



Department of Political Science  
Winter 2025

**POL101H1 S**  
**The Real World of Politics: An Introduction**

**Online, Asynchronous**

Course Instructor: **Professor Isabela Dos Santos**

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Office hours: by appointment, [book a time here](#)

**The names, contact information, and tutorial assignments of the course Teaching Assistants will be posted on Quercus.**

*Your TA should be your primary point of contact for any questions about this course.*

**Course description**

This course introduces students to key concepts and debates in political science by exploring contemporary issues such as the politics of climate change, Indigenous rights, elections and electoral systems, social movements, and war and peace.

**Lectures are posted on Mondays.**

**Learning Objectives**

Through this course, students will:

- Deepen their understanding of key concepts, ideas, and debates in political science
- Apply their understanding of the key concepts, ideas, and debates to contemporary cases in world politics
- Learn to read and analyze academic articles and books
- Acquire discipline-specific writing skills including writing a thesis statement and constructing persuasive arguments

**Course Materials**

All course materials are available online or posted on Quercus.

**Tutorials**

Students in this course must attend a weekly tutorial. Tutorials will involve a combination of group discussions, small group work, and opportunities to practice and get feedback on important writing-related skills. **Tutorials start the week of January 13, 2024.**



Each tutorial group is assigned a TA who will lead your discussions and be available to you for office hours and by email. **Your TA should be your primary point of contact for any questions about this course.**

### Grading Scheme

**Assignment 1: Introductory paragraph, including thesis statement – 12.5%**

Due January 26, 2025 @ 11:59PM EST via Quercus

**Assignment 2: Using evidence to make a persuasive argument – 12.5%**

Due February 16, 2025 @ 11:59PM EST via Quercus

**Short essay (5 pages) – 25%**

Due March 16, 2025 @ 11:59PM EST via Quercus

**Final Exam – 35%**

Online, during exam period

**Participation – 15%**

Your participation grade is evaluated by your TA, based on tutorial attendance, active engagement in class discussion, and evidence that you have attended the lecture and completed the readings for the week.

### Late policy

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 1% per day and will not be accepted after 7 days from the due date. Please pay careful attention when submitting assignments to Quercus as only certain file types are accepted and unreadable files will be marked as late.

### Extension policy

Extension requests should be made to your TA before the assignment is due. Extensions will be no more than one week (7 days). If you are a student registered with UofT's Accessibility Services, kindly note that you must also request an extension before the assignment is due and that the extension cannot be more than one week.

### Grade Appeals

All course assignments are graded using a set of rubrics and scoring guides. This ensures that assignments are graded fairly, consistently, and objectively. If you believe that there was an error in the grading process, then you have the right to request a regrade of your assignment. To be considered for a regrade, you must wait at least 48 hours from receiving your assignment before submitting a written request for a regrade. Your written regrade request should be sent to the Teaching Assistant assigned to you. Your request for a regrade must be raised within ten (10) days from the 48-hour waiting period. **Regrade requests submitted after this ten-day window has passed will not be considered.**



The request for a regrade needs to be grounded in academic rationale and must be accompanied by clear reasoning for why a regrade is being requested. As such, **it is expected that you will provide evidence** in support of your regrade. This evidence must come from the course materials such as lecture notes, readings, and grading rubric.

It is also important to note that **the reassessment of an assignment does not guarantee an increase in your grade. The assignment could receive a higher grade, the same grade, or a lower grade.**

### Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offences. University policy requires that course instructors refer suspected plagiarism cases to the Office of Academic Integrity for resolution. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

"Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>)."

### Use of Generative AI

"You may use artificial intelligence tools, including generative AI, in this course as **learning aids**. **If you choose to use artificial intelligence tools, you must submit, as an appendix with your assignment(s), a 150–200-word reflection on how you made use of generative artificial intelligence tools in the development of the assignment(s).** Your reflection must include what tools you used, how you used them, and how you incorporated the results from the AI into your assignment. In addition, **any content produced by an artificial intelligence tool must be cited appropriately** (view the [U of T Libraries Citation Guide for Artificial Intelligence Generative Tools](#)). Finally, the course instructor and TAs reserve the right to ask students to explain their process for creating their assignment."

### Accessibility Services

The university is fully committed to providing students with fair access to their courses. Students with special needs or disabilities are strongly encouraged to register with Accessibility Services to arrange for needed accommodations.

### Writing Support

Students can attend workshops and arrange one-on-one appointments for feedback on their written work. Students can visit [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca) for information and advice



on all aspects of academic writing. Students are encouraged to make use of the college writing centers for individualized consultations on their written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments with the writing centers early, as they fill up fast. Information about the writing centers is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. Students can also take advantage of the Library's free "Writing Plus" academic skills workshop series, described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus>. International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL), which includes practice opportunities for improving oral communication and critical reading skills, at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

### **Registrar Support**

Students are encouraged to contact their registrar promptly if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodations.

### **Health and Wellness**

Students can access a wide range of programs and services to support their health and wellbeing. Many of these programs are listed at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/health-wellness/>.

### **Crisis Support**

Students in distress can access a range of free crisis lines available from the University of Toronto and the City of Toronto, as listed below:

- University of Toronto: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/>
- City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/kb/docs/articles/311-toronto/information-and-business-development/crisis-lines-suicide-depression-telephone-support-lines-non-crisis-mental-health-services.html>

Most of these crisis lines are available 24 hours a day and some address specific problems that students may be experiencing. Immediate assistance is available as follows:

- My SSP for University of Toronto Students: 1-844-451-9700.
- Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454
- Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200
- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357)
- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)

You are not alone: please get help if you're experiencing difficulties or are in distress.



## Course Outline

**\*\*Readings are listed in the order in which they should be read and may be subject to change.\*\***

### Week of January 6: What is politics?

This week we will explore the relationship between the government (or the state) and the people (or society). The relationship between the government and the people is the foundational relationship in the practice of politics and the study of political science.

1. Scott, James C. 2008. "Introduction." In *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, 1-8. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale UP.
2. Chambers, Simone and Jeffrey Kopstein. 2006. "Civil Society and the State." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Phillips, 377-395. Oxford: Oxford UP.

### Week of January 13: How to Build a Government

This week we will look at different models of organizing democratic governments through a study of elections and electoral systems.

1. Lundell, Krister. 2009. "Electoral Systems." In *The Origins of Electoral Systems in the Postwar Era: A worldwide approach*, 17-31. London: Routledge. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/chapters/mono/10.4324/9780203871843-10/electoral-systems-krister-lundell?context=ubx&refId=0eebf281-a486-4851-83f0-0d83107a7896>
2. Taylor, Steven L., Matthew Soberg Shugart, and Arend Lijphart. 2014. "Appendix: Examples of Various Electoral Systems." In *A Different Democracy*, 152-167. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale UP. <https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks6/degruyter6/2021-09-14/4/9780300210705>

### Week of January 20: Is something wrong with democracy?

This week we will explore the "decline" of democracy by looking at the development of democracy over time. Our discussion will focus on the role of public debate and conversation in "fixing" democracy.

1. Tormey, Simon. 2022. "Stresses and Strains: Will we ever agree on what's going wrong with democracy?" *Journal of Representative Democracy* 58, no. 1: 13-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2021.2005674>
2. Danisch, Robert and William Keith. 2023. "The Problem and the Promise." In *Radically Civil: Saving Democracy One Conversation at a Time*, 1-17. New York: Routledge. <https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.4324/9781003442165>



### **Week of January 27: What is political participation?**

This week we will study political participation through the lens of social movements. Our discussion will focus on both historical and contemporary social movements and the relationship between political participation and democracy.

1. Tilly, Charles and Sidney Tarrow. 2015. "Making Claims." In *Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed., 3-24. New York: Oxford UP.
2. Woody, Deva R. 2022. "Introduction: The Democratic Necessity of Social Movements." In *Reckoning: Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Necessity of Social Movements*, 3-19. New York: Oxford UP.

### **Week of February 3: Does identity matter in politics?**

This week we will be looking at the different ways that identity has been used as a political tool. We will do this by looking at how identities became politicized over time and how the historical and contemporary politicization of identities differ.

1. Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2006. "The Politics of Identity." *Dædalus* 135, no.4: 15-22. <https://doi.org/10.1162/daed.2006.135.4.15>
2. Harcourt, Bernard E. 2022. "Being and Becoming: Rethinking Identity Politics: Combahee River Collective Statement; *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*, Keeanga-Yamahatta Tylor; *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*, Stuart Hall." *Social Research: An international quarterly* 89, no. 2: 297-317. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2022.0020>

### **Week of February 10: How do ideas shape politics?**

This week we will explore the role that ideas play in political change. We will do this by looking at populist movements across different countries and different political leanings.

1. Berman, Sheri. 2010. "Ideology, History, and Politics." In *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, edited by Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox, 105-126. Oxford: Oxford UP. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199736430.003.0006>.
2. Betz, Hans-Georg. 2018. "Populist mobilization across time and space." In *The Ideational Approach to Populism: Concept, Theory and Analysis*, edited by Kirk A. Hawkins, Ryan E. Carlin, Levente Littvay, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, 181-201. London: Routledge. <https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.4324/9781315196923>

### **Week of February 17: READING WEEK – NO CLASS & NO TUTORIALS**

### **Week of February 24: The Political Challenges of Climate Change**

*Readings TBD*



### **Week of March 3: Making Sense of American Politics**

This week we will study the American electoral system, focusing on the democratic challenges that it faces. The challenges we will explore include gerrymandering, voter suppression, and how American elections are funded.

1. Tamas, Bernard. 2023. "Beyond Gerrymandering: A structural crisis of the American electoral system." *New Political Science* 45, no. 2: 359-379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2023.2203061>
2. Wayne, Stephen J. 2024. "Has Money Corrupted Our Electoral Process?" In *Is This Any Way to Run a Democratic Election?*, 4th ed., 88-107. New York: Routledge. <https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.4324/9781032691435>

### **Week of March 10: Do international organizations matter?**

This week we will explore the rise and fall of international organizations in world governance. We will look at the way that the international system has been corrupted by the interests of individual governments and explore why and how the international system needs to be fixed.

1. Vreeland, James Raymond. 2019. "Corrupting International Organizations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 205-222. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050317-071031>
2. Karns, Margaret P., Tana Johnson, and Karen A. Mingst. 2024. "Why Global Governance?" In *International Organizations: The politics and processes of global governance* 4th ed., 1-44. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

### **Week of March 17: Why is the world at war?**

This week we will explore the rise in contemporary global conflict by looking at two different explanations for war: territorial dispute and institutional failure. We will look at whether or not these explanations for war can help us understand the global conflicts of today.

1. Beals, Emma and Peter Salisbury. "A World at War: What is Behind the Global Explosion of Violent Conflict?" *Foreign Affairs*. October 30, 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/africa/world-war>.
2. Charaniya, Amaan. "The Territorial Roots of Interstate Conflict." *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*. April 7, 2024. <https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/the-territorial-roots-of-interstate-conflict/>.



**Week of March 24: How do we make peace?**

This week we will explore different theories of peace. We will look at how political scientists define peace and how they turn those definitions from theory into practice.

1. Galtung, John. 1969. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3: 167-191.
2. Richmond, Oliver. 2005. "Conceptualising Peace." In *The Transformation of Peace*, 183-201. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
3. van Tongeren, Paul, Juliette Verhoeven, and Jim Wake. 2005. "People Building Peace: Key Messages and Essential Findings." In *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society*, edited by Paul van Tongeren, Malin Brenk and Marte Hellema, 83-94. Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

**Week of March 31: Can politics make the world a better place?**

This week we will focus our study on the role that our everyday lives can play in making our world a better place. We will explore the idea of the everyday life as "revolutionary." To do this, we are going to look at case studies in peacebuilding from around the world.

1. Bayat, Asef. 2021. "Everyday Life and Revolution." In *Revolutionary Life: The Everyday of the Arab Spring*, 7-43. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
2. Autesserre, Séverine. 2021. "Peace by Piece." In *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World*, 123-150. New York: Oxford UP.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197530351.003.0005>.