

PSC 100: Introduction to Government and World Affairs
Spring 2022 / TR 4-5:50pm / PH 210

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Course Website: <http://ut.blackboard.com>

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (11:00am-1:00pm)

Go to Blackboard and click on the "Office Hours" tab at least 12 hours in advance to schedule a 30-minute Zoom appointment. You will receive a link in your email.

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 slightly and/or clarified by professorial edict either in class or via email, consider this syllabus a tentative 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 bring it to class with your notebook. You are expected to read EVERYTHING assigned on the syllabus, which more than 50 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 attend and pay attention at EVERY lecture. Visiting me on occasion 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 in it each semester, for students used to putting in a minimal amount of work at the last minute and achieving good results, 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 three areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Exams (75%) – Over the course of the semester you will be given three opportunities to demonstrate your mastery of concepts covered in the readings and lectures. Each of these exams constitute a quarter of your final course grade. Exams are a mix of multiple choice, short answer, problems, and/or essay formats. 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. If you miss an exam for excused or unexcused reasons, it is YOUR responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to schedule a make-up during the next office hours.

Problem Sets (15%) – Each assigned chapter in the Clark, Golder, and Golder text comes with a problem set at the end. You should do them all as they are good preparation for exams, but I will grade four. One of the four will be assigned to you during the second week of class. This assignment will be reported in class and posted to Blackboard behind the "Problem Assignment" tab. The other three problem sets you submit, you choose. Answers should be accurate and thorough. The question you are answering should be clearly indicated and typed or written legibly. If I cannot figure out the question you are answering or read your answer, you will not receive credit for the work. If the problem set requires multiple pages, you need to staple them together. Deadlines for problem set answers are indicated below. All are due at the beginning of class in hard copy. Emailed assignments will NOT be accepted or acknowledged. Given the assignment's flexibility, late assignments will NOT be accepted. You are encouraged to complete this assignment early in the semester to give yourself maximum leeway. Since we go over problem sets in class, you will get a grade on these assignments but not a detailed explanation via Blackboard. If you submit more than four problem sets, I will only grade your assigned problem set and the first three you submit in addition.

Problem Teaching (10%) – For your assigned problem set, you will be given one question to answer for the class. If you forget which problem you have been assigned, a record of your assignment will be stored behind the "Problem Assignment" tab in Bb. This answer should be both accurate and thorough and it will be graded on a 0 to 3-point scale. Ten minutes of class time will be dedicated to your presentation and Q&A. This ten minutes includes set-up time so make sure to prepare accordingly. Earning a 3 indicates mastery in terms of accuracy, clarity, and thoroughness. Presentation is engaging and leaves your colleagues well-informed on the topic. Earning a 2 indicates proficiency in terms of accuracy, clarity, and thoroughness. Nothing is wrong, but there is less value-added because efforts to engage colleagues above and beyond them just reading the text and doing the problem themselves are under-practiced or fall flat. Earning a 1 indicates an insufficient presentation with problems in terms of accuracy, clarity, and/or thoroughness. Students observing the presentation likely feel less sure about the concepts than they would have without the presentation. Earning a 0 indicates that you

missed the assignment without an excused absence as defined by the university General Attendance policy. Late presentations will not be allowed because a late presentation would be disruptive to class and not aligned with the content. If you have a university-defined excused absence, you may present remotely via Zoom if you make arrangements at least a day in advance or be assigned a problem later in the semester as an alternative if feasible.

Important Due Dates:

Exam #1	Tuesday 8 February
Exam #2	Thursday 24 March
Exam #3	Tuesday 3 May
Problem Sets (four due in hard copy at the beginning of class)	
Ch 2	Tuesday 25 January
Ch 3	Tuesday 1 February
Ch 4	Tuesday 15 February
Ch 5	Thursday 17 February
Ch 6	Tuesday 22 February
Ch 8	Thursday 3 March
Ch 9	Tuesday 22 March
Ch 10	Tuesday 29 March
Ch 12	Thursday 31 March
Ch 13	Tuesday 12 April
Ch 14	Tuesday 19 April
Ch 15	Thursday 21 April

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 Blackboard site at the “Readings” tab.

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 18-21)

Tuesday Introduction
Readings: ∅ syllabus

Thursday Overview of Government and World Affairs (Comparative Politics)
Readings: CGG ch 1

Week 2 (January 24-28)

Tuesday What is Science? Part 1
Readings: CGG ch 2

Thursday What is Science? Part 2

Week 3 (January 31-February 4)

Tuesday What is Politics?
Readings: CGG ch 3

Thursday Reading Political Science
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 4 (February 7-11)

Tuesday **Exam 1**

Thursday The Origins of the Modern State, Part 1
Readings: Excerpts from ∅ Hobbes’ *Leviathan* and ∅ Locke’s *Second Treatise*. ∅ Kaplan, Robert. 1994. “The Coming Anarchy.” *The Atlantic Monthly*, February.

Week 5 (February 14-18)

Tuesday The Origins of the Modern State, Part 2
Readings: CGG ch 4

Thursday Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization and Measurement
Readings: CGG ch 5

Week 6 (February 21-25)

Tuesday The Economic Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship
Readings: CGG ch 6

Thursday Determinants of Democracy, Data Analysis
Readings: ✓ Fisher, Max. 2021. "US Allies Drive Much of World's Democratic Decline, Data Shows." *New York Times*, 16 November.

Week 7 (February 28-March 4)

Tuesday Democratic Transitions, Part 1
Readings: ✓ Merriam, Alan P. 1961. "The Congo's First Year of Independence." *Current History* (October): 232-237.

Thursday Democratic Transitions, Part 2
Readings: CGG ch 8

******* Spring Break (March 7-11) *******

Week 8 (March 14-18)

Tuesday Class cancelled.

Thursday Democracy or Dictatorship: Does it Make a Difference? Part 1
Readings: ✓ McDonnell, Tim. 2018. "What's the World's Fastest-Growing Economy? Ghana Contends for the Crown." *New York Times*, 10 March.

Week 9 (March 21-25)

Tuesday Democracy or Dictatorship: Does it Make a Difference? Part 2
Readings: CGG ch 9

Thursday **Exam 2**

******* March 28 Last Day to Withdraw *******

Week 10 (March 28-April 1)

Tuesday Varieties of Dictatorship
Readings: CGG ch 10

Thursday Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies
Readings: CGG ch 12

Week 11 (April 4-8)

Tuesday Elections and Electoral Systems, Part 1
Readings: ✓ Lopes, Marina and Dom Phillips. 2016. "Rousseff's impeachment may not resolve Brazil's political mess." *Washington Post*, 30 August.

Thursday Class cancelled. I will be at MPSA annual meeting.

Week 12 (April 11-15)

Tuesday Elections and Electoral Systems, Part 2
Readings: CGG ch 13

Thursday Social Cleavages and Party Systems, Part 1
Readings: ✓ Anderson, Scott. 2014. "Life in the Valley of Death." *New York Times*, 29 May.

Week 13 (April 18-22)

Tuesday Social Cleavages and Party Systems, Part 2
Readings: CGG ch 14

Thursday Institutional Veto Players
Readings: CGG ch 15

Week 14 (April 25-29)

Tuesday Consequences of Democratic Institutions: South Sudan
Readings: √ Gettleman, Jeffrey. 2011. "After Years of Struggle, South Sudan Becomes a New Nation." *New York Times*, 9 July; and √ O'Grady, Siobhan. 2016. "They Will Find Us and Kill Us." *Foreign Policy*, 14 July.

Thursday Consequences of Democratic Institutions: A Simulation

******* EXAM #3 administered in class from 3:45-5:45pm on Tuesday 3 May *******

UT Policies:

These are a few things every student should know.

Syllabus Subject to Change - This syllabus is informational in nature and is not an express or implied contract. It is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, as a result of any circumstance outside the University's control, or as other needs arise. If, in the University's sole discretion, public health conditions or any other matter affecting the health, safety, upkeep or wellbeing of our campus community or operations requires the University to make any syllabus or course changes or move to remote teaching, alternative assignments may be provided so that the learning objectives for the course, as determined by the University, can still be met. The University does not guarantee that this syllabus will not change, nor does it guarantee specific in-person, on-campus classes, activities, opportunities, or services or any other particular format, timing, or location of education, classes, activities, or services.

Exposure to or Diagnosis of COVID-19 - What to do if you have an exposure or diagnosis of COVID-19 or are unvaccinated and have had exposure to COVID-19?

If you have been diagnosed with COVID off-campus, please confidentially report this to UT's local contact tracers Rapid-Trace, so they can confidentially notify anyone else who may have been exposed, provide you resources, work with you on isolation/quarantine guidelines, and arrange notification to your professors as needed. Remember that it will be up to you to communicate with your professors on how to make up coursework, as remote accommodations are no longer in place. Students can contact Rapid-Trace at (813) 699-3551. Rapid-Trace can be reached daily from 7 a.m.-9 p.m., with after-hours voicemail.

If you are diagnosed with COVID at the Dickey Health and Wellness Center - Rapid-Trace will contact you. If you have been exposed to someone with a positive COVID diagnosis, please contact Rapid-Trace for guidance. Types of Close Contact that will be traced:

- 1) Physical contact – touching without protection
- 2) Close contact – within 6 ft. for 15 minutes or more

Please remember that these are general guidelines, and it is important to always follow UT's Spartan Shield directives for health and safety. If you are unvaccinated and feel you have been exposed to COVID and have not been contacted by Rapid Trace, please confidentially report the exposure to get assistance and guidance.

Title IX & Reporting Sexual Misconduct - Sexual misconduct, including, but not limited to acts of sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, nonconsensual sexual contact, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, gender-based harassment or sexual exploitation are prohibited by Title IX, the Student Code of Conduct and other University policies.

The University strives to maintain a safe and nondiscriminatory campus community, and to do so, it is important for the Spartan community to report any safety concerns, such as acts of sexual misconduct. If you experience or witness any of these University prohibited actions, the University encourages reporting these matters, so that the University is able

to take prompt action to stop, prevent and remedy the effects of the harassment. University resources and grievance procedure information will be provided to individuals who may seek services or redress.

There are many options to making a Title IX/Sexual Misconduct report. You may report this information through the University's online Title IX Report form.¹ The information will be forwarded and reviewed by the Title IX Coordinator or a Title IX Deputy Coordinator, who will contact you to provide further information on University grievance procedure options and resources that are available.

You may also make a direct report by contacting the University's Title IX Coordinator:
Kelsey San Antonio, Title IX Coordinator
Southard Family Building Suite #266
(KSanAntonio@ut.edu) (813)-257-3748

If you decide to discuss an incident with your course professor, it is important to note that they are considered a Responsible Employee and are obligated to report the information you share to the University's Title IX Coordinator.²

If you are not ready to disclose or report this information to the University, you may disclose the information to a confidential party, such as a Victim Advocate, and/or a Counselor or Medical Clinician at the Student Health Center³, to discuss any further options and resources available before deciding to report.

* The Victim's Advocacy Hotline: (victimadvocacy@ut.edu) (813) 257-3900

* Counseling Center (counselingservices@ut.edu) (813) 253-6250

* Student Health - Medical Services (healthcenter@ut.edu) (813) 253-6250

For more information, see The University of Tampa's Title IX webpage⁴ and the Student Code of Conduct⁵ webpage.

ADA Statement - Students with disabilities: If you require accommodations because of a disability, please call (813) 257-5757 or e-mail disability.services@ut.edu for information on registering with Student Disability Services. You can also submit your request for accommodations and supporting documentation via an Accommodation Request.⁶ Please feel free to discuss this with me in private for more information. If you encounter disability-related barriers accessing the online content for this course, please contact Sharon Austin, Academic Technology Accessibility Specialist, at saustin@ut.edu. If the initial access to the content cannot be resolved, the university will provide individuals with disabilities access to, and use of, information and data by an alternative means that meets the identified needs.

¹ www.ut.edu/titleixreport

² There is an exception to this required reporting for preventative education programs and public awareness events or forums. For more information about exempt events, please contact the Title IX Office.

³ A disclosure to a Dickey Health and Wellness Center Counselor or Medical clinician is only confidential when the disclosure is within the course of mental or medical health treatment and services.

⁴ <https://www.ut.edu/titleix>

⁵ <https://www.ut.edu/studentconduct>

⁶ https://ut-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public_accommodation/

Campus Closure Statement - Course interruption due to adverse conditions: In case of any adverse condition or situation which could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access UT Homepage⁷ for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to UT Blackboard⁸ for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Academic Integrity Statement - 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. Upholding academic integrity and promoting an ethical standard that does not condone academic misconduct is an important demonstration of these values and underpins how we live and learn in a community of inquiry. Students are expected to act ethically in the pursuit of their education and to avoid behaviors that run counter to participation in and demonstration of their learning. The Academic Integrity Policy⁹ lists several common types of violations related to cheating, unauthorized collaboration or assistance, plagiarism, and more. While the policy lists common violations and examples, it is not an exhaustive list and instructors may identify other types of conduct that impacts their ability to evaluate what has been learned substantively enough to constitute a violation of this policy. An instructor may impose a wide range of sanctions for academic integrity violations from completing a more difficult replacement assignment to an F in the course. Particularly severe violations or multiple violations throughout a student's academic career may result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Attendance Policy and Excused Absences - The University of Tampa has a General Attendance Policy in the Catalog. As stated, students are expected to attend class and academic programs and individual faculty may require specified levels of attendance for successful completion of a course. However, the University has identified specific types of absences as either excused or unexcused absences. Students should be aware of each type of absence and the impact on their ability to complete work that was missed during their absence.

Faculty must be notified of scheduled excused absences in advance in order for students to receive accommodation for work missed. The type of absence must fall within the categories specified in the catalog and the faculty member may determine how far in advance notification must be provided.

Certain types of unscheduled absences may also qualify as excused. Faculty may require documentation or verification. This would include isolation or quarantine due to COVID.

The policy requires faculty to accommodate excused absences, including graded work, in a fair manner. This is determined by the faculty member and is dependent on the structure of the course and what work was missed. This may include replacement of work with something equivalent or having the work excluded from the student's grade. Faculty

⁷ <http://ut.edu>

⁸ <https://utampa.okta.com>

⁹ <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy>

are NOT required or expected to provide accommodation through remote access to the class or by providing a recording of the class session.

Faculty may determine that a student has missed too much participant-dependent work to successfully accomplish learning outcomes, even if the absences meet the criteria for excused absences.

Faculty are not required to allow a student to make up work missed due to unexcused absences.

Class Disruption Statement - Every student has the right to a comfortable learning environment where the open and honest exchange of ideas may freely occur. Each student is expected to do his or her part to ensure that the classroom (and anywhere else the class may meet) remains conducive to learning. This includes respectful and courteous treatment of all in the classroom. According to the terms of the University of Tampa Disruption Policy, the professor will take immediate action when inappropriate behavior occurs. Details of the policy may be found at Disruption of the Academic Process.¹⁰

Face Coverings/Masks - To reduce their risk of becoming infected and potentially spreading it to others, the CDC recommends¹¹ everyone wear a mask in public indoor settings if they are in an area of substantial or high transmission regardless of vaccination status.

All UT community members and their guests are required to wear face masks while indoors on campus, regardless of vaccination status. Exceptions are permitted when eating, participating in athletic practices and contests, and instruction in selected fine arts. Residential students and their guests are to wear masks in public areas of residence halls but do not need to do so in private rooms. Detailed instructions on how best to navigate these activities will be provided by the respective areas, including Dining Services, Athletics, the Riseman Fitness and Recreation Center, Residence Life, and the College of Arts and Letters. In addition, instructors and podium presenters who are vaccinated and physically distanced may remove their masks for the duration of their presentation.

Students should bring a face mask supply when coming to campus. Health experts encourage surgical masks, KN95 masks or N95 masks (for health care workers), which offer additional protection.

Failure to wear a face mask will mean that one cannot enter a building nor attend class. It is considered disruptive behavior and will be treated in the classroom through our disruptive classroom behavior policy and outside the classroom through Student Conduct.

¹⁰ <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Disruption-of-the-Academic-Process>

¹¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>

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 policies and practices designed to help you make the most out of the course and improve the classroom experience for the both of us.

DO take care of your mental health – 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 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. The Health Center's email is counseling@ut.edu and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 813-257-7777 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

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 thoughtfully – 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 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 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 can become cumbersome. 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 only check email a few times a week. Also if you submit an assignment by email I will NOT grade it. Assignments in this class are submitted in hard copy.

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 take responsibility for missed classes – There are an infinite number of reasons students miss class. On exam days and when you have a presentation, you owe me an excuse if you want to avoid a late penalty. For all other class days, you do not need to ask permission to miss, nor do you owe me an explanation. The lectures and discussions you miss, however, are testable material that may show up on an exam. I do NOT provide make-up lectures to students who missed a class. It is not unusual for several students to miss each class and the

expectation that each will receive a personalized lecture is unreasonable. I do NOT answer questions similar to “did I miss anything important?” Answering such questions implies that a two-hour lecture/discussion can be boiled down into an email or few minute recitation and gives the false impression to many students that content not covered in the recap will not be on the exam. So what should you do if you miss a class? Make connections with your colleagues, especially those who take good notes. When you miss, ask them to share. If you expect your colleagues to be helpful in times of need, it behooves you to return the favor. I post Powerpoint lecture slides to Blackboard. Do the readings, go through the slides with your colleague’s notes, and write down any questions you have about the content therein. Feel free to sign up for office hours and ask those questions.

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 two weeks after your grade is submitted to Blackboard to file a complaint; and 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 university Grade Appeal procedure.

DO know the university policy on “excused” absences – I do not take roll so the only time you need an excused absence is when there is an assignment due. 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. There are no excuses for late written assignments. 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.