

Introduction to Political Science

POL 101.003

Fall 2007

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Contact Information

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Office Hours

Monday: 1:15 – 2:05

Wednesday 1:15 – 3:05

Friday: 1:15-2:05 or by
appointment.

Purpose

Welcome to Introduction to Political Science. This course provides the necessary background for further work in the various fields of the discipline: American politics, comparative politics, international politics, and political philosophy¹.

This course is designed to provide you with a general understanding of how political scientist study the phenomena of politics, and deepen your understanding and your role as both a critical thinker and participant within the body politic. This course will focus on the basic principles important to the field of political science and highlight the ideas important to political scientists in the study of politics. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between race, class, gender and politics.

The intention of this class is to introduce you to the *concepts, terms, theories, and methods* important in the discipline of political science and discuss how they are applied, their empirical uses and different techniques employed by political scientist across the discipline. Finally, this class will challenge you to engage in critical analysis and review by applying some of the theories and concepts in discussion and written work.

¹ Department of Political Science web page: Grinnell College,
www.grinnell.edu/academic/polisci/introduction.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance Policy: Although this is technically a lecture class, the quality still heavily depends on you. Therefore, it is important that you attend all scheduled classes. Remember to notify me in advance of any anticipated absences (due to sports, observance of religious holidays, or a College related activity). **Please make note of the following:**

- More than 3 unexcused absences during the course of the semester **will** result in an “F” for participation. (In the interest of clarification, absences that are not “officially” sanctioned by the College or those that are not cleared with me in advance will be considered unexcused).
- 2 or more absences (for any reason other than those officially cleared by the College) **may** result in a reduction of one grade point in your overall participation grade.

Religious Holidays: Please inform me in advance if you will miss a class, will not be able to submit a paper, or take a scheduled exam due to an official religious holiday so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

Students with Special Needs: I encourage students with documented disabilities, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, attention deficit/hyperactive disorder, psychiatric disabilities to discuss with me, after class or during my office hours. You will also need to provide documentation of your disability to the Associate Dean and Director of Academic Advising, Joyce Stern, (x3702).

Statement on Academic Honesty: Before beginning work on your papers or take-home exams, I recommend that you visit the page on citation posted by the Writing Lab. The link to that site is <http://www.grinnell.edu/academic/writinglab/ethicaluse/>. If you have any questions or uncertainties about my expectations, please ask me directly.

Note: I abide by the College’s stated policy on academic honesty and will submit all suspected cases of academic dishonesty directly to the Committee on Academic Standing.

A Word about Participation

Active participation is an important component of your grade. In addition to your composite grade (it is worth 15 points), your participation will play an integral role in the quality of your classroom experience. To that end, you should come to class prepared to discuss the readings to the best of your ability. This not only includes what you understand, but what you do not as well. Active participation does not mean that you have to say a lot. Quality of participation is more important than quantity. Most important, I expect that you will have carefully read and analyzed all assigned materials. It is not possible to achieve a nuanced understanding of the materials if you do not allow yourself the appropriate amount of time to read them carefully.

Ways to improve your participation grade include:

Asking questions about lecture or discussion (especially if you are confused about a concept being discussed). If you don’t feel comfortable asking questions in the actual class you can always write your question down and either email it to me or give it to me (in written form);

- Volunteering to be group spoke-person or secretary during group activities;
- Actively participation in small group and class discussions;
- Participating in or starting a class discussion on the course discussion page on Pioneer Web;
- Finally, submitting your discussion questions and notes **on-time** on your assigned days!

Class Format

This class is designed as a lecture/discussion course meeting MWF. On a typical week, I will lecture on Mondays, Wednesdays will be used as clarification/wrap-up days, and Fridays for discussions and exercises.

Course Secretaries and Discussion Questions

Every Monday two members of the class will be assigned as the “secretaries” for that class session. The job of the secretary is to take the notes for Monday’s class session; their notes will then be distributed to the class via P-Web to the entire class (though it is assumed that all students will also keep their own personal notes as well).

Secretaries should email their notes to me by 4pm Tuesday (failure to do so will result in an automatic “F” for that portion of your grade) so that I can post them on P-Web for Wednesday’s class. **ALL** students should bring a copy of the notes to class on Wednesday.

Each Friday we will discuss topics related to the assigned readings. Secretaries are required to submit questions and discussion topics for Friday’s discussion. Secretaries **must** meet with me Wednesday after class *prior* to preparing the discussion topic and questions for Friday’s discussion. Secretaries should meet with *each other* to decide on the discussion topics and questions for Friday’s class. Discussion questions and topics need to be emailed to me by **1:00pm Thursday**.

Please note: Failure to meet with me prior to preparing your discussion topic/questions will result in a ½ point reduction in the overall grade for this assignment. Failure to email your questions and topics by 1:00 will result in a .5 deduction in your overall grade for every hour your assignment is late.

Grading

Your grade in the class is based on a basic point system. **Note:** the due dates for assignments are **firm**. I will subtract 3 points for each day an assignment is late.

I will also allow for extra credit points at certain times throughout the class.

Assignment	Due Date	Point Value
Note-taking/Discussion Assignment	Ongoing	20 points
Participation	On-going	15 points
Midterm	10/19	20 points
Final	TBA	25 points
Ideology Presentations/Papers	11/19 & 11/21	15 points
Assignments	On-going	5 points

Required Materials

- Michael G. Roskin et al. *Political Science: An Introduction*, Ninth ed. New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006.
- Additional readings are underlined and will either appear on Blackboard or are placed on electronic reserve with the library.
- One notebook for assignments.

Additional Reading

Many of the examples that I will use during lectures are drawn from current events. Therefore I suggest that you remain as up-to-date as possible with respect to both domestic and world politics. You can do this a number of ways: by availing yourself of the resources at Burling Library, listening to reputable news such as National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* or you can subscribe to a newsmagazine or newspaper either online or in print (both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* offer online subscriptions for free).

You might also try the following:

- The BBC Online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>
- The New Republic Online: <http://www.tnr.com/>
- The New Yorker: <http://www.newyorker.com/>

Calendar²: please note that the calendar is *tentative* and subject to change.

I. Political Science: The Basic Elements³

What is “political science?”

- 8/31 Introductions, no reading.
- 9/3 Roskin: pp1-5, 8-16.
- 9/5 Roskin: Chapter 2.**
Assignment due in class.
- 9/7 Roskin: Chapter 2 (continued).

Concepts and Theories: Power

- 9/10 Roskin: p.49 “Dahl’s Influence Terms” Bachrach and Baratz;
- 9/12 The “Faces of Power.” Reading (TBA)
- 9/14 The “Faces of Power” concluded.

Applied Theory: Power and Black Civil Rights

- 9/17 MLK “Letter From Birmingham Jail”
- 9/19 Angela Y. Davis “I Am A Revolutionary Black Woman”
- 9/21 Discussion and Conclusion. **Assignment due in class.**

² **Note:** all readings should be completed *prior* to the class for which they are assigned; I reserve the right to make changes to the course calendar and syllabus.

³ Suggested Reading: Peter Digeser “The Fourth Face of Power,” *Journal of Politics* 54 (November 1992), pp.980. Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

Concepts and Theories: Institutions

9/24 Roskin: Chapter 13 (pp.233 – 240), Donald Horowitz *Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers*. pp.116-120.

9/26 Horowitz continued. Roskin: Chapter 13 (pp.240-251)

9/28 Discussion, Begin reading Roskin: Chapter 14

Concepts and Theories: Institutions continued.

10/1 Roskin: finish chapter 14.

10/3 Roskin: All of chapter 16.

10/5 Discussion. Assignment due in class.

Concepts and Theories: Nations & States

10/8 Robert Rotberg, *The New Nature of Failed States*.

10/10 Roskin: Chapter 3 (pp36-50).

10/12 Discussion.

10/15 Handout. Reading will be posted on P-Web.

10/17 No class, Take home midterm.

10/19 Midterm due by the end of the class period at 8:50 a.m.

October 20 – 29 FALL BREAK

Ideologies I: Liberalism

10/29 Ideologies an Introduction. Roskin: 92-107

10/31 Liberalism (selected readings)⁴

11/2 Liberalism concluded. Discussion.

Ideologies II: Conservatism⁵

11/5 Conservatism (selected readings)⁶

11/7 Conservatism continued

11/9 Conservatism concluded. Discussion.

Ideologies III: Liberation and Identity Politics

11/12 Roskin: 107-11

11/14 Feminism (selected readings).

11/16 Feminism and Liberations Ideologies discussed.

11/19 & 11/21 Group Presentations. Ideology Papers due on Wednesday 11/21.

II. Democracy and The State

Representative Democracy

11/26 Roskin: Chapter 5 (pp71-78, 82-90), Begin Zakaria reading.

11/28 Fareed Zakaria “Rise of Illiberal Democracy”

Assignment due in class.

11/30 Discussion.

⁴ Suggested Reading: * T.H Green: “Liberalism and Positive Freedom”

⁶ Suggested Reading: Michael Oakeshot: “On Being Conservative”

Concepts and Theories: Interest Groups

12/3 Roskin: Chapter 10

12/5 Robert Putnam “Bowling Alone”

12/7 Finish interest groups.

Assignment due in class.

Citizenship and Civic Engagement

12/10 Roskin: 246 (top) “Nationality and Citizenship,” Evelyn Glen “Citizenship and Inequality”

12/12 Finish Glen.

12/14 Finish citizenship. **Final Exam distributed in class.**