

UNIVERSITY of ALBERTA

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS
POL S 101 A1

Fall 2008

MWF 10:00-10:50

TB 95

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Beyond the clichéd comment that ‘everything is political,’ defining the focus of Political Science, both as a discipline of study and as an arena of human interaction, is quite difficult. As a discipline, Political Science is traditionally organised into four different fields of study – political theory, domestic (or Canadian) politics, comparative politics, and international relations – but these divisions are not absolute and often overlap. Moreover, in conceiving political science as an arena of human behaviour, its definition becomes even more murky as it encompasses topics as wide ranging as the foundational concepts of liberty and equality, the evolution of the modern state system and capitalism, and even the examination of the everyday politics of gender, class, and race. By focusing on power – in all its facets – Political Science touches on every aspect of human behaviour.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: None

POL S 101 is the prerequisite for all second-year POL S courses except POL S 221 and POL S 299. It is essential for first-year Political Science majors and minors or people who are considering Political Science to take POLS 101. Not open to students with credit in POL S 100 or 103. *Policy about course outlines, grading and related matters can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.*

COURSE GOALS:

This introductory course for Political Science has two overlapping objectives:

- As an introduction to the study of politics, this course is designed to familiarise students with the key and enduring concepts that help us understand the political world and contemporary political controversies;
- By emphasising critical thinking and critical analysis, this course seeks to encourage students to develop their own perspectives on major political issues through discussion and debate.

CLASS FORMAT:

Classes will be organised as both lectures and seminars; both the Monday and Wednesday classes will consist of lectures but the Friday classes will be separated into smaller seminars at eight points in the semester in order to allow students to explore contemporary political issues in further detail through

critical reflection and discussion. As such, students are expected to complete all of the readings and come to class prepared to discuss these readings through questions and comments.

OFFICE HOURS:

Office hours for the instructor will be held on Wednesday from 9:00-10:00. If you are unable to make this time, please email me at dvpreece@ualberta.ca to set up an appointment.

COURSE TEXTS:

Janine Brodie and Sandra Rein. 2008. *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics, Fourth Edition*. Toronto: Pearson Education Canada. (ISBN 0132237660)

Additional readings will be available electronically through WebCT.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

The course requirements are outlined below. Students should note that in all but exceptional situations, all components of the course must be completed to receive a passing grade. Policy regarding missed term work is outlined in Section 23.4(3) of the University Calendar. While examinations will be assigned a numeric grade, participation and the written assignments will be assigned a letter grade. The final grade will be determined by the grading scheme outlined below. Nevertheless, the instructor will not 'curve' or adjust final grades according to any preset formula.

Students have the option of participating in two possible streams for their major assignment: the persuasive letter stream or the community service learning stream. Please note that every attempt has been made to make these two options as equitable as possible in terms of time and expectations. While both options will be elaborated in class and on WebCT, they are briefly described below.

Evaluation of the following course requirements will determine students' grades:

- ***Class Participation:*** 10% of course grade

Despite the size of the class, a considerable amount of time will be allowed for student discussion, allowing each student to apply the concepts and theories through discussing the key issues and problems central to the study of politics. However, the participation mark will be determined on the basis of quality of participation and not quantity. In other words, it is not essential for a student to talk continuously throughout the class in order to receive a high participation mark. Rather, the scope of participation will be evaluated on both the degree to which arguments are not merely opinions, but grounded in both the lectures and readings, and the degree to which each student engages with the arguments forwarded by other students in the seminar.

- ***Major Assignment:*** 30% of course grade

Students have the option of participating in two possible streams for their major assignment: the persuasive letter stream or the community service learning stream. Students must decide which option they want to take by **Sept. 12**.

Option 1—Persuasive letter stream

Rather than a traditional research paper, students will write a persuasive letter to their Member of Parliament, asking the MP to vote in a particular manner on a bill currently being debated within the House of Commons. This written assignment has been broken into three components:

- 1) Critical Assessment of Legislation, due in class on **Oct. 8** and worth 30% of major assignment mark.
- 2) Annotated Bibliography, due in class on **Nov. 5** and worth 35% of written assignment mark.
- 3) Persuasive Letter, due in class on **Dec. 3** and worth 35% of written assignment mark.

Option 2—Community service learning stream

Community Service Learning (CSL) is an approach to learning that integrates community engagement into academic courses (see the CSL Guidebook and www.arts.ualberta.ca/csl). The CSL Program in Arts has worked with local community organizations to develop a number of projects appropriate for students in POLS 101. While the projects vary, *each CSL student will be expected to contribute twenty hours of time* to the community placement of his or her choice during the term.

On the first day of class, all interested students will receive a list of CSL partner organizations with descriptions of placements, and a copy of the CSL guidebook. By **September 12**, all students who are interested in the CSL option should contact me by email, specifying which two organizations they would most like to work with and why. There are only a certain number of placement spots available, so your first choice may not be available. Be prepared to work with either organization that you select. The first 25 students to send me an email explaining their choices will receive confirmation from me telling them that they may proceed to the next step. Once you receive confirmation, contact your selected organization, and tell them that you are a CSL student from “POLS 101: Introduction to Politics,” and arrange to meet with a representative from that organization to get started. Community organizations are busy, so be persistent but polite about trying to reach them.

Fill out the CSL Student Agreement form (see CSL guidebook), which details how you will work with that organization—your participation in CSL is official only once your agreement form has been signed by your community partner and returned to me. The Student Agreement form must be returned in class no later than **Wednesday, September 24, 2008**. Students who choose the CSL option will be expected to begin placements by the end of September.

For the class project, CSL students will be expected to use a combination of reflection on their community experiences, analysis of their organization’s documents/web sites, and course material. Assessment for the CSL option has been broken into two components:

- 1) Critical reflection journal, due in class at three points in the semester (**Oct 8, Oct. 29, and Nov. 19**) and worth 75% of the major assignment mark
- 2) Group presentation either **Nov. 24, 26, or 28** and worth 25% of the major assignment mark

- **Mid-Term Examination:** 30% of course grade

The mid-term exam will consist of two components: part 1 will be held on **Oct 15** and part 2 will be held on **Oct. 17**. More details will be announced in class.

- **Final Examination:** 30% of course grade

A final exam will be held during the exam period and is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, December 11 at 9:00. More precise details will be announced in class. In addition, final exams for the last three years are available at the online Exam registry for study purposes.

GRADING SCHEME:

<i>Descriptor</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Grade Point</i>
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	D	1.0
Failure	F	0

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC HONESTY:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. An important excerpt from the Code of Student Behaviour is appended at the end of this syllabus. Additional information and resources are available through the UofA's Truth in Education project: <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>.

SPECIALIZED SUPPORT & DISABILITY SERVICES:

Students with disabilities or special needs that might interfere with their performance should contact the professor at the beginning of the course with the appropriate documentation. Every effort will be made to accommodate such students, but in all cases prior arrangements must be made to ensure that any special needs can be met in a timely fashion and in such a way that the rest of the class is not put at an unfair disadvantage. Students requiring special support or services should be registered with the office of Specialized Support & Disability Services (SSDS): <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/SSDS/>. This is particularly important for students requiring special exam arrangements. Once you have registered with SSDS, it is your responsibility to provide the instructor with a "Letter of Introduction" and, if necessary, an "Exam Instruction & Authorization" form.

FEELING OVERWHELMED? (In need of student, social, financial or security services?):

The Student Distress Centre is there to listen, offer support, supply information and provide services:

- Call: 492-HELP (492-4357)
- Drop in: 030-N in the S.U.B.
- Visit: www.su.ualberta.ca/sdc
- Chat: <http://www.campuscrisischat.com/>

OTHER INFORMATION:

Citation format: The citation format required in this class is the APA citation style.

Late assignments: It is your responsibility to inform the instructor as soon as it becomes clear that your work will be late. If you do not communicate in advance, and your reason for being late does not also explain this lack of communication, then you should be prepared to be penalised by one grade per day (e.g. an assignment that would have received a grade of A-, but was two days late, will instead receive a grade of B). Justified lateness includes, among others, sickness and death in the family and you will have to submit proper medical or other professional documentation with the late work.

Submission of assignments: All assignments must be submitted in class and I will not accept faxes or email attachments of any assignments.

Current events: In addition to weekly readings, students are strongly encouraged to read either daily, weekly, or monthly newspapers in order to be aware of current events. Many news organisations are available for free on-line:

- The CBC: www.cbc.ca
- The BBC: www.bbc.co.uk
- Edmonton Journal: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/index.html>
- The Globe and Mail: www.globeandmail.com

LECTURE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS:

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic/ Readings</i>
1	Sept. 3	<i>Introduction to class</i>
	Sept. 5	<i>What is Political Science?</i> Chapter 1, Brodie and Rein text
2	Sept. 8, 10, & 12	<i>Foundations of Political Theory</i> Chapters 2, 3, and 4, Brodie and Rein text
3	Sept. 15 & 17	<i>Critical Approaches and Lens, pt 1</i> Chapters 5 and 14, Brodie and Rein text
	Sept. 19	Seminar 1: <i>Do the Numbers Matter?</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
4	Sept. 22 & 24	<i>Critical Approaches and Lens, pt 2</i> Chapters 17 and 18, Brodie and Rein text
	Sept. 26	Seminar 2: <i>TBA</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
5	Sept. 29 & Oct 1	<i>Governance and Government</i> Chapters 6 and 7, Brodie and Rein text

	Oct. 3	Seminar 3: <i>The Shrinking State?</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
6	Oct. 6 & 8	<i>The Administration of Justice</i> Chapters 8 and 9, Brodie and Rein text
	Oct. 10	Seminar 4: <i>TBA</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
7	Oct. 13	Thanksgiving—no class
	Oct. 15 and 17	Mid-term exam
8	Oct. 20 & 22	<i>Choosing Representatives</i> Chapters 10 and 11, Brodie and Rein text
	Oct. 24	Seminar 5: <i>Party Discipline and Crossing the Floor</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
9	Oct. 27 & 29	<i>Citizenship and Community</i> Chapters 12 and 13, Brodie and Rein text
	Oct. 31	Seminar 6: <i>Are There Limits to Citizenship?</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
10	Nov. 3 & 5	<i>Culture and Diversity</i> Chapters 15 and 16, Brodie and Rein text
	Nov. 7	Seminar 7: <i>Reasonable Accommodation</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
11	Nov. 10	Remembrance Day—no class
	Nov. 12 & 14	<i>International Relations</i> Chapters 20 and 22, Brodie and Rein text
12	Nov. 17 & 19	<i>International Political Economy</i> Chapters 24 and 27, Brodie and Rein text
	Nov. 21	Seminar 8: <i>Third World Debt</i> Seminar readings available electronically on WebCT
13	Nov. 24, 26, & 28	CSL Presentations
14	Dec. 1 & 3	<i>Globalisation and Governance</i> Chapters 23 and 26, Brodie and Rein text

EXCERPTS FROM THE CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

(UPDATED EFFECTIVE MAY 12,2006)

30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2) a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2) b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6 (4).

30.3.2(2) c No Student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student's own work.

30.3.2(2) d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2) e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. See also 30.3.2(2) b, c, d and e.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

The Truth In Education (T*I*E) project is a campus wide educational campaign on Academic Honesty. This program was created to let people know the limits and consequences of inappropriate academic behavior. There are helpful tips for Instructors and Students.

Please take the time to visit the website at:

<http://www.ualberta.ca/tie>