

POLS 406

Senior Seminar in Political Science

Professor Ehito Kimura
Political Science 406
Spring 2016, Wednesday 1:30-4pm
Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30-11 am and by appointment
Office: Saunders Hall Room 610, Department of Political Science

Course Description

Senior Seminar in Political Science is designed as a capstone to the political science major. In this class, students are challenged to take their learning experience into their own hands. Looking broadly at the issue of power and the political, students will actively shape the curriculum, readings, assignments, and the activities of this course. The class meets weekly and involves heavy discussion as well as regular reading and writing assignments. While specific topics and activities will vary, we will be addressing the question of how power operates from a critical perspective especially exploring local, national, and global contexts.

Student Learning Objectives

Student learning objectives for the department include the following:

1. Students will be able to think critically and historically about power and the political.
2. Students will be able to craft and defend evidence-based arguments.
3. Students will be able to communicate effectively in public settings, with attention to and appreciation of diverse cultural contexts.
4. Students will be able to cogently explain the interconnectedness of local and global dynamics of power in the context of the political and cultural specificities of Hawai`i nei.

Course Structure and Assignments

This course will be divided roughly into four parts.

The first one is an introduction to explore how to think and communicate effectively about power and the political. We will take one field trip, have one class on research, and one session on critical pedagogy.

The second part of the course will consist of student led sessions on topics of their own choosing that relate to global, national, and/or local kinds of political issues. With guidance from the instructor and feedback from peers, students will assign readings, plan and lead class and assess relevant assignments.

The third part of the course will involve organizing and hosting speakers or events to reflect on the interconnectedness of the theory and practice of the political in the “real world.”

The final part of the course is devoted to experiential ‘sandbox’ activities where students will work collaboratively to design political institutions and experiences through mock activities and simulations.

Grading:

Attendance and Participation:	10%
Reaction Papers and Writing Assignments	30%
Teaching Session:	20%
Group Project (Group Grade)	10%
Group Project (Individual Grade)	10%
Simulation/Sandbox:	20%

Course Policies

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory. As the class only meets once a week, three unexcused absences will be grounds for failing the class.

Deadlines: Assignments submitted late will be docked one full letter grade every 24 hours past deadline.

Emergencies: If there are unforeseen events that prevent you from performing in this class, it is important that you contact me and communicate how we can resolve the situation.

Academic Integrity: Please refer to the UHM website on academic dishonesty and related issues <http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/students/conduct/impermissible_behavior.html>. All such matters will be referred to the department chair.

Disability Issues: Please see me and refer to the UH Kokua Program on issues related to disability. <<http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>> I am more than happy to make accommodations on all aspects of the course on a case-by-case basis.

Summary Course Schedule (See Lualima for more details)

1/13/2016	Introductions
1/20/2016	Field Trip: Opening Day at the Legislature
1/27/2016	Debrief and Presentations on Opening Day
2/3/2016	Library Session on Research
2/10/2016	Critical Thinking and Pedagogy
2/17/2016	Student Led Sessions 1 and 2
2/24/2016	Student Led Sessions 3 and 4
3/2/2016	Student Led Sessions 5 and 6
3/9/2016	Student Led Sessions 7 and 8
3/16/2016	Student Led Sessions 9 and 10
3/23/2016	Spring Break
3/30/2016	Guest Speaker and Discussion
4/6/2016	Guest Speaker and Discussion
4/13/2016	Practicing Politics: Field/Service Activity
4/20/2016	Simulation / Sandbox Activity
4/27/2016	Simulation / Sandbox Activity
5/4/2016	Simulation / Sandbox Activity