, AT 5:00 PM, VIA BLACKBOARD**

## **Week 9: International Relations (cont.), Exam 2 Review (Mar 6 – Mar 10)**

### **War**

- Covers Introduction to Politics, Understanding Politics, Chapters 15 & 18

## **Week 10: Exam 2 (Mar 13 – Mar 17)**

### **Wednesday, March 15: Exam 2 review**

### **Friday, March 17: Exam 2**

- This exam covers content from:
  - o Introduction to Politics, Analyzing Politics, Chapters 9-10
  - o Introduction to Politics, Understanding Politics, Chapters 5, 6, 15, 17, 18
  - o Lectures on Comparative and IR

## **AMERICAN POLITICS/ PUBLIC POLICY EMPHASIS**

### **Week 11: American Politics (Mar 27 – Mar 31)**

#### **The Constitution and the Founding**

- Covers Introduction to Politics, American Government, Chapter 2

#### **Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and the Judiciary**

- Covers Introduction to Politics, American Government, Chapter 6

### **Week 12: American Politics Continued (April 3 – April 7)**

#### **Political Parties and elections**

- Covers Introduction to Politics, American Government, Chapter 9

#### **American political institutions: Congress**

### **Week 13: American politics continued (April 10 – April 14)**

#### **American political institutions: The Presidency and the Bureaucracy**

#### **Interest Groups**

Research papers due **Friday, April 14, at 5:00 PM, via Blackboard.**

### **Week 14 & 15: Research presentations week (April 17 – April 28)**

Sign-up sheets for research presentations will be circulated mid-semester.

### **Final Exam – Wednesday, May 3, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

- This exam covers content from:
  - o Introduction to Politics, American Government, Chapters 2, 6, 9
  - o Lectures on American Government