



**National Taiwan University of Science and Technology
2016 Summer Program**

PLSC 300 Introduction to Political Science

Course Outline

Course Code: PLSC 300

Instructor: Juli Minoves-Triquell

Home Institution: TBA

Office Hours: 4-6 Monday to Thursday

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Class Hours: According to the regulations of Minister of Education, R.O.C, 18 class hours could be counted as 1 academic credit in all universities in Taiwan. This course will have 72 class hours, including 40 lecture hours, professor 10 office hours, 10-hour TA discussion sessions, 2-hour review sessions, 10-hour extra classes.

Course Description:

This course introduces the field of political science through a comparative, international survey of the major issues, questions, and ideas of politics. The class provides an overview of the discipline and its subfields. Key concepts and topics include:

- power
- the state and the nation
- political change
- resistance
- violence
- human rights



- ideologies of
 - liberalism
 - conservatism
 - nationalism
 - feminism
 - environmentalism
- the organization of major political systems
- institutions of governance, including
 - executives
 - legislatures
 - courts
- the international dimensions of politics and economics

These themes provide frameworks to both interpret current events and describe domestic and international political systems.

Parallel goals of this course include developing effective research, analysis, critical thinking, and writing skills. The class also aims to foster a global understanding of cultural diversity and difference. Together, these objectives help form the basis for future coursework in and out of the discipline and should help students make informed judgments about the political world around them.

Required Texts:

- Ellen Grigsby, Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Political Science, Cengage Advantage Books, 3rd edition
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Students are also required to follow a source for current events, such as BBC World News, NPR News, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, El Pais or The Economist.

General Information:

Class meetings will be grounded in discussion of the assigned texts. Readings must be completed



before the class meeting in which they will be discussed. This enables students to get the most out of the lectures and to participate effectively in discussion.

Discussion: Each student will be assigned study questions to prepare for class discussion. During these discussions, you will not be expected to have fully developed points of view about the course materials. However, you are expected to participate.

Availability: I expect that all of you, either alone or in groups, will contact me. I am almost always available to discuss the course material.

Laptops, Cell Phones, and Tablets: Laptops and tablets may not be used in class. Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class meetings. Students who use laptops, tablets or cell phones without explicit permission to do so will be considered absent.

Evaluation Criteria:

The value of our meetings will hinge on your advance preparation and on your willingness to engage the issues actively in class. When you are doing the readings, keep in mind that you will be expected to participate in the debates outlined in the readings, reject some positions, embrace others, and defend the choices you make.

Grades will be based on the following:

- Mid-Term exam: 30%
- Paper: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
- Attendance and participation: 10%

Final Exam: The final exam will be in two parts. The first part will ask you to answer a series of short-answer questions based on the course materials and lectures (Terms). The second part will ask you to write an essay.

Participation: Each student's frequency and quality of contribution to the class discussion will be assessed and reflected in the class participation score.



SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND REQUIRED READING:

First session:

- **Introduction**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 1

Session 2:

- **Political Science and Scientific Methods in Studying Politics**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 2
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Session 3:

- **Key Concepts in Political Science**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 3
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Session 4:

- **Political Theory: Examining the Ethical Foundations of Politics**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 4
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Session 5:

- **Political Ideologies I: Liberalism, Conservatism, and Socialism**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 5
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Session 6:

- **Political Ideologies II: Fascism**

Session 7:

- **Political Ideologies III: Feminism, Environmentalism, and Postmodernism**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 7
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Session 8:

- **PRIMARY TEXTS IN POLITICAL THEORY**



- John Rawls, A Theory of Justice
 - How did Rawls attempt to synthesize Hayek's classical liberalism and Marx's egalitarianism? pp. 473-4
 - What are the assumptions of Rawls' theory? p. 477
 - What is contract theory? p. 479
 - What is the original position? What is it meant to illustrate? pp. 480-82
 - What is the first principle of justice? Is this a principle you adopt when you imagine yourself behind a veil of ignorance in the original position? p. 482-3
 - What is the veil of ignorance? What is its purpose? pp. 487-9
 - What is the second principle of justice (both parts)? Is this a principle you adopt when you imagine yourself behind a veil of ignorance in the original position? p. 483-5
 - Does the difference principle discriminate against the well off?
 - What is the "utility principle?" Why does Rawls suggest it may be at odds with justice as fairness? pp. 490-1

Session 9:

- **Comparative Politics I: Governmental Systems: Democracy and Nondemocracy**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 8
- Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) pp. 3- 49

Session 10:

- **Comparative Politics II: Governing Democracies: Executives, Legislatures, and Judiciaries**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 9, pp. 184-202

Session 11:

- **Comparative Politics II (cont'd): Governing Democracies: Executives, Legislatures, and Judiciaries**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 9, pp. 202-219

Session 12:



• **Comparative Politics III: Governing Democracies: Executives, Legislatures, and Judiciaries**

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 10

Session 13:

- Readings to be assigned

- **Terms**

- Montesquieu
- Buddha
- “An Eye for an Eye”
- Joseph Nye
- Exodus
- Hu Jintao
- Sochi Olympics
- Confucius

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- **Questions**

- What is soft power? Is it a form of idealism or inaction?
- What type or types of power does the United Nations wield?
- How are Muslim women portrayed in Aman?
- What is the most enduring form of soft power?

Session 14:

• **PRIMARY TEXTS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

- Readings to be assigned
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983)
 - How durable is Democracy?
 - What are the conditions for a breakdown of democracy?
 - Give some examples of breakdowns of democratic regimes in the past 70 years.
 - Is patriotism an ancient idea?
 - How is patriotism expressed in the modern world?
 - Does a nation need its own language to be considered a nation?
 - Is a Monarchy a democratic regime? If yes, give examples. If no, give examples.



- Is a parliamentary Monarchy better or worse than a parliamentary Republic?

Session 15:

• PRIMARY TEXTS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

- Readings to be assigned
- How does federalism differ from unitary government?
- What is Madison's main argument in Federalist Paper #10?
- What are some of the causes of government gridlock?
- Where did America's political parties come from?
- Did the U.S. Constitution establish a democracy?
- What are some of the checks and balances provided for in the Constitution?
- What are the differences between liberals and conservatives?
- How did John Locke influence the founding fathers?
- How do political scientists "know" what the American people believe?
- How has the American Constitution changed over time?

Session 16:

• PRIMARY TEXTS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

- Readings to be assigned
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Session 17:

• International Relations I: Introduction

- Reading: Grigsby, ch. 11

Session 18:

• International Relations II: Contemporary Issues

- Grigsby, ch. 12
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Session 19:

• PRIMARY TEXTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Readings to be assigned
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Session 20:

• **PRIMARY TEXTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

- Readings to be assigned

FINAL EXAM

GRADING:

Your work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

A— designates work of extraordinarily high quality; reflects unusually thorough and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of ideas.

B— designates work of high quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues and hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas.

C— designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas, but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete.

D— designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forward in assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that student has not done reading assignments thoroughly.

F— designates work that does not meet ANY of the standards set above or which is not handed in.