

# Political Science 100: Introduction to Political Science

Matt Mettler

Fall 2024

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Class Room: Gregory Hall 217

Class Hours: MWF 11:00-11:50am

Office: David Kinley Hall 433

Office Hours: W 2:00 - 4:00pm

Web: Canvas page

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**Textbook:** *The Challenge of Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. CQ Press.  
**Author(s):** Riemer, Simon, and Romance. 2022.; **ISBN-13:** 978-1071835395

## Course description:

- What is power, who gets it, and why? How do American voters decide who to vote for? How do political institutions vary across countries? When do countries go to war? How can these questions be studied scientifically? These are some of the questions that you will consider during this broad overview of the discipline of political science. The course will introduce the major subfields of political science, including political theory, American politics, comparative politics, and international relations. We will also discuss the nature of social scientific research and how it can be used to inform thinking about pressing political issues. At the end of the course, you should have a working knowledge of core political science concepts and be able to apply those concepts to real-world problems.

## Course goals and objectives:

- This course is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of political science (see the course description above). By the end of the course, you should feel comfortable with undertaking more specialized courses in any subfield of political science. A second goal of this course is to provide you with practical political skills. To accomplish this goal, you will participate in a weekly discussion section that will be focused on practical applications of political science research.

## Work required:

- Reading in advance of lecture is expected. Monday and Wednesdays are mostly lectures but we will often discuss the materials as a class and this requires having done the reading. Fridays will be discussion where I lead the discussions but students are expected to be doing most of the discussing.
- Attendance to lecture is expected. I will take attendance "randomly" on Mondays and Wednesdays usually in the form of some written activity. I will take attendance every Friday for the discussion grade. To accommodate unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness or emergency), you will get one excused absence for lectures and two for discussions. If you are going to miss class for an excused reason, please email me before class.
- The objective for discussion days is to read, think critically, and discuss contemporary political issues. With this objective in mind, participation in discussion sections is expected. To receive full points, you must attend discussions every week and be an active participant. If you attend but do not participate in discussion, you will only receive half credit. I also expect that we treat each other with respect. Lastly, I expect everyone to share ideas and opinions in good faith. Shared opinions should be those that reflect careful and genuine thought about an issue and not to "win" an argument or anger anyone else. If it is clear to me that someone is arguing in bad faith I reserve the right to withhold participation points for that day.
- You will complete two short reflection papers (writing assignments) based on any of the discussion (Friday readings) we do. You can submit up to three reflection papers and I will take the best two grades, but a minimum of two are required. These should be a minimum of 500 words, and a maximum of 800 words. **They must be double spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt font, and one inch margins. Deviations from this format will be deducted 10%.** These paper should not be summaries of the readings. They should reflect on the ideas discussed and you should add your own opinions and insights. An essay that is mostly summary will not receive a grade above a C (see page 9 for rubric). These papers are due before class on the Friday that we discuss the reading.
- There will be three, non-cumulative exams in the course. Exams will be between 30 and 40 multiple choice questions generated from class readings and lecture materials.

**Grade Distribution:**

Lecture-attendance	10%
Discussion-attendance & participation	10%
Writing assignments	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	20%

**Grading scale:**

>= 98.00	A+		
93-97	A	73 - 77	C
90-92	A-	70 - 72	C-
87 - 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
83 - 86	B	63 - 66	D
80 - 82	B-	60 - 62	D-
77 - 79	C+	<= 59	F

**Course Policies:**

- **Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:**

- Disruptions or interruptions in the classroom due to the improper use of cell phones or laptops (e.g., texting, chatting, browsing social media) will not be tolerated. Students who are disrupting the class will be asked to stop using their electronic device and may be asked to leave.

- **Attendance policy:**

- Regular class attendance is expected of all students (as outlined in the Student Code § 1-501). Students who are absent for in-class activities will not be awarded participation points (see “work required” above for a description of exceptions).

- **Late, incomplete, and revised work policy:**

- For attendance and discussion sections, some of your lowest grades (including absences) will be excused (see “work required” above). Make up exams will be scheduled as needed if the absence is for acceptable reasons as outlined in the Student Code (e.g., religious observance, disability accommodation, illness, university athletic participation). Students must inform the instructor in advance if they are going to miss an exam. In the event that a student misses an exam without first providing a legitimate reason in advance, a 10% penalty will be applied for each day or part of a day that passes until a make-up date is scheduled.

- **Email policy:**

- If you have a question about the course or an assignment, check the syllabus first to see if the answer to your question is there. If you cannot find the answer to your question on the syllabus, email me directly and I will attempt to respond as quickly as I can

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within reason. On the email subject line please put the class (PS100) and your last name (**PS100 Mettler**). You are also encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns about the course with me at office hours or after class.

- **Academic integrity policy:**

- Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and other infractions outlined in the Student Code, Article 1, Part 4 will not be tolerated. If such an infraction is suspected, action will be taken following the procedures outlined in the Student Code § 1-403.
- “(a) Cheating. No student shall use or attempt to use in any academic exercise materials, information, study aids, or electronic data that the student knows or should know is unauthorized. . .
  - \* (1) Allowing others to conduct research or prepare any work for a student without prior authorization from the Instructor, including using the services of commercial term paper companies.
  - \* (2) Submitting substantial portions of the same academic work for credit more than once or by more than one student without authorization from the Instructors to whom the work is being submitted.
  - \* (3) Working with another person without authorization to satisfy an individual assignment.”
- “(b) Plagiarism. No student shall represent the words, work, or ideas of another as his or her own in any academic endeavor. A violation of this section includes but is not limited to:
  - \* (1) Copying: Submitting the work of another as one’s own.
  - \* (2) Direct Quotation: Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited. Proper citation style for many academic departments is outlined in such manuals as the MLA Handbook or K.L. Turabian’s A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations. These and similar publications are available in the University bookstore or library. The actual source from which cited information was obtained should be acknowledged.
  - \* (3) Paraphrase: Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part. This is true even if the student’s words differ substantially from those of the source. A citation acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice as an acknowledgment of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material.
  - \* (4) Borrowed Facts or Information: Information obtained in one’s reading or research that is not common knowledge must be acknowledged. Examples of common knowledge might include the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc. Materials that contribute only to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in a bibliography and need not be immediately cited. One citation is usually sufficient to acknowledge indebtedness when a number of connected sentences in the paper draw their special information from one source.”

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- **AI policy:**

- An emerging area of concern in higher education is the use of natural language models in the classroom (for example, ChatGPT). To be clear, using an AI model to complete your assignments for you is cheating under (a)(1) in the academic integrity policy above. There are tools for detecting whether written work is AI-generated. If you submit AI-generated work, it will be treated as an academic infraction, just like if you plagiarized a published work or had someone else write your paper for you.
- However, I also recognize that AI-assisted research is a complicated topic where norms are still emerging; it is a tool, like your textbook, a search engine, or Wikipedia, and it has legitimate uses. It can be useful for brainstorming ideas, but it can also provide you with false information. The guiding principle in using AI is transparency. Just like when you provide citations to published work or webpages to give credit for ideas, if you get inspiration or ideas from an AI tool, you must cite your source and use quotation marks if you want to use a direct quotation. For guidance, see, for example, <https://style.mla.org/citing-artificial-intelligence/>. In addition, because the AI does not know if what it is saying is true, you should seek out other sources to confirm any factual claims made in statements by a natural language model.
- If you have questions about using AI for this course, ask for permission for your proposed use in advance rather than assuming and risking an academic infraction; we can work together to navigate these new opportunities and challenges. When unsure, it is always safer to abstain from using AI for coursework this semester until the standards become clearer.
- It is important to recognize that other instructors will approach AI in their classrooms differently; talk to your instructor about their policies and do not assume that this policy applies to other courses.

## Tentative schedule

- **Week 1: The Games politicians play (Chapter 1)**
  - 8/26: Class overview and Introductions
  - 8/28 The Games and the players
  - 8/30 The legal system: structure and players
- **Week 2: Politics and Choice (Chapter 2)**
  - 9/2: No class (Labor day)
  - 9/4: Chapter 2
  - 9/6: Balancing individual rights and the common good (canvas reading)
- **Week 3: Structure of political discipline (Chapter 3)**
  - 9/9 Chapter 3
  - 9/11 Scientific inquiry and methodology (hand out on canvas)
  - 9/13 No reading - class activity
- **Week 4: Political environments (Chapter 4)**
  - 9/16 Levels of analysis
  - 9/18 Constitutions and rights
  - 9/20 The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality, Chapter 3 (canvas reading)
- **Week 5: The Quest for the Good Political Life (Chapter 5)**
  - 9/23: Plato & Aristotle
  - 9/25 Christian and Modern forms
  - 9/27 Review Session
- **Week 6: Liberal democracy (Chapter 6)**
  - 9/30 **Exam 1**
  - 10/2 Chapter 6
  - 10/4 Political polarization in the American public & Polarization in today's congress has roots that go back decades (Canvas readings)
- **Week 7: Democratic socialism, Communist, and Authoritarianism (Chapter 7)**
  - 10/7 Chapter 7
  - 10/9 Illiberal democracy and the struggle on the right (Canvas reading)
  - 10/11 Liberal and illiberal democracy (Canvas reading)

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- **Week 8: Political Form, Culture, and Values (Chapter 8)**
    - 10/14 Political form & culture pg. 202 - 217
    - 10/16 Political values pg. 218 - 237
    - 10/18 Unwelcome change: coming to terms with democratic backsliding (Canvas reading)
  
  - **Week 9: American, comparative, and international institutions**
    - 10/21 Chapter 9 pg. 247 - 260
    - 10/23 Chapter 10 pg. 278 - 302
    - 10/25 Why nations fail chapter 2 & 3
  
  - **Week 10: Institutions continued**
    - 10/28 International relations: one world, many theories (Canvas reading)
    - 10/30 Neo-liberal Institutions
    - 11/1 No Reading ( In-class activity)
  
  - **Week 11: American behavior**
    - 11/4 Belief systems and political decision making (canvas reading)
    - 11/6 Chapter 9 pg. 264 - 274
    - 11/8 Review
  
  - **Week 12: Comparative behavior**
    - 11/11 Exam 2
    - 11/13 The interaction of structures and voter behavior
    - 11/15 Election turnout across nations
  
  - **Week 13: International Relations**
    - 11/18 Chapter 11 pg. 307- 314 & Chapter 12
    - 11/20 Chapter 12 continued
    - 11/22 NATO and the Russia problem (Canvas Reading)

- **Week 14: Fall Break**

- 11/25
- 11/27
- 11/29

- **Week 15: Public Policy**

- 12/2 Chapter 13
- 12/4 Finding solutions to lasting problems
- 12/6 No Reading (in class activity)

- **Week 16: Public Policy continued**

- 12/9 Chapter 15
- 12/11 Review

## Writing Assignment Rubric

Criteria	Pts
<b>Formatting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Does the paper follow the instructions?</li><li>- Does it use proper citations?</li><li>- Is it 500-800 words pages double spaced with 12-point font, times new romans, one-inch margins?</li></ul>	2 pts
<b>Substance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Thesis paragraph clearly identifies a demonstrable central argument.</li><li>- Does the paper demonstrate a clear understanding of the chosen readings while not spending too much time summarizing?</li><li>- Evidence used to support the central point is detailed and well argued.</li></ul>	8 pts

Total Points: 10