

PSC 100: Introduction to Government and World Affairs
Summer I 2025 / Asynchronous Online

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Course Website: SpartanLearn (Canvas)

Zoom Office Hours: Thursday 9am-2pm (Office Hours must be scheduled at least a day in advance with the exception of exam weeks where Thursdays 11am-1pm will be open drop-in hours.)

Objective:

Cover the essential elements of political science from a national and international perspective giving students the skills they need to digest political science and think more critically about the political world in which they live.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to introduce you to the basics of social science research as well as persistent questions in comparative politics. By the end of this course students are able to:

- Describe the components of a social science research paper and understand how these components fit together.
- Compare and contrast the determinants of democracy and dictatorship.
- Explain the impacts of different social foundations and formal political institutions on governance.

Requirements:

Though it may be altered and/or clarified by professorial edict on Canvas if conditions dictate, consider this syllabus a tentative agreement between you and your professor that lists both what you can expect from class and what is expected of you. Check it regularly. You are expected to read EVERYTHING assigned on the syllabus, which averages approximately 100 pages a week. Perhaps more importantly in this class, you are also expected to play around with the concepts covered until you KNOW them!!! You are also expected to watch and pay attention to EVERY lecture. Visiting me during office hours to discuss issues raised in class and/or problem sets will not hurt either.

If you do these things, you will do very well in the course. If you do not do these things, you will not do so well in the course. Though this class is certainly manageable for conscientious students, and several do quite well each semester, for students used to putting in a minimal

amount of work at the last minute and achieving good results, an expedited summer version of PSC 100 can be an unpleasant experience. Consider this fair warning up front.

You will be evaluated in this class based on your performance in four areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Exams (45%) – Over the course of the semester you will be given two opportunities to demonstrate your mastery of concepts covered in the readings and lectures. Each of these exams constitute nearly a quarter of your final course grade. Exams are available for a 48-hour period on SpartanLearn and remotely proctored by Proctorio. They are closed book exams meaning you may not use notes, books, or any outside help. A mix of multiple choice, short answer, problems, and/or essay formats comprise the questions. There will be no review sheets. Excused late or early exams will only be given in extreme circumstances and only with acceptable documentation as described in the university's General Attendance policy. Unexcused late exams will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day.

Homework (20%) – Each assigned chapter in the Clark, Golder, and Golder text comes with a problem set at the end. You should do all the questions as they are good preparation for exams. On SpartanLearn there is a homework assignment for each chapter that asks for the answers to a handful of these problem set questions. These homework assignments are repeatable before they are due, and the lowest two scores are dropped. Because of these leniencies, late homework assignments are not accepted. Homework assignments are available two weeks before they are due.

Quizzes (20%) – Ten of your twelve modules have readings and lectures assigned. For each of these ten modules, there is a 15-minute quiz available on SpartanLearn. Quizzes are monitored by Proctorio. These quizzes are NOT repeatable, but the lowest two scores are dropped. Because of this leniency, late quiz assignments are not accepted. Quizzes are available two weeks before they are due.

Participation (15%) – There are two components of your participation grade. One is asynchronous and the other synchronous. The asynchronous component happens via Yuja video quizzes embedded in the lectures. More than 30 times those lecture videos pause to ask a question. These questions cover either basic information just discussed in the video (which have a correct answer) or ask you to answer a subjective question (for which all serious answers are correct). Answer 20 of these questions correctly and you will pick up half of the participation points. Your points will be diminished proportionally for each correct answer below 20. The synchronous component happens via Zoom office hours. Each week of the semester 5 office hours are available to you. These are one-on-one appointments you may schedule a day in advance. In addition, the week before each exam I sit for 2 hours of drop-in office hours. I want to meet with you at least twice, once before Exam 1 and another time between Exam 1 and Exam 2. In extreme circumstances I can set up a meeting outside drop-in and scheduled office hours, but you must identify this conflict and make arrangements before the end of the second week of the semester.

Important Due Dates:¹

Exam #1	Saturday 14 June
Exam #2	Saturday 5 July
Homework and Quizzes	
Module 1	Saturday 31 May
Module 2	Saturday 31 May
Module 3	Saturday 7 June
Module 4	Saturday 7 June
Module 5	Saturday 14 June
Module 7	Saturday 21 June
Module 8	Saturday 21 June
Module 9	Saturday 28 June
Module 10	Saturday 5 July
Module 11	Saturday 5 July
Participation	
Video Questions	Before module homework/quiz deadline where lecture video is assigned
Office Hours #1	By Thursday 12 June
Office Hours #2	By Thursday 3 July

Grading:

The course letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Quality Points</i>	<i>Numeric Scale*</i>
A	4.0	92.5 and above
AB	3.5	87.5-92.49
B	3.0	82.5-87.49
BC	2.5	77.5-82.49
C	2.0	72.5-77.49
CD	1.5	67.5-72.49
D	1.0	60-67.49
F	0.0	Below 60

Required Texts:

(CGG) Clark, William R., Matt Golder, Sona N. Golder. 2018. *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 3rd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press/Sage. (ISBN: 9781506318127)

(📖) Article or chapter available on course SpartanLearn.

¹ On due dates, assignments must be in by 11:59 PM Tampa time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the professor's sole discretion. Any changes will be announced via SpartanLearn.

Week 1 (May 27-31)

Module 1 Introduction

Readings: ✓ syllabus; **CGG** Ch. 1; and ✓ "How to Read Political Science."

Lectures: 1.1 Introduction

Assignments: Module 1 Homework and Module 1 Quiz

Module 2 What is Science?

Readings: **CGG** Ch. 2

Lectures: 2.1 What is Science?; 2.2 Structure of Scientific Arguments; and 2.3 Valid Arguments

Assignments: Module 2 Homework and Module 2 Quiz

Week 2 (June 1-7)

Module 3 What is Politics?

Readings: **CGG** Ch. 3

Lectures: 3.1 Exit, Voice, Loyalty

Assignments: Module 3 Homework and Module 3 Quiz

Module 4 Origins of the Modern State

Readings: **CGG** Ch. 4; ✓ excerpt from Hobbes' *Leviathan*; ✓ excerpt from Locke's *Second Treatise*; and ✓ Kaplan's "The Coming Anarchy."

Lectures: 4.1 What is the State?; 4.2 Origins of the Modern State; 4.3 Failed States; 4.4 Prisoners Dilemma

Assignments: Module 4 Homework and Module 4 Quiz

Week 3 (June 8-14)

Module 5 Democracy and Dictatorships

Readings: **CGG** Ch. 5

Lectures: 5.1 Democracy and Dictatorship; and 5.2 Variable Attributes

Assignments: Module 5 Homework and Module 5 Quiz

Module 6 Exam 1

Assignments: Exam 1 (This assignment is available for 48 hours only beginning on 13 June.

You may begin the exam any time during that 48 hours as long as you complete the exam before its due date.)

Week 4 (June 15-21)

Module 7 Varieties of Dictatorship

Readings: **CGG** Ch. 10

Lectures: 7.1 Typologies of Authoritarianism; and 7.2 Problems with Authoritarian Rule

Assignments: Module 7 Homework and Module 7 Quiz

Module 8 Presidential, Parliamentary, and Semi-Presidential Democracies

Readings: **CGG** Ch. 12

Lectures: 8.1 Parliamentary Systems; 8.2 Presidential Systems; 8.3 Semi-Presidential Systems; and 8.4 Principal-Agent Game

Assignments: Module 8 Homework and Module 8 Quiz

******* June 23 Last Day to Withdraw *******

Week 5 (June 22-28)

- Module 9* Elections and Electoral Systems
Readings: **CGG** Ch. 13
Lectures: 9.1 Majoritarian, Proportional, and Mixed; and 9.2 Translating Votes into Seats
Assignments: Module 9 Homework and Module 9 Quiz
- Module 10* Social Cleavages and Party Systems
Readings: **CGG** Ch. 14
Lectures: 10.1 Social Cleavages; and 10.2 Party Systems
Assignments: Module 10 Homework and Module 10 Quiz

Week 6 (June 29-July 5)

- Module 11* Institutional Veto Players
Readings: **CGG** Ch. 15
Lectures: 11.1 Federalism; 11.2 Bicameralism; 11.3 Constitutionalism; and 11.4 Veto Players
Assignments: Module 11 Homework and Module 11 Quiz
- Module 12* Exam 2
Assignments: Exam 2 (This assignment is available for 48 hours only beginning on 4 July. You may begin the exam any time during that 48 hours as long as you complete the exam before its due date.)

UT Policies:

There are a number of policies that apply to every course taken at UT. These deal with syllabus alterations, Title IX and reporting of sexual misconduct, ADA compliance, campus closure, academic integrity, attendance, and classroom disruptions. You should familiarize yourself with them all. Each of these policies is in effect for this course. In lieu of replicating them all here, below is a link where you can read the most updated policies in their entirety.

<https://www.ut.edu/academics/center-for-teaching-and-learning/required-syllabus-disclosures>

Intellectual Property:

The content of this course (including lecture videos and assignments) is copyright protected and may NOT be shared, uploaded, sold, or distributed. You may use the materials as part of this course, but you may not share the content with those outside of the course. This means it is fine to take notes on lectures, download readings, and create study guides for personal use. Prohibited uses would include reposting lecture videos in their entirety or in parts; creating open access online study guides that include quiz, homework, or exam questions; and/or replicating discussion threads outside of the password-protected Canvas environment. If in doubt, ask before you share course content. Failure to respect copyright, comes with potential campus and civil sanctions.

Class Rules, Etiquette, and Advice:

I like my job a lot. There are few things I can imagine doing more satisfying than providing inquisitive minds with an atmosphere conducive to thinking more critically about their own assumptions and the world in which we live. The image of students leaving my course just a bit more prepared to make their society better is sustaining. Following is a list of policies and practices designed to help you make the most out of the course and improve the classroom experience for both of us.

DO take care of your mental health – There is a mental health crisis among college students. A recent study observed 44% of students reported feeling symptoms of depression, 37% reported anxiety disorders, and 15% reported having seriously considered suicide in the past year.² If at some point during your time at UT you begin to feel out of control for any reason you should realize that you are not alone and there is help available to you. Your professors are happy to discuss problems you are having with course content, but most of us are not trained mental health professionals. There are, however, dedicated mental health counselors available to you through UT's Health and Counseling Center located in the Dickey Health and Wellness Center directly behind Austin Hall. The best time to deal with mental health issues is when they arise and not after your personal and academic life have hit rock bottom. The Health Center's email is counseling@ut.edu and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 833-755-0484 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

DO read the assigned texts and watch the assigned lectures – The amount and content of the reading assignments and lectures are well within the realm of reasonable for a class at this level. I have looked at syllabi from many different institutions of higher learning to come confidently to

² Kim North Shine, "College Students' Anxiety, Depression Higher than Ever, but so Are Efforts to Receive Care," University of Michigan News, March 9, 2023, <https://news.umich.edu/college-students-anxiety-depression-higher-than-ever-but-so-are-efforts-to-receive-care/>.

this conclusion. Though there are some things covered in the assigned readings that will not be covered in lecture, and vice versa, the lectures and readings build off each other. I will not hesitate to pull exam questions from readings not covered in lecture and from lectures not covered in the readings.

DO know the university policy on “excused” absences – In this online asynchronous class you have a great deal of leeway regarding submission of assignments. For homework and quizzes you have a two week window. For exams you have a two-day window. Since I allow for a couple of dropped assignments with the homework and quizzes, I do not extend deadlines or accept late assignments for absences. For exams there is a modest late penalty that I will waive if you have an excused absence. The UT catalog has a detailed section on excused absences. It falls under the heading “Class Attendance and Participation” in the Academic Policies and Procedures section. In the event that you cannot take an exam during the scheduled two-day exam window, you must provide acceptable documentation detailing the reasons for your excuse as soon as possible. Be thorough with this documentation as the burden of proving an absence is excusable falls on the student.

DO visit me during office hours – If you have a question about something we covered in class, need feedback on an assignment, want to discuss something you discovered outside of class that you think connects to course content in an interesting way, or just want to chat, FEEL FREE to schedule or drop by office hours. I keep at least five hours per week and these hours are for you. You are not pestering me or taking me away from something more important. It is nice to talk with students outside of our regular classroom setting.

DO NOT send me an email unless it’s absolutely necessary – With several classes and nearly 100 students a semester emails are a burden. While I know email seems convenient from the student point of view because it is more instantly gratifying and relatively labor free, I have found the method of communication a poor way to convey the complex concepts we deal with in class and for general points of inquiry it is inefficient as emails regularly get lost in my Inbox. So how can you decide if an email must be sent to me? I would encourage you to ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1) Can I find the answer on the syllabus, in a text, or online?
- 2) Is it something one of my colleagues in class can answer?
- 3) Can it wait until next class or office hours?

If you answer any of these questions in the affirmative, PLEASE fight against the temptation to hit send. If you answer all of the questions in the negative, feel free to send the email. Make sure, however, to send it from your @spartans.ut.edu email account and keep in mind that I don’t check email every day. Also, if you submit an assignment by email, I will NOT grade it.

DO NOT ask if it is on the exam – I do not give out study guides. This is a university class and when I attended university ages ago study guides, like the iPod and indoor plumbing, were not yet invented. This experience taught me that learning things the readings and lectures cover that are not on the exam can be just as important and enlightening as learning things that are on the exam. Anything in the readings and lectures is fair game for an exam. Things covered extensively across readings and lectures are more likely to show up on the exam.

DO NOT ask for extra credit – Rarely do I give out extra credit opportunities. When I do, the opportunity is initiated by me and open to all students in class. I have never given an extra credit

assignment to a student who initiates the request. Giving out extra credit opportunities to select students makes grades for the course an unreliable measure of student success and your goal should be to master the material assigned on the syllabus.

DO NOT offload your education to AI - You may use AI chatbots to help brainstorm an idea or check your grammar. You should note, however, that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, plagiarized, or otherwise problematic. Overuse of AI will also stifle your own independent thinking, creativity, and development as a scholar. You may NOT submit any work generated by an AI chatbot as your own. If you include material generated by AI, it should be quoted and cited like any other reference material. Uncited material that reads like it was written by AI will receive no credit.³

DO understand what your grade represents – I assume all students who enter my class want to take away a greater understanding of the slice of the world we are studying and that the grade they receive is but a formal, and somewhat abstract and imprecise, reflection of the knowledge they have gained. The average student in my courses typically earns a low B (3.0). Grades represent both effort and skill so students that put in more effort than average and/or are more skilled than average will do better than this, whereas students who put in less effort than average and/or are less skilled will do worse. It is not easy to earn an A in my course, but a few do. On the other hand, it is even more difficult to earn an F in my course but a few students every semester put in nearly no effort and/or do not have the skills necessary for a college-level course in Political Science. I have given failing marks to students whom I think are wonderful people and given A grades to students of whom I am not so fond. Grades are not personal statements on your character, they are a professional opinion of the work you submit.

DO learn how to question grades respectfully – I do my best to communicate expectations and make sure my comments on graded assignments pinpoint areas where you did well and areas where you needed to put in some more work. There will, however, occasionally be questions about the grade you receive. I will NOT change a grade or let you resubmit an assignment simply because you want a better grade. If, however, you think I made a mistake I will consider changing a grade ONLY after the following conditions have been met: 1) You must wait at least 24 hours but no more than two weeks after your grade is submitted to SpartanLearn to file a complaint and 2) You must submit in writing a detailed explanation of why you think you deserve a different grade. I will review your submission and give you my final decision within a week of receipt at which time I will consider the “negotiation” complete and any further appeals on the issue will be directed to the university Grade Appeal procedure.

³ Adapted from <https://x.com/HollyLynchez/status/1614980625374580738>