

Spring 2014 ONLINE  
**POLS 110 Introduction to Political Science**  
Course Period: February 3rd - May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

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### Course Description

This course is designed to provide you with an understanding of politics in relation to society and culture. It is an introduction to the basic concepts, problems, systems, ideologies, and terminology of contemporary political science. A major objective of this course is to develop critical thinking skills - to go beyond surface level analyses of politics in order to uncover multiple and often opposing truths. We begin with the premise that "the political" permeates all of human activity, and it is our task in this course to identify and analyze "the political" in a variety of settings. The course is structured around reading a textbook, which will be supplemented with other readings, movies and documentaries that help to highlight the different themes we will be discussing.

### Office Hours

As this is an online course I will not be holding in-person office hours, but I will still be making myself available regularly. Feel free to email me directly at [gitte@hawaii.edu](mailto:gitte@hawaii.edu). I will be happy to answer your questions by email, or if needed we can set up a time to Skype.

### Plagiarism

If you present someone else's words or ideas as your own, you are plagiarizing them. Plagiarism is a form of theft and academic dishonesty. Some examples include doing any of the following without proper citation: cutting and pasting text from a website, paraphrasing another person's ideas, directly copying words from any source (book, journal, script), etc. Doing any of the above is cheating and will result in serious consequences. Any work that is deemed to include plagiarized material will be failed.

I understand that generally people resort to plagiarism when they are under pressure for various reasons: work, family, relationships, or simply not understanding the material. Please talk to me if you are having trouble with the work. We will work something out together that will be much better than cheating and failing.

If you have any questions about the plagiarism policy of the school please see the UHM Student Conduct Code: [www.hawaii.edu/ail/students/plagiarism.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/ail/students/plagiarism.html). For all UHM policies on academic integrity please see this page: [http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/students/conduct/impermissible\\_behavior.html](http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/students/conduct/impermissible_behavior.html).

### Services to students with disabilities

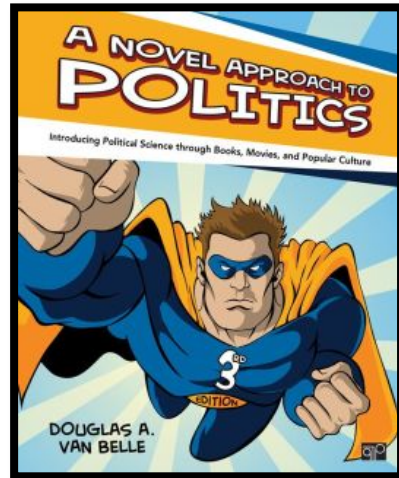
If you have any kind of disability and you are concerned about access to the course or completing the required work, I encourage you to contact KOKUA. The KOKUA program is

located on the ground floor of the Student Services Center, online (<http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>), and can also be reached by phone at 956-7511.

### Required Reading

You are expected to acquire one book for this course:

- Douglas A. Van Belle. *A Novel Approach to Politics: Introducing Political Science through Books, Movies, and Popular Culture*. Third Edition. Victoria University at Wellington. 2012.



All other materials for the course will be posted on Lulima.

### Assignments

All assignments should be typed, single-spaced, 12 point font, with proper grammar, spelling, and sentence structure. For assignments turned in electronically please make sure that your files are word documents (the file ending should be **.doc** or **.docx**).

### Grading

Your final grade will be based on your grades for three analytical essays, your participation in class forums, and your final paper. The three essays will be worth 15% each, the forum participation 20%, and your final paper will count for 35% of your grade.

Three analytical essays - 45%

Forum participation - 20%

Final paper - 35%

### Analytical Essays

You will complete three analytical essays during the semester. These essays should be about 1200 - 1500 words in length and will respond to a broad question pertaining to issues we have worked with in class. I will post the question at least three weeks prior to each deadline. The essays are designed to help you practice applying the material presented in readings, movies and forums in order to describe and analyze this material in response to a specific question. You will be able to answer the questions based on class materials; you are not expected to conduct outside research, however you are welcome to include outside aspects if something relevant comes to mind for you. When I post the first question, I will also post a more specific description of what is required for each essay. All essays should be submitted online to [gitte@hawaii.edu](mailto:gitte@hawaii.edu). **The essays are due Friday at noon of week 4, 7 and 10.**

### Forum Participation

In order to keep you committed on reading and viewing all the assigned material, you will be expected to post a reaction (at least 2 paragraphs) each week relating to the material of that week. Additionally, you will be expected to post at least two comments to fellow student's reactions (at least a short paragraph). I will also participate in your forums and you are

welcome to respond to my posts too. **The deadline for forum posts will be every Friday at noon.** In order to give your fellow students a chance to have some reactions to comment on, I encourage you to get these posts in earlier in the week rather than later.

### Final paper

Your final project is a paper about a topic related to the course that you wish to explore further. The length of the paper is about 5000 words. For this paper you are expected to include knowledge you have gained from the readings and assignments of the course as well as additional outside research on your topic of choice. The task here is to write a coherent presentation, exploration and critical discussion of a topic. You will be graded on your ability to critically analyze rather than summarize your findings. **The final paper is due on the last day of class - Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup>** - and is to be submitted to [gitte@hawaii.edu](mailto:gitte@hawaii.edu). I will supply a more detailed description of what is expected from the final paper in the beginning of the semester.

## Course Schedule

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Prior to the readings and viewings for each week, I will upload either a reading or a viewing guide with some questions so you know what to look for, think about and perhaps respond to in the weekly online forum.

### Week 1: Introduction and Syllabus

- Van Belle, Chapter 1: Introducing popular culture as a tool for exploring politics. Distinguishing Ideologies from Theories. What is Politics? What is Political Science?
- Watch the RSA Animation *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* in which political philosopher Slavoj Žižek discusses ethics, capitalism and charity.

### Week 2: Security and Anarchy

- Van Belle, Chapter 2: Security, Power, Anarchy, Alliances, Groups. Resisting or relying on government?
- Read the introduction to John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*.
- Read part I of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*.

### Week 3: Governing Society

- Van Belle, Chapter 3: The Panopticon, Collective Action, Revolution, Control, Elections, Public Goods, Force and Legitimacy.
- Read excerpts from Michel Foucault's *Society must be defended* and *The Birth of Biopolitics*.

### Week 4: Government's Role in the Economy

- Van Belle, Chapter 4. The Concept of the Commons, Karl Marx, Communism, Capitalism, Labor, Socialism.
  - Watch Naomi Klein's documentary *The Shock Doctrine, The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*.
- First analytical essay due.**

#### Week 5: Structures and Institutions

- Van Belle, Chapter 5. Human nature and political Institutions. Legitimacy and information.
- Read about Egypt and the Arab Spring (current material will be chosen closer to the day of class).

#### Week 6: Leaders: Kings, Presidents and Democratic Executives

- Van Belle, Chapter 6. Religious and authoritarian oligarchy, democratic executives as heads of states and governments.
- Watch Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln*.

#### Week 7: The Legislative Function

- Van Belle, Chapter 7. Lawmaking, legislative representation, parliamentary and presidential systems.
- Watch Schoolhouse Rock's *I'm Just a Bill*.

#### Week 8: Courts and Law

- Van Belle, Chapter 9. Law in theory versus practice, functions of courts, legal systems.
- Read excerpts from Sally Engle Merry's *Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law*.
- **Second analytical essay due.**

#### Week 9: The Democratic Ideal

- Van Belle, Chapter 10. Democracy, the liberal ideal, direct and representative democracy.
- Read Fareed Zakaria's article *The Rise of Illiberal Democracy*.

#### Week 10: Media, Politics and Government

- Van Belle, Chapter 11. News Media, The Business of News, Political Conflict as Soap Opera, Conspiracies.
- Watch the documentary *Outfoxed! Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism*

#### Week 11: International Politics

- Van Belle, Chapter 12. War and Conflict. Fear.
- Watch the documentary *War Made Easy*.
- **Third analytical essay due.**

#### Week 12: Summing it up

- Van Belle, Chapter 15. Subfields of Political Science within the Study of Politics and Applied Politics.
- This week we will also take time to discuss your final papers.

#### Week 13: **Final Paper Due**