

Oxford College of Emory University

Political Science 101: Introduction to Politics

Seney 209
TU & TH 11:30-12:45
Fall 2008

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Office Hours

M & W 12:45-1:45
TU & TH 4:00-5:00

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, POLS101 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.

A significant and last point I will make about this course and all of my courses: I STRICTLY ENFORCE THE OXFORD HONOR CODE. If you think you are witnessing violations of the honor code, report it. I certainly will report violations.

The code can be accessed at:

http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/academics/academic_success/honor_code.dot

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, International pages Monday-Friday (on line-use "today's paper tab")

Course Grades

2 Non-Cumulative exams = (25% each) Cumulative Final = (30%)

Exam Dates:

Exam 1: Thursday, October 2

Exam 2: Tuesday, November 18

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 17, (9-12)

7 Unannounced Quizzes, 5 are calculated into final grade (20%)

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

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.

Class Outline

August 28

INTRODUCTION

I. Political Philosophy: Foundations

September 2 & 4

Sophocles: "Antigone" (entire play)

September 9 & 11

Plato: "Apology of Socrates"

September 16

Plato: "Crito"

September 18 & 23

Aristotle: The Politics, Book 1

September 25 & 30

Aristotle: The Politics, Book III

October 2

EXAM ONE

October 7

Reserve: *Genesis* (Ch. 1-25)
Exodus (Ch. 1-20)

October 9

Reserve: *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Ch. 1-12)

October 14

OFF MIDSEMESTER BREAK

October 16

Reserve: *Koran (Suras 1-5)*

October 21

Reserve: *Nathan the Wise* (entire play)

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

October 23 & 28	Locke "Second Treatise" (esp. pp. 3-56; 68-73; 75-82; 96-99; 119-139)
October 30 & November 4	Marx: <u>The Communist Manifesto</u>
November 6	Reserve: Lenin
November 11 & 13	Reserve: Mussolini (Fascism) & Hitler (Nazism)
November 18	EXAM TWO

III. Politics: Goals and Limits

November 20	Ibsen: "An Enemy of the People"
November 25	Ibsen: "An Enemy of the People"
November 27	OFF TG BREAK
December 2	Reserve: MLK, jr. "I Have a Dream" & other readings
December 4	Shakespeare: "The Tempest"
December 9	Shakespeare: "The Tempest"
December 17	CUMULATIVE FINAL (9-12)