

Oxford College of Emory University

Political Science 101: Introduction to Politics

Seney Hall 310
T & TH 4PM
Spring 2008

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview

This is **THE** introductory course to Political Science offered at Oxford College. We require you to take this course *before* you take any other political science course. **Why do we do this?** If you decide to take more courses after this one, you will find you have been given a very unique experience, for much else in Political Science concerns itself with what can be known *through the scientific method*. That is, most of what you learn *after this course* is based on an understanding of things political (states, institutions, leaders, laws, political behavior, elections, and even culture) through the gathering of empirical evidence to support theory of the *known* world. In contrast, pols 101 concerns itself with qualitative questions about *what should* or *ought* to be.

We will be reading, analyzing, discussing and writing about some of the greatest political thinkers in history. Yet, we will be discussing these great works for a very different purpose than that given in other political science courses: we are asking questions that we *cannot* answer with any verifiable evidence. Thus, we *cannot* know if our answers are correct. For example: can we really know “what the GOOD is?” or “what is the GOOD life?” That is, we *intentionally* ask questions we know we cannot answer with any concrete certainty.

Why would we do this to you? And why would we require you to take an introductory course that seemingly is a small tangent of current political science? As it turns out, *these were the first questions of political science*. They were asked by great political thinkers about things political before hypothesis testing, large data aggregations, and number crunching, and regression analysis.

These questions, in fact, are so important **that they must be thought about first**. We ask you these questions so when you venture on to the empirical confines of political science, you will not forget them. They underlie our science and touch our lives in virtually every regard. We may try and avoid them, but they are there. They are the essence of what makes politics interesting.

Required Reading

Sophocles: *Three Tragedies*
 Plato: *Apology & Crito*
 Aristotle: *The Politics*
 Lessing: *Nathan the Wise*
 Locke: *The Second Treatise of Government*
 Marx & Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*
 Ibsen: *Four Major Plays*
 Shakespeare: *The Tempest*
 Koran (selected reading on reserve)
 Bible: (selected reading on reserve)
The New York Times, National pages Monday-Friday

Course Grades

2 non-cumulative exams = 50% (**February 21 and November 20**)
 1 Cumulative Final = 30% (**December 17**)
 7 **Unannounced Quizzes**, 5 are calculated into final grade = 20%

TOTAL = 450 POINTS

Plus-Minus Grading Scale will be used (as described in 2007-2008 Catalog of Oxford College)

Honor Code

I do not tolerate violations of the honor code. If you cheat and get caught, I will turn you in without hesitation. If you are unfamiliar with the honor code, you can also find it in the Catalog of Oxford College. When in doubt, ask me!

Attendance

You are not required to come to class. However, there are POP quizzes. If you miss more than 2, you will receive a 0 for that quiz (unless you furnish a recognized dean's excuse for your absence). This class is not one to cram for and take lightly. If this self- monitoring is too difficult for you and you are unsure you can make this commitment, I suggest you think about another course and major.

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment. I live in Atlanta and have 2 small children. I would rather schedule time I can commit to you than have an open-door policy I may not be able to maintain. Generally, I am on campus all day Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. However, I am always reachable. You can email me and I will get back to you promptly. I take your concerns and questions very seriously. Additionally, I will use the Learnlink Conference to bolster class discussion and important questions or concerns that come up during the semester.

If you are struggling with the material or have questions, please ask me. I cannot read your mind. Proactive contact with me is critically important and will only help you.

Class Outline

January 17

INTRODUCTION

I. Political Philosophy: Foundations

January 22 & 24

Sophocles: "Antigone" (entire play)

January 29 & 31

Plato: "Apology of Socrates"

February 5

Plato: "Crito"

February 7 & 12

Aristotle: The Politics, Book 1

February 14 & 19

Aristotle: The Politics, Book III

February 21

EXAM ONE

February 23 & 26

The Bible Volume I & II : Old & New Testaments

On E Reserves:

Genesis (Ch. 1-25)

Exodus (Ch. 1-20)

The Gospel According to St.

Matthew (Ch. 1-12)

February 28

Koran (Suras 1-5)

March 4

Reserve: *Nathan the Wise* (entire play)

II. Modern Politics: Liberal Democracy, Communism, and Fascism/Nazism

March 6 & 18*

Locke "Second Treatise" (esp.
pp. 3-56; 68-73; 75-82; 96-99;
119-139)

MARCH 10-14

SPRING BREAK

March 20 & 25

Marx: The Communist Manifesto

March 27

Reserve: Lenin

April 1 & 3

Reserve: Mussolini (Fascism) &
Hitler (Nazism)

April 8

EXAM TWO

III. Politics: Goals and Limits

April 10 & 15

Ibsen: "An Enemy of the People"

April 17 & 22

Reserve: "I Have a Dream"
Other suggested suggested
speeches/songs audio files TBA

April 24 & 29

Shakespeare: "The Tempest"

MAY 5

CUMULATIVE FINAL (7-10 PM)