

**Introduction to Politics**  
**POLS 1002 – Fall 2018**  
**Syllabus**

Mondays 6:05-8:35PM  
Boylan Hall, Room 4219, Brooklyn College, CUNY

Instructor: Elizabeth Stone  
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Office Hours: By Appointment

**Course Description and Learning Objectives**

This is an introductory course to some of the core concepts and questions in the Political Science discipline. We will critically consider competing definitions of power, politics, the state, government, justice, political economy, the politics of identity, and political change. We will engage classical texts of political thought and contemporary political events, considering how a selection of texts can help us understand and think critically about our current political moment. On completion of the course students should have:

- A basic understanding of some of the core concepts and questions of the Political Science discipline.
- A working knowledge of several key political thinkers and their critics, and of competing political ideologies and their practices.
- Critical thinking skills including the capacity to assess the kind and quality of evidence writers use to support claims, the ability to reconcile conflicting evidence that seems to support different claims, and the ability to ask probing questions about complex political issues.
- Analytical writing skills including the ability to summarize the main points of an argument succinctly, use language precisely, and demonstrate command of some political science terminology.
- Oral communication skills developed through class discussions.

**Texts**

You do not need to buy a textbook for this class. All of the readings are available on Blackboard. **You are required to bring a copy of the readings to each class.** It is preferred that you print out hard copies of the readings, but you may also bring a tablet or laptop to class for accessing them. If it becomes clear that you are using your tablet or laptop for something other than accessing the readings, I reserve the right to change this policy. **NO CELLPHONES in the classroom.**

**Lecture PowerPoint Slides**

The PowerPoint presentations for each class will be posted on Blackboard on the “Syllabus & Lectures” page. These slides do not include everything covered in class and should not be your only resource when studying for the exams. You will need to take additional notes during class to supplement these slides.

**Current Events**

You are expected to stay up-to-date on current issues in world politics while taking this course. If you do not have regular access to the news, Brooklyn College offers all of its students a free one-year subscription to *The New York Times* online. All you need to sign up is your CUNY email address:

[https://library.brooklyn.cuny.edu/resources/?view=fullRecord&res\\_id=4677](https://library.brooklyn.cuny.edu/resources/?view=fullRecord&res_id=4677).

### **Blackboard**

This course requires that you log into Blackboard regularly to access class readings, submit assignments, and check for announcements. Please ensure that you have access to Blackboard within the first week of class. The syllabus and PDFs of all required readings are uploaded to Blackboard under “Syllabus & Lectures” and “Readings,” respectively.

### **Grading & Class Requirements**

Your grade is based on the four requirements for this course:

#### **1. Class Participation (20% of class grade)**

- Participation in class discussion is a critical part of the learning process. You are expected to come to every class having read all of the readings, prepared to contribute to class discussion and participate in class activities.
- If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes and any assignments from a classmate.
- You are required to bring a printed or electronic copy of all the readings and your reading response paper to each class. Failure to do so will negatively affect your grade.

#### **2. Weekly Reading Responses (20% of class grade)**

- To foster your thinking outside of class and to facilitate discussion in class you are required to submit weekly reading response papers. Response papers should be between 400 – 500 words in length and must include four parts. See the handout (available on Blackboard) for details.
- Unless otherwise noted, reading responses are due via Blackboard at 1:00PM on Mondays before class.
- You are required to bring a printed or electronic copy of your response paper to class. Failure to do so will negatively affect your grade.

#### **3. Midterm Exam (30% of class grade)**

- The midterm exam will be held on Monday, November 5 in class.

#### **4. Final Exam (30% of class grade)**

- The final exam will be held during finals week. Details TBA.

For both exams:

- You will receive a study guide one week prior to the exam. We will not review for the exam during class time.
- The exam will include content from the assigned readings and class lectures. Reading the assigned readings, taking notes during lectures, and participating in class discussion are the best ways to prepare for the exam.
- If you have to miss an exam you must inform me by email before the exam is held. Otherwise, you will not be permitted to take a make-up.

### **Classroom Philosophy and Conduct**

Discussing political topics can challenge deeply held or unexamined beliefs. Expect to be challenged in this classroom to think critically about the ideas presented in the readings and common assumptions made about historical and contemporary politics. Given the difficult, sensitive, and political nature of the material to be discussed in this course, students will be expected to conduct themselves in a mature and respectful manner. This requires both thoughtfully voicing your own opinion and respectfully listening and responding to the opinions of others. The ultimate goal of this course is to provide you with the knowledge and critical thinking skills to construct informed opinions on complex political issues.

### **Email policy**

Email is the best method for getting in touch with me. My policy is to respond to email within 48 hours. In order for me to respond to your email, you must include "POLS 1002" in the subject line of the email. If your email address is not a variation of your name, please indicate in the body of the email who you are.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services please provide me with the course accommodation form so we may discuss your specific accommodation.

### **Academic Integrity**

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

### **Weekly Course Schedule**

*All dates, readings, and assignments are subject to change.*

\*\* Indicates a response paper is due at 1:00PM this day

## **Part I: Political Science: The Discipline and Key Concepts**

Mon Aug 27: Welcome and introduction

Mon Sept 3: NO CLASS

Weds Sept 5: CLASSES ON A MONDAY SCHEDULE Key concepts in political science \*\*

- Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. “Two Faces of Power” in *The American Political Science Review*.
- S. Laurel Weldon. 2013. “Dialogue: New Approaches to Thinking About Power and the Political?” in *Politics, Groups, and Identities*.

Mon Sept 10: NO CLASS

Thurs Sept 13: PRIMARY ELECTION (NEW YORK)

Sun Sept 16: LAST DAY TO DROP A COURSE WITHOUT A GRADE

Mon Sept 17: The political science discipline \*\*

- Iris Marion Young. 1990. “Five Faces of Oppression” in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.
- Mary Hawkesworth. 2005. “Engendering Political Science: An Immodest Proposal” in *Politics & Gender*.

## **Part II: Political Theory, Political Questions**

Mon Sept 24: The Aristotelean legacy \*\*

- Aristotle. 4 BC. *Politics*, Book I Ch. 1-7, 12-13, Book II Ch. 1, 4-7.
- Wendy Brown. 1989. “Aristotle: The Highest Good for Man” in *Manhood and Politics*.

Mon Oct 1: Machiavellian state, Machiavellian man \*\*

- Niccolò Machiavelli. 1532. *The Prince*, Ch. 1, 2, 8, 15, 17-18, 25.
- Hanna Pitkin. 1984. “Autonomy – Personal and Political” in *Fortune is a Woman*.

Mon Oct 8: NO CLASS

Mon Oct 15: The social contract, the sexual contract, the racial contract \*\*

- John Locke. 1690. *The Second Treatise of Government*, Ch. 5, 7-9.
- Carole Pateman. 1989. “Contracting In” in *The Sexual Contract*.
- Charles Mills. 1997. “Introduction” and “Overview” in *The Racial Contract*

Mon Oct 22: Marxist historical materialism and racial capitalism \*\*

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1848. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Parts I and II.
- Cedric J. Robinson. 1983. “Introduction” and “An Ending” in *Black Marxism*.

Mon Oct 29: Intersectionality \*\*

- Evelyn M. Simien. 2006. *Black Feminist Voices in Politics*. Chapters 1, 5-6.

- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. 2016. “The Urgency of Intersectionality.” Video and transcript:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality)

Mon Nov 5:

- **MIDTERM EXAM**

Tues Nov 6: MIDTERM ELECTION; LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE WITH A “W” (NON-PENALTY) GRADE

### **Part III: Political Ideologies and Practices**

Mon Nov 12: Democratic theory and democracies\*\*

- Robert Dahl. 1998. *On Democracy* Chapters 4-5, 8, 12-14.

Mon Nov 19: (Neo)-Liberalism\*\*

- Milton Friedman. 1962. “The Role of Government in a Free Society” in *Capitalism and Freedom* (excerpts).
- Wendy Brown. 2015. “Undoing Democracy: Neoliberalism’s Remaking of State and Subject” in *Undoing the Demos*.

Mon Nov 26: Socialism and Social Democracy \*\*

- Eduard Bernstein. 1899. *Evolutionary Socialism: A Criticism and Affirmation* (excerpts).
- Bhaskar Sunkara, ed. 2016. *The ABCs of Socialism* (excerpts).

Mon Dec 3: Fascism \*\*

- Hannah Arendt. 1958. “Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.
- Zoe Williams. 2017. “Totalitarianism in the age of Trump: lessons from Hannah Arendt” in *The Guardian*.

Mon Dec 10: Anarchism\*\* LAST DAY OF CLASS

- Emma Goldman. 1910. “Anarchism: What it really stands for” in *Anarchism and Other Essays*.
- Stephen D. Krasner. 2011. “Review Symposium: State, Power, Anarchism; A Discussion of *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* [by James C. Scott]” in *Perspectives on Politics*.

Week of Dec 17:

- **FINAL EXAM**



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