

Spring 2015

# POLS 110 Introduction to Political Science

Monday and Wednesday 10.30-11.45am in Kuykendall 305

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Office: Saunders 633 | Office hours: TBA

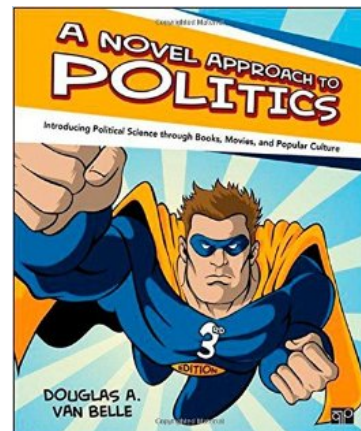
## Course Description

This course is designed to provide you with an understanding of politics in relation to society and culture. It is an introduction to 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 reading and viewing other material that helps to highlight the different political themes we will be discussing.

## 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. The book is available at the UH bookstore. All other materials for the course will be provided on the class website.



## Grading

For your final class grade, as well as for each assignment, I will be grading as follows:

A: 90-100% | B: 80-89% | C: 70-79% | D: 60-69% | F: >60%

The final grade is made up as follows:

- Attendance and participation in class discussions 40%
- Exam I 15%
- Exam II 15%
- Final Paper 30%

## Attendance and participation

I will not only be taking attendance, but will also be grading you based on how much you participate in the class discussions. It's not about contributing with brilliant insights or saying the smartest and most correct things, but about being engaged and participating by voicing thoughts, questions, confusions and so on. I will do my utmost to develop a classroom where everyone can feel safe to speak. It is my big hope that everyone joining the class will help to ensure this.

## Exams I and II

Through the semester there will be two exams. Both will be in-class, with no materials available. The questions will be short-answer questions relating to the bigger themes we have discussed in class (in other words I won't be asking about tiny details). If you are following along well in the course, these exams shouldn't be a problem for you.

## Final Paper: Political Science Research Project (2000-2500 words)

Your final project is about a topic related to the course that you wish to explore further. For this project, 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. Your project should refer to at least 10 different sources (materials from in class as well as out of class). The task here is to present a coherent presentation, exploration/analysis and critical discussion of a topic. You will be graded on your ability to critically analyze rather than summarize your findings. Before you submit the final version of your paper, we will have an in-class peer-reviewed writing workshop where you will get feedback on your paper from me as well as from other students.

## Weekly Schedule

One class of every week will be spent on working through a chapter from our textbook. These days I will also assign or show you a newspaper article, tv- or YouTube clip, a blog post, or something else that touches upon a political issue that is unfolding currently. The idea is that we get to discuss the politics of what is going on right now, and relate this to what we are learning.

When there isn't a holiday or an exam the other day of the week, we will discuss a reading or documentary movie that pertains to the theme from the textbook chapter from that week.

# Course Schedule

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## Week 1:

Monday January 12<sup>th</sup>

- Introductions, fun name games and review of syllabus.
- Watch the RSA animation "first as tragedy then as farce" with Slavoj Žižek.

Wednesday January 14<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 1, the Ideal versus the Real. Introducing the debate: the Ideal versus the Real. Fiction as a tool for exploring politics. Utopias, Ideologies.
- Current events.

## Week 2:

Monday January 19<sup>th</sup>

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no class.

Wednesday January 21<sup>st</sup>

- Chapter 2, Why Government? Collective action, Security, Power, Anarchy, Alliances, Hierarchy, Groups and group identities.
- Current events.

## Week 3:

Monday January 26<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 3, Governing society. The Panopticon, Collective Action, Revolution, Control, Elections, Public Goods, Force and Legitimacy.
- Current events.

Wednesday January 28<sup>th</sup>

- Read excerpts from Michel Foucault's lectures *Society must be defended* and *the Birth of Biopolitics*

## Week 4:

Monday February 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Chapter 4, Government's role in the economy. The Concept of the Commons, Karl Marx, Socialism, Communism, Capitalism, Labor.
- Current events.

Wednesday February 4<sup>th</sup>

- Watch Naomi Klein's documentary *The Shock Doctrine, The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2009).

## Week 5:

Monday February 9<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 5, Structures and Institutions. Human Nature and Political Institutions. Design your own institutions.
- Current events.

Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup>

- Read excerpts from Didier Fassin's *Enforcing Order – An Ethnography of urban policing* (2013)

## Week 6:

Monday February 16<sup>th</sup>

- Presidents Day, no class.

Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 6, The Executive. Kings, Presidents, Authoritarian Oligarchy, Democratic Executives, Heads of state and Heads of government.
- Current events.

## Week 7:

Monday February 23<sup>rd</sup>

- Chapter 7, The legislative function. History, Religion, Lawmaking, Legislative Representation, Legislation in Parliamentary versus Presidential systems, Coalition politics, authoritarian legislation.
- Current events.

Wednesday February 25<sup>th</sup>

- Read excerpts from Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson's *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer - and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*.

## Week 8:

Monday March 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Chapter 8, Bureaucracy. What is bureaucracy and do we really want it? Ideals of bureaucracy, Policymaking versus administration, bureaucratic roles, flaws in bureaucracy.
- Current events.

Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup>

- **Exam I**

## Week 9:

Monday March 9<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 9, Law and Politics. Law in the books versus law in action, Functions of courts, Legal systems, Jurisprudence, Private, Public, Criminal, Civil, Federal, State and International Law, Review of the constitution.
- Current events.

Wednesday March 11<sup>th</sup>

- Read excerpts from Walter R. Echo-Hawk's *In The Courts of the Conqueror: The 10 Worst Indian Law Cases Ever Decided* (2012)

## Week 10:

Monday March 16<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 10, The democratic ideal. Democracy, the liberal ideal, direct and representative democracy.

Wednesday March 18<sup>th</sup>

- Read Fareed Zakaria's article *The Rise of Illiberal Democracy*.
- Read Larry M. Bartels' article *Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind*

## Week 11: SPRING BREAK

## Week 12:

Monday March 30<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 11, Media, Politics and government. News Media, The Business of News, Political Conflict and Soap Opera, Conspiracies, understanding distortions.
- Current events.

Wednesday April 1<sup>st</sup>

- Read the introductory article and hear the podcast *How Biased Is Your Media?* from Freakonomics; <http://freakonomics.com/2012/02/16/how-biased-is-your-media/>

## Week 13:

Monday April 6<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 12: International Politics. Causes of war, anarchy, realism and war, challenging the realist paradigm.
- Current events.

Wednesday April 8<sup>th</sup>

- Read excerpts from Timothy Mitchell's *Carbon Democracy – Political Power in the Age of Oil* (2010)

#### Week 14:

Monday April 13<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 14, Political Culture. Culture as explanation, social distance, culture as politics, cultural ownership, what is culture?
- Current events.

Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup>

- Read Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller and Noenoe K. Silva's article "Sharks and Pigs: Animating Hawaiian Sovereignty against the Anthropological Machine," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 110:2, Spring 2011.

#### Week 15:

Monday April 20<sup>th</sup>

##### **Exam II**

Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup>

- Hawaiian Politics. Read excerpts from Noenoe K. Silva's *Aloha Betrayed* (2004)

#### Week 16:

Monday April 27<sup>th</sup>

- Hawaiian Politics continued. Today we will explore the website about the Hawaiian Patriots Project. <http://www.kamakakoi.com/hawaiianpatriots/HawaiianPatriotProject>.

Wednesday April 29<sup>th</sup>

- Chapter 15, Subfields and applied subfields. American politics, International Relations, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, Public Policy, Public Administration, Public Law, Methodological divisions in the study of politics.
- **Draft one of final paper due**

#### Week 17:

Monday May 4<sup>th</sup>

- Peer reviewed writing workshop. Work on your final paper.

Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup>

- Summing up, final paper Q&A, evaluation and cake 😊

#### Week 18:

**FINAL PAPER DUE Wednesday May 13<sup>th</sup> at noon**

## General Policies

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious offence that I do not look lightly upon. 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 and I will not hesitate to report any instances of plagiarism to the UH office of judicial affairs. 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).

### Students with disabilities

If you have a hidden or visible disability, which may require class or testing accommodations, please talk to me as soon as possible or let me know via email. If you are a student with a documented disability and have not voluntarily disclosed the nature of your disability and the support you need, you are invited to contact the The KOKUA program on campus (956-7511), which coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### Non-tolerance policy towards discrimination

I uphold the University of Hawaii's nondiscrimination policy in my classes.

UHM does not tolerate discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, national origin, ancestry, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, arrest and court record, or associational preference. Any discriminatory acts or language (in class or online) will not be tolerated.