

## **PSCI 210-L18 Introduction to Political Science**

**Class Time: T TH 4:15- 5:30**

**Fall Semester 2009**

**Instructor: Merry Mayer (merry.mayer@sbcglobal.net)**

**Northeastern Illinois University**

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS – Monday 11 to 1:00 [during this time you should get immediate response, though I do check my email regularly throughout the week] and also by appointment or before and after class.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

**3 cr.** An introduction to the discipline through an examination of the concepts and skills utilized in the contemporary study of politics. The course provides an overview of political science, including its various sub-fields, and a framework for future study.

### REQUIRED TEXT

*Understanding the Political World: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science*, by James N. Danziger (Eighth Edition) Pearson Longman 2007.

Variety of short reading handouts or online readings

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To introduce you to the four subfields of American political science: American government/public policy, international relations, comparative politics and political theory.
- To provide you with a full appreciation of the following concepts – nation/ state, republic, democracy, civil liberties/civil rights, federalism, equality of opportunity/condition, liberalism/classical liberalism/conservatism
- To give you a better understanding of the various political viewpoints that exist today and how they view the balance between order, liberty and equality in society.
- To give you an introduction to the writings of some of the most influential political thinkers.
- To help you develop your own political viewpoint and/or to better understand how you came to feel as you do.
- To expand your political horizons to see how other countries govern, provide for their citizens, etc.
- To, hopefully, increase, your interest in the political process by increasing your knowledge of the political system and how you can influence it.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

(1) Students will be required to write one short, 4-5 page, double-spaced paper. To earn an A, students will need to do the following

- thoroughly research using at least five sources appropriately cited,
- include at least two paragraphs of original analysis of topic
- write in an organized and relatively error free way
- use a creative sentence to begin your paper, rather than beginning with “*This paper is about..*”

(2) There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. Exams will be multiple choice and short essay.

(3) There will be a weekly take-home questions that will be given out and posted on Blackboard. Although these will be based on the reading, students will expected to show independent thought (these will not be spit-it-back type homework) and will be expected to write well-developed and grammatically correct responses.

## GRADING

Breakdown (out of a 1000 points total):

Weekly Questions – 200 points [based on average grade on these]

Paper – 200 points

Midterm – 250 points

Final – 250 points

Attendance/Participation – 100 points

Grading Scale;

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

## LATE WORK POLICY

Weekly Homework will **NOT** be accepted late. If you must miss class on the due date, you must email it to me BEFORE class starts that day.

Paper Assignment will be accepted up to one week late, but marked down by one letter grade. After this, **no papers will be accepted no matter what the excuse.**

Midterm/Final: **No make ups of tests will be allowed without prior notification.**

Papers will only be accepted in hard copy form. If you absolutely have to email it to me, you must do the following: (1) paste your paper within the email (do not attach it as a

separate document), (2) email it to me before or on the day it is due and make sure that you receive a confirmation from me, (3) keep a copy of this email as a record, and (4) turn in a paper copy to me at next class.

## INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

Your papers should be written in your own words, with factual information credited to the source you obtained it from, using footnotes or endnotes. Plagiarism is more than just using someone's exact words; it also encompasses passing off an idea as your own even if you have put it in your own words. I strongly recommend reading *What is plagiarism?* at [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org). *If requested within one week of submission of your assignment, you must show me your source materials for your paper.*

## COURSE OUTLINE

Week of –

Sept. 1, 3

Class - Introduction/What does government do/ the study of political science

Reading should be completed during the current week:

- Ch. 2 in text

Sept. 8, 10

Class □ Political Theory

Readings: Handouts

Sept. 15, 17

Class – Political Participation

Readings:

- ch 3/text
- *The Strange Disappearance of Civic America* by Robert Putnam from The American Prospect, Dec. 1995 (this can be read online at [prospect.org](http://prospect.org), click on Archive, then click on Print archive by issue)

Sept. 22, 24

Class – The nature of the state

Reading: Ch. 5/text

Sept. 29, Oct. 1

Class - Government Structure

Reading:

- Ch. 6/text
- Handout: "Introduction" to *The Future of Freedom* by Fareed Zakaria

Oct. 6, 8

Class - Types of Gov t

Reading:

- Ch. 7/text
- Handout: “Problems of Democracy” from *The Future of Freedom* by Fareed Zakaria

Oct. 13, 15

Class - Midterm, tentatively scheduled for this week, Political Economy

Reading: Ch. 8/text

Oct. 20, 22

Class - Public Policy Making

Reading: Ch. 9/text

Oct. 27, 29

Class – International Relations

Reading: Ch. 11/text

Nov. 3, 5

Class – Use of violence in politics

Reading: Ch. 12/text

Nov. 10, 12 \*(Nov. 13 - Last day to drop)

Class - Comparative Politics/ developed countries

Reading: Ch. 13/text

Nov. 17, 19

Class - developing countries

Reading: Ch. 14/text

Nov. 24, 26

Class - catch up/No Class on Thursday

Reading: Ch. 15/text

Dec. 1, 3

Class - transitional developed countries

**PAPER DUE: Thursday, Dec. 3**

Dec. 8, 10

Class – Conclusion and Review

Dec. 15, 17

Finals Week