

PSCH100F: Introduction to Government and World Affairs (Honors)
Spring 2017 / TR 12:00-1:50 / KBB 216

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Office Hours: Wednesday (10am-3pm)

Objective:

PSC 100 offers you a very broad overview of Political Science. By the end of the class you should be able to engage in a thoughtful conversation on the discipline and the real world subjects it studies. The course is not comprehensive and is at its best a stepping stone for higher-level and more focused courses in American Politics, Area Studies, Law, Comparative Politics, and International Relations.

The topic of the first month of class is the scientific method as it applies to the study of politics. What do political scientists study? How do their methods help us understand the world around us? Where are academics studying politics failing their students and why? Liberal Arts colleges are designed to give young scholars the building blocks they need to wrap their minds around interesting and complex phenomena. Under optimal circumstances this introduction to the discipline will assist you in better understanding the topical issues in political science covered in the last two and a half months of class.

The topical issues covered in this course include governance, poverty, terrorism, war, trade, human rights, and the environment. Most, if not all, of these issues will be of interest to you as intelligent inhabitants of this planet because they all have a bearing on your everyday life. While we will not all agree on how best to handle the situations presented over the course of discussing these issues, by the end of the class you should be better able to articulate your political positions and offer both theoretical and empirical justifications for these positions that extend beyond the trite “just because...” or one of its equally erudite variants. Many students come to university thinking that they “are not political.” By the end of this course you should be able to tell such a student that they are wrong!

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed such that students who have immersed themselves in the material, attending lectures regularly, doing the readings, completing all assignments diligently, and studying for exams, should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- The student will be able to describe and analyze the impact of a variety of political institutions and processes from around the world.
- The student will be able to explain the differences between major political ideologies and apply them to analysis of public policies.
- The student will be able to describe how political knowledge is developed in the discipline of political science.
- The student will be able to identify their own values on major issues of public policy and world affairs

Requirements:

Though it may be altered slightly and/or clarified by professorial edict either in class or via email, consider this syllabus a contract between you and your professor that lists both what you can expect from class and what is expected of you. Check it regularly and always bring it to class with your notebook. You are expected to read EVERYTHING assigned on the syllabus, which averages between 50 and 100 pages a week. You are also expected to attend EVERY lecture. Visiting me on occasion during office hours to discuss issues raised in class and/or paper topics 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. Consider this fair warning up front.

You will be evaluated in this class based on your performance in 6 areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Exam #1 (20%) – given out in-class on Thursday 2 February. The exam will cover all material from the readings, in-class discussions, and special Reeves Theater presentations for weeks 1 through 3. If you miss a lecture over this period, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your colleagues. The exam will include both multiple choice and short essay questions. There will be NO review sheet. Excused late or early exams will only be given in extreme circumstances with acceptable documentation or prior permission (at least two weeks in advance) from the professor. Unexcused late exams will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day. If you miss an exam it is YOUR responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to schedule a make-up.

Exam #2 (20%) – exactly like Exam #1 in format but covering material from week 1 through week 8. It will be administered in-class on Thursday 23 March. A heavy emphasis will be placed on lessons covered after Exam #1.

Exam #3 (20%) – exactly like Exams #1 and #2 in format but covering material from weeks 1 through 14. It will be administered during the finals period on Thursday 4 May. A heavy emphasis will be placed on lessons covered after Exam #2.

Research Paper (25%) – To conduct a research project you will divide up in groups of 4 to 6 students. You may choose your own group and email me a list of members before noon on Friday 20 January or I will choose a group for you. In these groups you will pick a research question you want to answer as well as case studies and evidence you think will help you produce a compelling answer to your question. Then, as a group, you will develop a paper proposal which you will present to the class on Tuesday 21 March. These presentations should be well-organized, informative, and no more than 30 minutes long. After completing your proposal as a group, you will individually be responsible for writing a paper detailing your research question, thesis, the literature you are responding to, and making your case. You should also include a discussion of your research methods and improvements you would make if given a chance to return to your project. A formal outline for your paper will be available on our course Blackboard site. While each group member's paper will be different in significant ways, you should not feel free to make such drastic changes to the basic tenets of the project, such as the research question, that the papers no longer resemble a coherent group. Your paper should be NO MORE than 10 pages (1 inch margins, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt) long. It should be well researched, well written, and include a reference page as well as internal citations. Though there is no fixed requirement, papers with less than five peer-reviewed citations are unlikely to be "well researched." Organizationally your paper should have an introduction, literature review, methods and findings sections, and a conclusion. Your grade will be based on the quality of your group presentations (20%) and individual paper (80%). Research papers are due on, or before, Monday 17 April via Blackboard/Turnitin. Late papers will be penalized at a

rate of 10 points per day. As this assignment should not be completed the night before it is due, even what have heretofore been excused absences are no excuse for tardiness.

Book Review (7.5%) – Over the course of the semester we will cover five books in their entirety: Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Korten's *When Corporations Rule the World*, and Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*. You will be responsible for reviewing one book which you should choose before the end of week 2. If you have no preference a book will be assigned to you. Once you have been assigned a book, you will not be allowed to switch books without approval of the instructor and at least a week's notice. Book reviews should be NO MORE than 3 pages long (1 inch margins, single-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt). Book reviews are NOT mere chapter by chapter summaries of a text. You should identify the work's research question, thesis, and succinctly outline how the author's argument progresses from research question to thesis. You should also include a discussion of how the book fits into the literature on government and world affairs. Your thoughtful and appropriate personal evaluation of the text should work its way into your review. Book reviews are due before the class we discuss the text via Blackboard/Turnitin. You should come to this class with five copies of your review and be prepared to lead a small group discussion of the text. Your colleagues will be familiar with the text having read one chapter (available online through Blackboard), but you will be the expert having read the entire book (which you must purchase or find a way to borrow). Papers turned in after class has started will receive a 0 without prior approval from the professor. Papers whose authors do not present the material WILL BE DOCKED 25 POINTS. Since you are using this assignment to teach your colleagues, these harsh late and absentee penalties are a recognition that book reviews are much easier to write after we cover the material in class and should serve as a reminder that it is disrespectful to the entire class not to take this assignment seriously.

Questions (7.5%) – For each session's readings/lecture you have the opportunity to write down three questions and bring them to class. At least one of these questions should be about a specific reading; a second should relate to the lecture, and a third should be discussion oriented and tie the day's readings/lecture to the real world. Think of these questions as a study review. At the beginning of each class I will randomly select between zero and five students to present their questions from the previous class to the group and we will spend a few minutes discussing possible answers. I will call on each student at least five times but only your three highest graded question sets will count toward your final grade. Since I will drop at least your two lowest question grades, late or make-up questions are not be allowed. Grading of questions will be on a ✓+ (1), ✓ (.5), and ✓- (0) scale. To receive a ✓+ your questions should be well informed by the readings and demonstrate that you are self-processing connections between the readings and your environment. Grades of ✓- will be given to questions that are "mailed in" and demonstrate no critical thinking.

Despite the above listed percentages, because I have had students in the past do terribly on exams but turn in excellent papers clearly written by someone else I REQUIRE YOU TO PASS A MINIMUM OF ONE OF THE COURSE'S THREE EXAMS IN ORDER TO PASS THIS COURSE. If you do not understand what is expected of you with regard to any of these assignments it is your responsibility to seek clarification in a timely manner which your professor will gladly provide.

Important Due Dates:

Exam #1	Thursday 2 February
Exam #2	Thursday 23 March
Exam #3	Thursday 4 May
Book Review	
Putnam	Thursday 16 February
Korten	Tuesday 28 February
Arendt	Thursday 16 March
Carr	Thursday 6 April
Fanon	Thursday 20 April
Groups Present	Tuesday 21 March
Research Paper	Monday 17 April
Questions	weeks 2 – 14

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	93-100
AB	3.5	88-92
B	3.0	83-87
BC	2.5	78-82
C	2.0	73-77
CD	1.5	68-72
D	1.0	60-67
F	0.0	Below 60

*I will round up at the .5 and NOT before. For example, if you earn an 87.49 you will receive a B for the class. If you earn an 87.5 you will receive an AB. The only exception to this rule concerns the line between a D and an F. If you make below 60 points, even if it is by the smallest fraction of a point, I will NOT round up.

Required Texts:

- (M) Magstadt, Thomas. *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions, & Issues* (12th ed).
- (♻️) Article or chapter available through UT Blackboard.

Recommended Texts:

- Arendt, Hanna. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.
- Carr, E.H. *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- Korten, David. *When Corporations Rule the World*.
- Putnam, Robert. *Making Democracy Work*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the professor's sole discretion. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and/or via Blackboard.

Week 1 (January 17 - 20)

- Tuesday* Introduction
Readings: ☪ syllabus
- Thursday* Topic 1: What is politics and why are we studying it?
Readings: *M* ch. 1
- Topic 2: Learning how to read social science in college
Readings: ☪ Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529-545.

Week 2 (January 23 – 27)

- Tuesday* Topic 1: Learning how to do social science – research design
Readings: ☪ Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "Research Design and the Accumulation of Knowledge." In *Paradigms and Sand Castles*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Topic 2: Learning how to do social science – picking a question
Readings: ☪ King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. "Major Components of Research Design." In *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Thursday* Topic 1: Learning how to do social science – selecting cases
Readings: ☪ Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65 (3): 682-693.
- Topic 2: Learning how to do social science – collecting evidence
Readings: ☪ Bernard, H. Russell. 2002. "The Foundations of Social Research." In *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. 3rd ed. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Week 3 (January 30 – February 3)

- Tuesday* Learning how to do social science – accounting for counter arguments
Readings: ☪ Lim, Timothy. 2006. "Thinking Theoretically in Comparative Politics." In *Doing Comparative Politics*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Thursday* **EXAM #1**

Week 4 (February 6 – 10)

- Tuesday* Ideologies, defining the 'public good'
Readings: *M* ch. 2
- Thursday* The State – creating sovereignty
Readings: ☪ Selections from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and John Locke's *Second Treatise*.

Week 5 (February 13 – 17)

- Tuesday* The State – falling apart at the seams
Readings: ☪ Kaplan, Robert. 1994. "The Coming Anarchy." *The Atlantic Monthly*, February.
- Thursday* Topic 1: Governments – democratic and undemocratic models
Readings: ☪ Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1-16.
- Topic 2: Democracy and its causes
Readings: ☪ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Students writing a book review should read the entire book. All others should read at least Chapter 1 and Appendix A.)

Week 6 (February 20 – 24)

- Tuesday* **GROUP MEETINGS**
Your group will meet with me at a scheduled time during the class period to discuss your project.
- Thursday* Poverty – What it looks like
Readings: None, we will watch *Darwin's Nightmare* in class.

Week 7 (February 27 – March 3)

- Tuesday* Topic 1: Poverty – Defined
Readings: *M* ch. 9, and ☺ “The Mountain Man and the Surgeon.” 2005. *The Economist*, 24 December.
- Topic 2: Poverty – the rich get richer
Readings: ☺ Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (Students writing a book review should read the entire book. All others should read at least the Prologue.)
- Thursday* Topic 1: Poverty – why are the poor poor?
Readings: ☺ Wolfe, Marshall. 1973. “Development: Images, Conceptions, Criteria, Agents, Choices.” *UN Economic Bulletin For Latin America* 18(1): 1-12, and ☺ Williamson, John. 1990. “The ‘Washington Consensus.’”
- Topic 2: Political Parties in Ghana (Research Presentation)

*** SPRING BREAK ***

Week 8 (March 13 – 17)

- Tuesday* Terrorism – a micro-look
Readings: None, we will watch the movie *Paradise Now* in class.
- Thursday* Topic 1: Terrorism – understanding 9/11
Readings: *M* ch. 16; ☺ Campbell, David. 2002. “Time Is Broken.” *Theory and Event* 5(4), ☺ Bush, George W. 2001. “September 20 Speech to the American Public,” ☺ Krugman, Paul. 2001. “After the Horror.” *New York Times*, 14 September.
- Topic 2: Terrorism – the banality of evil?
Readings: ☺ Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Students writing a book review should read the entire book. All others should read at least the introduction to the Penguin Classics edition by Amos Elon.)

Week 9 (March 20 – 24)

- Tuesday* **GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**
- Thursday* **EXAM #2**

Week 10 (March 27 – 31)

- Monday* LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW
- Tuesday* Politics without Government – IR and anarchy
Readings: *M* ch. 17
- Thursday* Topic 1: International Organizations
- Topic 2: War
Readings: *M* ch. 15 and selection from ☺ Buzan, Barry. 1997. “Rethinking Security after the Cold War.” *Cooperation and Conflict* 32 (1): 5-28.

Week 11 (April 3 – 7)

Tuesday War – Rwanda
Readings: None, we will watch the movie *Ghosts of Rwanda* in class.

Thursday War, an interpretation that started a subfield and an unconventional look
Readings: ∞ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (Students writing a book review should read the entire book. All others should read at least the chapter titled "Utopia and Reality."); and ∞ Zinn, Howard. 2009. "A Just Cause ≠ A Just War." *The Progressive*, July.

Week 12 (April 10 – 14)

Tuesday Political Economy – Watching the sausage get made.
Readings: ∞ None, we will watch the movie *Mardi Gras: Made in China*

Thursday Political Economy – A Political or Economic Issue?
Readings: ∞ Friedman, Thomas. 2005. "A Race to the Top." *New York Times*, 3 June, ∞ Palast, Greg. 2005. "French-Fried Friedman, Nouvelle Globalizer." *CommonDreams.org*, 3 June.

Week 13 (April 17 – 21)

Monday **RESEARCH PAPERS due via Blackboard/Turnitin**

Tuesday Political Economy – International Aid
Readings: ∞ Wiedemann, Erich and Thilo Thielke. 2005. "Choking on Aid Money in Africa." *Der Spiegel*, 4 July.

Thursday Topic 1: Human Rights
Readings: ∞ United Nations. 1948. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."
Topic 2: Human Rights – Fanon's take
Readings: ∞ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. (Students writing a book review should read the entire book. All others should read the preface to the Grove edition written by Jean-Paul Sartre.)

Week 14 (April 25 – 28)

Tuesday Topic 1: The Environment – competing claims and understandings
Readings: None, we will watch the movie *Elephant People* in class.
Topic 2: The Environment – a new global threat?
Readings: ∞ United Nations. 1998. "Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;" and ∞ Daley, Beth. 2010. "After errors, global warming gets a cold shoulder." *Boston Globe* (8 March).

Thursday Politics, what is it good for? A requiem.
Readings: *M* ch. 13

***** EXAM #3 in class from 1:30pm-3:30pm on Thursday 4 May *****

General Information:

These are a few things every student should know.

Emergency Conditions - In case of any adverse condition or situation which could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access www.ut.edu for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to Blackboard for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Special Needs - If there is a student who has special needs because of any disability, please go to the Academic Success Center in North Walker Hall for information regarding registering as a student with a disability. You may also call (813) 257-5757 or email disability.services@ut.edu. Please feel free to discuss this issue with me, in private, if you need more information. Once registered with ASC we can figure out a mutually agreeable way to meet your individual accommodations.

Classroom Disruption Policy – The University of Tampa has a policy covering disruptive classroom behavior. The policy will be applied in this course and is detailed in the Faculty Handbook Chapter 6 Section XI (available online at www.ut.edu/provost).

Mental Health Counseling – College can be a stressful time in a young person's life. The American Psychiatric Association published a recent study of college students observed over the course of a single academic year. Over 60% of students reported feeling things were hopeless one or more times, almost 40% of the men and 50% of the women reported feeling so depressed that they had difficulty functioning one or more times, and 10% of the students reported seriously considering attempting suicide at least one time. If at some point during your time at UT you begin to feel depressed or 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 counsel you on the problems you are having coping with academic life, but there are dedicated mental health counselors available to you through UT's Health and Counseling Center located at 111 North Brevard Ave. (behind Austin Hall) who you may feel more comfortable disclosing certain types of non-academic problems to. The time to deal with mental health issues is when they arise and not after your grade has deteriorated. Their email is healthcenter@ut.edu and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 813-257-7777 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

Academic Assistance – The Academic Success Center (academicsuccess@ut.edu) in North Walker Hall offers free peer tutoring, credited academic skills courses, national testing services, and services for students with disabilities. The Saunders Writing Center (323 Plant Hall, x6244) aids students with their writing projects. You pay for these services through your tuition and there is no shame in using them if you need help with your course work. I am more than happy to discuss any academic issues you might have during office hours but if I think one of these services can help you be more successful I will not hesitate to recommend it.

Academic Integrity – The University of Tampa is committed to the development of each student to become a productive and responsible citizen who embraces the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. The scholarly community at The University of Tampa strives to instill values that uphold academic integrity and promotes an ethical standard that does not condone academic misconduct. Violation of academic integrity and academic misconduct tarnish the reputation of the University and discredit the accomplishments of past and present students. Sanctions for violation of academic integrity and academic misconduct include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the University. I take integrity very

seriously and will monitor all submissions and exams for violations of the academic integrity policy. I also expect professional behavior in class that fosters an environment encouraging not only your learning but the learning of your peers. Students are held responsible for knowing and observing the University's Academic Integrity Policy (available online at www.ut.edu/provost). If you have any questions about the policy, please feel free to talk with me.

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 classroom just a bit more prepared to make their society better is sustaining. Following is a list of things you can do to help me maintain this image as well as some things you can do to reveal it as a mirage. Doing more of the former and less of the latter will make me happy whereas the converse will make me sad!

DO read the assigned texts – The amount and content of the reading assignments 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 this conclusion. Do the assigned readings before each class and you will get the most out of the lectures. 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 class and from lectures not covered in the readings.

DO engage in class discussions in an intelligent way – There will be lots of opportunities for you to contribute to conversations in the classroom. Most of my lectures have a built in component for student input because I think it is important that you not only read and hear the information, but have to reconstitute and challenge it. I am also delighted to entertain questions when you have them and follow tangents that you would like to explore. Class periods when students are engaged and contributing seem to go by much faster than class periods when students are checked out. Students who regularly contribute to the classroom conversation do significantly better than students who do not on exams. So pretend the information we are covering is really interesting and jump at the opportunity to challenge the material. After a while you will find that you do not have to pretend any more. If you are shy this is good practice for you. Use the class to build your confidence and public speaking skills. If you are worried about your peers' impressions of you forget about it. Those who value education will find your contributions useful and those who roll their eyes are dull and uninteresting.

DO NOT be tardy or leave class early – If you come in late to class enter quietly and sit somewhere where you will not disturb other students. Classes will begin promptly as scheduled so you will need to copy notes from one of your colleagues on lecture days if you feel like you have missed something important. On assignment days you will not be given extra time for your tardiness. If you show up without an excuse 5 minutes before an exam is finished, you will only have 5 minutes to finish the assignment. If you miss an assignment because of tardiness you will need to consult that assignment's make-up policy.

Class is done when I say something to the effect of "see you next class" and not before. I will do my best to end class on time if not a few minutes earlier. There will, however, be some class periods where I might need to go over time by a minute or two to finish an important point. Out of respect for your fellow classmates you should NOT begin filing papers into your book bags before class has officially ended. I realize that there will be classes where you have a job interview or a club activity

or a plane you need to leave early for. By all means let me know before class that you need to leave early, arrange with someone in class to take notes for you, and do not miss your important event.

DO NOT use cell phones, computers, or recording devices in class – There is a boatload of research suggesting students learn more during lectures when they take notes the old fashioned way with paper and a pen or pencil. Even if you do not buy this evidence or consider yourself an outlier, electronic devices prove distracting to your neighbors.

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 will appear on the exam. Anything in the readings or lectures is fair game for an exam. Things covered in both readings and lectures, which I post online in the form of Powerpoint slides, are slightly more likely to show up on the exam.

DO NOT ask for extra credit – Rarely 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 initiated the request. Giving out extra credit opportunities to select students makes grades for my courses unreliable measures of student success and your goal should be to master the material assigned on the syllabus.

DO understand what your grade represents – I assume every student who enters my class wants to take away a greater understanding of the world and that the grade (s)he receives is but a formal, and somewhat abstract and imprecise, reflection of the knowledge (s)he has gained. The average student in my courses typically earns a low B (3.0) or a high C (2.0). This grade represents 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 and few will. 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 who I think are wonderful people and given A grades to students who I would rather never see again. 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 have 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 ten days after receiving your graded assignment to file a complaint. 2) You must submit in writing (*typed* and *printed* out) 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 department chair. Challenges that resemble “I’m an A student so there is no way this paper is a B,” “I was making a good argument it just did not come across in my paper,” “I was having a bad day can you cut me some slack,” or “I need to pass this class to graduate” will be summarily dismissed as they do not speak to the quality of the work.

DO NOT send me an email unless it's an emergency – With several classes and nearly 100 students a semester emails can become burdensome. 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. So how can you decide if an email is an emergency? 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. Also if you submit an assignment by email I will NOT grade it. Most assignments I have submitted via Turnitin and those few which require hardcopies there is a drop box on the outside of my office door.

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 drop by my office during office hours. I keep 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 know the university policy on “excused” absences – The UT catalog has a section on “excused absences.” It falls under the heading “Class Attendance and Participation” in the Academic Policies and Procedures section. There are no excuses for late papers. You know about them well in advance and a last minute illness or death in the family should not affect your ability to turn in the assignment or have a colleague do so on your behalf. Excuses for missed exams or presentations are granted following university procedures. The best way to be granted an excused absence is with prior approval. If you will miss an exam or presentation due to a previously scheduled event, let me know at least two weeks in advance and you will almost always be allowed an early exam or presentation. In the event that prior approval is not possible, 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. For each assignment listed in this syllabus there is a detailed policy regarding late penalties. Many of these policies grant an exception for “excused” absences. Whether an absence is “excused” or not is up to the discretion of your professor based on the guidelines outlined above.

DO understand that I am interested in discussing your progress in the course with you – If you have a parent, coach, drill sergeant, etc. who is interested in learning about your status in this course feel free to share it with them. I post grades on Blackboard and the syllabus explains in detail my weighting formula so you have access to all the information I do regarding your current standing in the class and may share it with anyone you want.