

# PSC 131: Introduction to Political Science

## Section (1)

Fall 2013  
MWF 9:00-9:55 am  
Ryan 201

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### 1) Course Description:

Political Science 131 is designed to provide you with an introduction to political science as a discipline. The course consists of two primary sections. First, we will explore the scope of political science as a field of inquiry and the methods used by political scientists. In this section, we will examine both normative and descriptive approaches to politics. Normative approaches focus on questions of what *should* occur in politics, and, in contrast, descriptive approaches seek to analyze what *does* occur in politics. As social scientists, we are concerned mostly with questions falling into the latter category.

The second section of the course will focus on the substance of politics, including the roles played by states, mass publics, organizations, and institutions, as well as the outputs of their interactions, public policy and international relations.

### 2) Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. distinguish between major and minor historical events and developments in shaping political systems.
2. analyze the relative merits of contemporary government policies.
3. evaluate the efficacy of various elements in the political system.
4. evaluate the relative success and efficacy of political institutions in fulfilling the goals of society.
5. analyze problems related to governing a pluralistic society.

### 3) Course Requirements

- **Class Preparation & Attendance:** Your success in this class depends heavily upon your attendance and participation. You are expected to come to class having read the material assigned for the day.
- **Quizzes:** There will be 12 (5 short answer) reading quizzes given through the semester. There are no make-up quizzes. Missed quizzes will be given a zero. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

- **Exams:** The midterm exam will be held in class on Friday, October 18. The final exam is currently scheduled for Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, from 10:30AM to 12:30PM, in our classroom; it will focus on material from the second half of the course. Two review sessions will be held before each exam.
- **Grading:**

Attendance		10%
Quiz #1	Friday, August 30 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz #2	Friday, September 6 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz #3	Friday, September 13 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz #4	Friday, September 20 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz #5	Friday, September 27 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz #6	Friday, October 4 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz#7	Friday, October 11 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz#8	Friday, October 25 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz#9	Friday, November 1 <sup>st</sup>	5%
Quiz#10	Friday, November 8 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz#11	Friday, November 15 <sup>th</sup>	5%
Quiz#12	Friday, November 22 <sup>nd</sup>	5%
Midterm	Friday, October 18	15%
Final	Wednesday, December 11	15%
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Total		100%

#### 4) Course Policies

- **Absences:** Success in this course is contingent on attendance and participation; therefore, multiple absences will result in a reduction of your overall letter grade, while excess absences may result in failure of the course. Students are expected to stay current on the readings and lectures, which is possible only by attending class. The university policy is for 2 unexcused absences to be allowed during the semester with no penalties incurred. Any additional absences will result in a significant penalty attached to final grades. For **every** additional class missed without a valid excuse, students' final grade will be lowered 1 numerical point. For example, if a student's final numerical grade is 93 (A), then one additional unexcused absence (after the first one has been used) will result in the student's grade being lowered to 92 (A-).

Excused absences are not penalized, but students must provide documentation for an absence to be considered excused. An example of an excused absence is a university sanctioned field trip. An example of an **unexcused** absence is leaving a message on my voice mail indicating a student isn't feeling very well. If you are ill, you will need to see the university nurse for documentation. I also reserve the right to administratively drop without prior notification students who develop a pattern of absences.

**Please be aware that being dropped from the course may result in certain financial aid, and/or athletic competition eligibility repercussions, and thus students are strongly advised to keep track of their attendance and progress. If a student wishes to drop this class during the semester, it is the responsibility of the student to make sure that this class is dropped from his or her schedule.**

- **Cheating & Academic Dishonesty:** Any student found to be in violation of the University’s policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty will receive an F in this course and be reported to the appropriate authorities. If in doubt, please consult the university handbook.

## 5) General Etiquette.

- **Cell phone use:** Students are expected to turn off their cell phones in class. Students receiving calls in class will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violation 102) for appropriate punishment.
- **Computer use in the classroom:** Students are expected to use computers in the classroom appropriately. Surfing the net randomly, checking e-mail, playing games, etc, are considered a violation of appropriate tablet use and will be treated seriously. Students violating appropriate computer use or caught using other electronic devices for purposes unrelated to the course will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. This stipulation includes Facebook, MySpace, blogging, etc.... Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violations 102 and 117) for appropriate punishment.
- **Food and other items:** Students may bring food and/or sodas or coffee into the classroom, as long as the food or beverage is consumed quietly. Tobacco, however, will not be tolerated. Any student caught with tobacco products will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violation 102) for appropriate punishment.
- **Addressing fellow classmates:** In this course, students will be asked to debate ideas and opinions. At times, I will play devil’s advocate on a broad range of controversial topics. However, the tone of discussion must always remain appropriate. Any name-calling or derogatory comments made concerning an individual’s opinion will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in inappropriate speech will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violation 102) for appropriate punishment.

## 6) Textbooks & Class Materials

- There is one required Textbook for this course available for purchase in the University Bookstore or \*online at Amazon.com\*

It is: W. Philips Shively (2012). Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science, 13th edition. McGraw Hill Publishing..

- All other relevant course material will be available through Moodle or the Library Reserves.

## 7) Class Schedule:

### Week 1: What is Politics? What the heck is Political Science?

Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to the Course  
Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to Politics Shively pp. 1-17  
Friday, August 30<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to Politics Shively pp. 18-21

### Week 2: Some Basics of Political Methodology-

Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>: *Labor Day, no class*  
Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.422-429  
Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>: No readings!

### Week 3: Normative Theories and Ideology

Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>: Ideologies Shively pp.23-34  
Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>: Ideologies Shively pp.35-41  
Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>: Ideologies Shively pp.41-47

### Week 4: States, Nations, and Regime Types

Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>: The modern State Shively pp. 49-64, 64-66  
Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>: Democracy and Democratization Shively pp.151-164  
Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>: Autocratic States Shively pp.164-180

### Week 5: Individuals, Participation, & Elections

Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>: Shively pp.189-198, 194-195  
Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp. 226-237  
Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp. 237-249

## **Week 6: Political Parties**

Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.251-263  
Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>: Shively pp.263-273  
Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>: Discussion/Debate

## **Week 7: Interest Groups and Social Movements**

Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.274-283  
Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.283-300  
Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp. 301-313

## **Week 8: Midterm**

Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>: Review  
Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>: Review  
Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>: Midterm

## **Week 9: The Institutions of the State**

Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>: Shively Chapter 14  
Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>: Shively Chapter 15  
Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.205-222

## **Week 10: The Legal System**

Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.376-385  
Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.385-392  
Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup>: Discussion/Debate

## **Week 11: Public Policy**

Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>: Policies of the State Shively pp. 76-86  
Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>: Policies of the State Shively pp. 86-94  
Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>: Policies of the State Shively pp. 96-104

## **Week 12: International Relations**

Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp.393-401  
Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>: Game Theory in Practice: Conflict or Cooperation? (No readings)  
Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>: Discussion/Debate

## **Week 13: International Politics and Organizations**

Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>: International Politics Shively pp.401-408  
Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>: The U.N Case Study (No readings!)  
Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>: Discussion/Debate

### **Week 14: War and Peace**

Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp. 408-420  
Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>: Shively pp. 409-421  
Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup>: **Thanksgiving Break (No Class!)**

### **Week 15: Globalization**

Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>: Slumdog Millionaire and Globalization  
Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>: Slumdog Millionaire and Globalization continued...  
Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>: Discussion

### **Week 16: Final Examination Period**

Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>: Final Review Session  
Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>: Final Exam