Political Science 200
Fall, 2015
M. Weinstein

Class Format:
Classes will proceed by STRUCTURED DISCUSSION based on the conversations we have each period. In order for an intelligent and lively discussion to occur, certain ground rules must be observed. Nobody should come to class late (if you try to come in late you will not be allowed to enter), anyone may leave class at any time but will not be permitted to return during that session, the use of electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, messaging systems) is prohibited. Recording the class is prohibited and you will get an automatic F in the course if you are caught doing so. There should be no ridicule of others, there should be freedom and encouragement of criticism. Ideas brought out in class discussion will be the basis of examinations, so, at least for that reason, attendance is important. The requirements of the course are aimed at developing the skills of thorough and critical understanding of political-science thinking, ability to discuss politics through a scientific approach articulately, and capacity to write about the issues raised by political science intelligibly. YOU WILL ALSO PRACTICE THE SKILL OF LISTENING. These goals can best be attained by serious preparation for and participation in class discussion. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out from another student what went on and to obtain notes. There is no need to discuss an absence with me. Plagiarism will be treated according to university rules.

Reading:
There is no text for this course. STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE MATERIALS FOR THE COURSE. JUST PROVIDE A COPY OF WHATEVER YOU WANT US TO READ FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE CLASS. If you are not present when materials are handed out in class for succeeding sessions you will have to get them from another student. This is another reason to attend class regularly: you will still be responsible for the reading assignments even if you haven’t received them in class.
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Class Schedule:

August 25  Introduction to Course
October 15  Examination #1, in-class
December 3  Examination #2, in-class
December 10  Free Discussion

This course will analyze contemporary political events through the way a political scientist thinks about them. Political science is one way of thinking about political events; it analyzes political events in terms of how they happen and why WITHOUT making value judgments.
Examinations:
There will be an in-class examination on the first segment of the course on October 15 and an in-class examination on the second segment of the course on December 3. EACH EXAM WILL COUNT FOR FORTY PER CENT OF YOUR GRADE IN THE COURSE. These examinations will cover both the texts (if any) and the points raised in class discussion. THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAMINATION OR MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS.

Written Assignment:
Each member of the class will write a four-page, double-spaced critical summary of the ideas brought up in class discussion during a specific class period. The class period for which each person will be responsible will be determined in the first session of the course. The critical summary is due at the beginning of the class period following the period summarized. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. FAILURE TO ATTEND THE CLASS PERIOD THAT YOU ARE ASSIGNED TO SUMMARIZE WILL RESULT IN A '0' ON THIS ASSIGNMENT. THE CRITICAL SUMMARY WILL COUNT FOR TWENTY PER CENT OF YOUR GRADE IN THE COURSE. ANY STUDENT WHO IS NOT ASSIGNED A DATE FOR THE CRITICAL SUMMARY PAPER BECAUSE THEY HAVE MISSED THE ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ASKING ME TO GIVE THEM THEIR DATE!

Policy on Class Discussion:
There will be no grade given to reflect the quality or quantity of your participation in class discussion. I do not grade participation because I wish discussion to be as free as possible, with no penalty for expression of opinion.

INVITATION TO PROVIDE READING MATERIALS TO THE CLASS:
Each student is encouraged to provide materials to the class to be discussed in one or more class sessions. Student-provided material will supersede the ongoing discussion. Just make enough copies of your material for everyone in class, including me.