PSCI 210 (14453) Ryan C. Maness

Fall 2012 El Centro 122

Northeastern Illinois University T/R 4:15-5:30

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**Introduction to Political Science**

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the study of politics as well as the varying disciplines in the academic field of political science. This is an overview course that will cover many topics and will therefore be fast-paced. It is therefore imperative that you keep up with the reading schedule and attend class on a regular basis. We will begin with an overview of political science and the study of politics, followed by the relevant theories and political ideologies, then an overview of different types of states (countries), constitutions, and regimes. We will then tackle key concepts dealing with varying political culture, public opinion, political communication, interest groups, political parties, and elections across different countries. We then move onto key political institutions of states, which include legislatures, executives and bureaucracies, and judiciaries. We wrap things up with a concentration on international relations, which includes international political economy, political violence, and international security. All the while we will be covering the four major subfields of political science; theory, comparative politics, American politics, and international relations. Focusing on the current events of the semester will also be a topic of discussion in many of the lectures.

Another of this course’s objectives is developing understanding, or critical thinking abilities. Here I am speaking not just of understanding this subject, but developing your ability to understand in general. This is consistent with the general mission of the liberal arts and sciences to encourage you to develop the capacity for independent thought, for reflection, for comparing things as they are with things as they might be, and, in an important way, to become a different kind of person than you were when you entered this university. There are some significant differences between people with a college education, particularly in the liberal arts and sciences, and those without. Perhaps the most important is the development of this critical thinking ability, which will serve you well for a lifetime once you acquire it. This will lead to you developing more of an understanding of what your own values are, and how you view the field of political science, its key tenets, and give you an better understanding of the world we live in.

**Course requirements**

Please be advised that I will not accept late papers or other assignments, and I will not administer makeup exams, except in cases of documented emergencies or if you talk to me about a conflict you may have. I understand that many of you have lives outside of NEIU, all I ask is that you make sure you talk to me before the date of the exams or due dates for assignments.

Here is a summary of how your grade will be calculated:

**Grading Scale**

A   90% and above      B   80-89%      C   70-79%      D   60-69%      F   59% and below

**Two midterms (20% each) and non-cumulative Final (30%)**

**Current events paper (20%)** This paper will cover a current event, either domestically in the United States, or internationally. I highly recommend that you choose your current event early in the semester and follow the progress of this event throughout the semester by documenting various news stories or academic articles. You will then apply certain concepts of the course to your current event to gain a better understanding as to what political scientists do every day. I urge not to be “all over the place;” rather pick two to three key concepts of the course (e.g., political ideology, political parties, and legislative procedures) and focus on these to write a clear and coherent essay. I highly recommend that you check with me about your ideas so that you are on the right track. The paper should consist of three parts: 1) a summary of your current event; 2) the application of the core concepts of the course that relate to your current event, and 3) what you learned from this project. Please cite sources when necessary, any style is OK. If you believe yourself to be deficient in writing college papers, please talk to me. The paper must be at least 6 pages, although there is no maximum page limit. **The paper is due on Tuesday, November 27 in class.**

**Participation (10%)**  Participation is simply showing up **and** contributing to class. Either asking questions, bringing up news articles, following up on lecture points, or private conversations with the instructor (if you are more comfortable with that) all count towards your participation grade. I do not take attendance and feel that missing class will be reflected on your final grade because you will miss important material.

**Required Text:** Roskin, Cord, Medeiros, and Jones: *Political Science: An Introduction*, 12th Edition: Pearson ISBN: 9780205075942

Available at NEIU Bookstore or Online at Amazon.com, Half.com, etc.

**Plagiarism:**

When you write, you must do your own work and use a system of footnotes and references.  If you do not do this, or if you copy material from the internet or other sources without attribution, you may be committing plagiarism.  The NEIU Student Code of Conduct defines plagiarism as “Appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s original work. This includes (1) paraphrasing another’s ideas or conclusions without acknowledgement; (2) lifting of entire paragraphs, chapters, etc. from another’s work; and (3) submission as one’s own work, any work prepared by another person or agency.”  Plagiarism is SERIOUS.  Punishments include a failing grade on the paper or exam, or a failing grade in the course.  Students can also be referred to the Dean of Students for a hearing to decide additional punishments.  Plagiarism is also easy to avoid.  If you find a paper or article that says exactly what you wanted to say, then use it, but cite it.   We will discuss this again when the first paper assignment is distributed.

**Acts of Misconduct**(“University Student Conduct Code” can be found at <http://www.neiu.edu/DOCUMENTS/Dean_of_Students%20-%20Docs/uscc.pdf>): A student is subject to University discipline for participating or conspiring in the following acts of misconduct.  Academic misconduct is an offense against the University. Acts of academic misconduct include but are not limited to:

1. **Cheating**. Use or attempted use of any unauthorized assistance in taking an exam, test, quiz, or other assignment.
2. **Encouraging Academic Dishonesty**. Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to persuade and/or influence another to violate the University’s rules, policies, and regulations governing academic integrity.
3. **Fabrication**. Deliberate falsification or design of any material or excerpt in an academic assignment or exercise.
4. **Plagiarism**. Appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s original work. This includes (1) paraphrasing another’s ideas or conclusions without acknowledgement; (2) lifting of entire paragraphs, chapters, etc. from another’s work; and (3) submission as one’s own work, any work prepared by another person or agency.

If the student’s observed conduct or apparent behavior is such as to lead to suspicion of academic misconduct, the faculty member in whose course the alleged infraction occurred may adjust the grade downward (including F - failure) for the test, paper, or course, or other course related activity in question. In such instances the faculty member shall notify the student, the Department/Unit Head, the Dean of the College and the Office of the Dean of Students of the reason for such action in writing.

**Web Link to Emergency Information:**

It is recognized that a safe university environment is a shared responsibility of faculty, staff, and students, all of whom are expected to familiarize themselves with and cooperate with emergency procedures.  Web links to Campus Safety: Emergency Procedures and Safety Information can be found on NEIUport on the MyNEIU tab or as follows:

For the Main campus:

<http://www.neiu.edu/~neiutemp/Emergency_Procedures/MainCampus/>

**Course Schedule**

Week 1: Aug 28-30: Introductions, Politics and Political Science

Read: Chapter 1

Week 2: Sept 4-6: Theories and Ideologies

Read: Chapter 2 & 3

Week 3: Sept 11-13: States and Constitutions

Read: Chapter 4 & 5

Week 4: Sept 18-20: Regimes and Political Cultures

Read: Chapter 6 & 7

Week 5: Sept 25: Political Cultures and Midterm Review

Sept 27: **First Midterm in class**

Week 6: Oct 2-4: Public Opinion and Political Communication

Read: Chapter 8 & 9

Week 7: Oct 9-11: Interest Groups and Political Parties

Read: Chapter 10 & 11

Week 8: Oct 16-18: Political Parties and Elections

Read: Chapter 12

Week 9: Oct 23: Elections and Midterm Review

Oct 25: **Second Midterm during class**

Week 10: Oct 30-Nov 1: Legislatures

Read: Chapter 13

Week 11: Nov 6-8: Executives and Bureaucracies

Read: Chapters 14

Week 12: Nov 13-15: Judiciaries/International Political Economy

Read: Chapter 15 & 16

Week 13: Nov 20: IPE/Political Violence

Read: Chapter 17

Nov 22: **No Class, Thanksgiving**

Week 14: Nov 27-29: Political Violence/International Security

**Current Events papers due November 27 in class!!**

Week 15: Dec 4-6: International Security

Read: Chapter 18

Week 16: Dec 10-14: **Final: December 11, 4:00-5:50 pm, In classroom**