COURSE DESCRIPTION

While the study of politics encompasses, in principle, all inquiry concerned with the nature and exercise of power, political scientists have tended to narrow their focus to power exercised through a particular entity: the state. This is a notable limitation, as power exists and is exerted in settings far removed from the formal institutions and official actors that are typically thought to constitute the government. Whether at home, in school or standing on a street corner, we are all subject to and can potentially exert various forms of power.

That said, political scientists' routine focus on the state is justified, in part, by the massive consequences of state power. From the everyday business of tax collection and the regulation of economic activity to such extraordinary acts as the declaration of war, the capacity of states to shape the lives of their citizens and, not uncommonly, the citizens of other countries is very great.

At the same time – and, arguably, unlike other forms of power – the exercise of much state power is frequently subject to conscious human control. Democratic governments are installed and turned out by voters; dictators seize power and are regularly overthrown by civil or military rebellion.

Accordingly, the goal of this course is to introduce students to the nature and exercise of state power, with an emphasis on the structures and processes involved in controlling the activities of the state. The course provides a broad survey of major topics investigated and conclusions offered by political scientists, with a special emphasis on the institutions and processes of democratic politics.

Lectures and reading material range across national boundaries, both to acquaint students broadly with politics around the world and because the strategy of comparison across countries is one of the main ways political scientists frame and test their conjectures. At the same time, the course will draw extensively on examples from two countries in particular, Canada and the United States.

FORMAT

The class meets twice per week for approximately 75 minutes. Class is structured as a lecture.
REQUERIED READINGS

The required textbook for the course, available in the Memorial University Bookstore, is James N. Danziger and Charles Anthony Smith, *Understanding the Political World: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science, Twelfth Edition*. The course schedule, below, refers to this book as simply *Understanding*. (When inquiring at the bookstore about the textbook for this course, make sure you specify POSC 1000, section 003. Different textbooks are used in other sections of the course.)

Students are free to use the previous version of the textbook, i.e., the eleventh edition. Although many components of the book have been revised or updated since the previous edition, large portions of the book remain the same and I have judged the previous version to be an adequate substitute for the current version. In those cases where page numbers differ between the 11th and 12th editions, I note the correct information for the 11th edition in brackets, e.g., [11e: Ch. 2, pp. 26-34].

We also read a few selections from two other books: Rosalee Clawson and Zoe Oxley, *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*; and, Heather MacIvor, ed., *Election*. The course schedule refers to these books as *Public Opinion* and *Election*, respectively. Copies of these readings are available on D2L (see below) under “Course Readings”. Finally, many weeks include additional readings – marked with an asterisk (*) on the course schedule – concerning specific topics covered in lecture but not examined in the textbook. These readings are also available on D2L.

**DESIRE2LEARN**

Many important course materials – including this syllabus, assignment guidelines, certain readings, supplementary materials and PowerPoint slides – can be found on Desire2Learn (a.k.a. D2L). Also, D2L is where you will find course news and announcements throughout the term. *If something has been announced on D2L, then it is assumed that you know about it* – so be sure to access the D2L course regularly. Access the course page through [https://online.mun.ca/](https://online.mun.ca/). As important as D2L is as a means of communicating with you, it should not be used for communications with the professor. This mailbox is checked only infrequently. It is much better to email the professor directly at jsmatthews99@gmail.com.

**EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical review 1</td>
<td>Beginning of class on February 11th</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>February 18th</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical review 2</td>
<td>Beginning of class on March 17th</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Exam period (TBA)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus Online Syllabus Quiz</td>
<td>5 pm on January 21st</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
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**LECTURES**

The primary goal of the lectures is to draw out, clarify and elaborate on major concepts and themes developed in the course readings. That said, lectures will not cover all the material covered in the readings and the readings do not cover some material presented in lecture. It is critical, therefore, that students are both present in lecture and diligent in completing their readings. Optimally, students should complete readings prior to the relevant lectures, and certainly students should not allow their reading to fall more than a class or two behind the lectures. To facilitate preparation for exams, MS-PowerPoint-format lecture slides will be available shortly before each lecture via D2L. Copies of the professor’s lecture notes will not be provided to students. If a student misses a lecture, it is her/his responsibility to approach another student for a copy of her/his notes.

**CRITICAL REVIEWS**

Students will prepare two “critical reviews” of scholarly articles published in political science journals. The reviews will be short analytical summaries of articles chosen from an approved list of key works in political science. The reviews will be prepared according to a set of guidelines that will be provided, along with the list of approved
articles for the first review, on January 19th. The list of approved articles for the second review will be provided on February 11th. The assignment guidelines describe specific requirements concerning the format and structure of the reviews and a series of questions that the reviews must address. Each review will be 4 typed, double-spaced pages in length. The goal of the critical review assignments is to help students develop their skills as consumers of political science scholarship, while at the same time facilitating independent study on selected topics in the field.

The first critical review is due at the beginning of class on February 11th, while the second is due at the beginning of class on March 17th. Students must submit hard copies of their reviews; electronic versions submitted by email will not be accepted unless a prior arrangement has been made with the professor. The weight in the course evaluation of the second review is slightly greater (25 percent) than that of the first review (20 percent), in order to allow students to develop their skills with this assignment over the term.

MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAM

A midterm exam will take place in class on February 18th. The exam will cover readings and lectures up to and including the material for February 16th. The exam will consist entirely of multiple choice questions. Further details will be announced in class.

The final exam will take place during the winter examination period. The exam will focus primarily on lectures and readings after the midterm and will involve a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. The short answer questions will require students to identify and discuss the significance of a selection of terms from a list of key terms that will be distributed to students during the final lecture of the course (April 5th). Further details will be announced in class.

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions, and to respond to the professor's questions, during lectures. Aside from the personal benefit of having your questions answered, other students benefit when you share your comments, concerns or confusion. Attempting to answer a question posed by the professor will have similar effects. More generally, discussion and interaction during lectures help to generate and sustain interest and enthusiasm (as much for the professor as for the students!). While it can be intimidating to ask questions in a large class, it is almost always worth the effort and becomes easier with time and practice. And remember: there are absolutely no stupid questions, except those that are left unasked!

BONUS ONLINE SYLLABUS QUIZ

Students will have the opportunity to write a quiz on the syllabus for bonus marks during the 3rd week of class. The quiz will be posted on the D2L course page on Monday morning of that week, and will be “open-book” (of course!). The aim of this quiz is simple: encourage you to read the syllabus carefully. To be eligible for bonus marks, the quiz must be submitted by 5 pm on January 21st. Students can earn a maximum of 2 bonus marks (i.e., extra marks equal to 2 percent of the course).

CHECK-IN EXERCISE

Students will participate in an anonymous, not-for-credit written exercise designed to provide an opportunity to give mid-semester feedback on the course to the professor. This “check-in exercise” will take place in class on February 9th. The exercise invites students to comment on the highs and lows of the course up to that point, and also to provide any other kind of feedback to the professor on how the course is going. Further details will be announced in class.

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

The university provides a host of resources to support students. The Academic Advising Centre (SN-4053) provides academic guidance to students in their first year of study. Students seeking advice about a specific Major or Minor should contact the designated undergraduate advisor in that department. The Commons (QEI library) provides access to print, electronic and technology resources. The Counselling Centre (UC-5000) helps students develop their personal capabilities, ranging from study strategies to assisting distressed students. Student Affairs and Services (Answers, UC-3005) answers questions about such things as courses, housing, books, financial matters and health. The Writing Centre (SN-2053) is a free, drop-in facility for students and helps them become
better writers and critical thinkers. The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre (UC -4007) serves students whose disabilities involve conditions affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning (disabilities), chronic illness, or mental health; support is also provided to students with documented temporary illnesses and injuries.

PLAGIARISM

Memorial University values academic integrity, and the professor and teaching support staff for this course will be vigilant in checking for instances of plagiarism. All students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences. See http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=REGS-0748.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized 5 percentage points on the first day and 2 percentage points per day thereafter, including weekends, up to a maximum of 21 percentage points. The first penalty, of 5 percentage points, accrues 10 minutes after the start of the class during which the assignment in question is due. The next penalty, of 2 percentage points, accrues the next day at 4:30 pm. Subsequent penalties accrue at 4:30 pm each day. At 4:30 pm on the day after the day when the maximum penalty of 21 percentage points is reached, assignments will no longer be accepted in the absence of a properly documented illness or personal emergency approved by the professor. Late assignments can be submitted to the professor in class or during office hours, or to the Political Science General Office (SN 2028) during regular office hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 am - 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm -4:30 pm, except holidays. Papers slipped under the professor’s door will not be graded as the time and date of submission cannot be verified.

Please note that students are expected to take a prudential approach to completing their assignments and handing them in on time – which means that you should expect the (somewhat) unexpected. Your computer may crash; the power may suddenly go out; you may miss the bus on the way to campus; or some other minor, but reasonably foreseeable mishap may intervene to prevent you from submitting work on time. You must take such contingencies into account by, for instance, starting work on your assignments well in advance of deadlines, backing up your work in multiple locations, or planning to arrive on campus early on the day that an assignment is due.

ACCOMMODATIONS

From time-to-time, students request various accommodations – for example, an extension on a written assignment or a deferred exam. The policy in this course is to grant accommodations only in the event of a properly documented illness or personal emergency approved by the professor. This means that the following arguments for accommodations, among others, will not be accepted: to participate in a voluntary campus activity (sporting events, student politics, etc.); to coordinate with travel arrangements; to attend work or a job interview; and so on.

Although this policy is a strict one, it is justified on grounds of equity and fairness. Simply put, as all students passing POSC 1000 will be awarded the same course credit on their academic transcripts, all students should be subject to the same opportunities and constraints in completing this course. Secondarily, the policy helps the professor to avoid making tricky and potentially arbitrary judgments about ambiguous comparisons (e.g., is Mary’s playing in a basketball tournament equivalent as a justification to Johnny’s attending a family wedding?). Therefore, if you feel you will have important obligations over the semester that will conflict with the requirements of the course, then it is not advisable to take POSC 1000.

That said, it should be noted that the professor takes a broad view of the term “personal emergency” and most reasonable requests on these grounds can be accommodated, subject to the constraint that the professor must maintain the integrity of the course. If you are unsure if your request fits these criteria, do not hesitate to contact the professor.

Finally, please note that requests for accommodation must be made as early as possible, preferably in advance of the due date of the assignment or date of the exam. If, for reasons beyond your control, you cannot request an accommodation in advance, then you must make the request as soon as possible. Even if illness or other circumstances prevent you from coming to campus, you are expected to make all reasonable efforts to
communicate with the professor (e.g., by email or telephone). A failure to make your request in a timely manner may constitute grounds for rejecting your request for an accommodation. For instance, requests for accommodations made at the end of term in regards to assignments early in the term will generally not be successful.

GRADE APPEALS

Professors and teaching assistants sometimes make mistakes when evaluating students’ work, awarding too little (or even too much!) credit than is deserved. If you feel that your work in POSC 1000 has been graded incorrectly, then you should certainly consider appealing your grade.

In order for an appeal to be considered, students must prepare a written statement that describes specifically and in detail why an appeal is warranted. The written statement should be roughly 1 typed, single-spaced page in length. In making the case, students must demonstrate that the grading of their assignment fails to conform to the guidelines for the assignment in question. It will not suffice to claim that the grade awarded doesn’t reflect the student’s level of effort, is lower than grades the student has received on other assignments or in other courses, or is simply lower than the student would like (say, in order to secure a scholarship or admission to other academic programs).

Requests for an appeal must be made within two weeks of the date that the assignment in question is returned. Also, a mandatory “cooling off period” applies with regard to appeals. That is, requests for appeals will not be considered during the two days following the returning of the assignment. This waiting period is designed to ensure students reflect carefully before requesting an appeal.

Finally, while appeals are welcome, it is worth noting that they almost always result in very small grade changes (1 or 2 percentage points) on assignments. These small changes, in turn, must be discounted by the weight of the assignment in the course evaluation. (For instance, a 2 percentage point increase in a student’s grade on an assignment worth 20 percent of the overall grade in a course would increase that student’s overall grade by less than half a percentage point.) As such, it may not always be worthwhile devoting time to preparing an appeal.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS?

There are no make-up assignments available to students who seek extra credit to compensate for poor performance on a component of the course. Of course, if you miss an assignment or exam for a valid reason (see Accommodations, above), then a make-up assignment will be designed for you. Otherwise, students will only be awarded marks for completing the assignments described in this syllabus.

OFFICE HOURS

Twice a week you can meet the professor during office hours to take up any questions or concerns you may have; see scheduling details on the first page of this document. Students are free to drop in during these periods; however, if possible, it is helpful to email first to set a specific time. If you’re unable to make the professor’s office hours and feel your concerns can’t be effectively handled over email, then you may attempt to arrange an appointment outside the professor’s office hours. As it may take a while to find a time convenient for both you and the professor, it is important to make your request for an appointment in a timely manner. Note that the final regular office hours of the term will take place on April 5th.

EMAIL POLICIES

Students are encouraged to email the professor (jismatthews99@gmail.com) with any questions or concerns they may have. The professor generally responds within a few hours, unless the email arrives in the evening or on the weekend. Note that you should not contact the professor through D2L or using his MUN email address – these mailboxes are checked only infrequently.

When emailing the professor, please observe the following guidelines: before sending an email, quickly review this syllabus to ensure that the question is not addressed here; email from your MUN account to avoid spam filters; in the subject line, note the course number and a meaningful description of the topic of your email (e.g., “POSC 1000: Critical review formatting”); be sure to sign your name to the email; and, to save time, please
be as concise as possible (if you find it hard to be concise in regards to your concern, it’s possible your issue is better handled in person during office hours).

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is organized by lecture day. There are 26 lecture days in all; however, only 23 lectures actually take place, as one class is taken up by the midterm and two classes are cancelled for the winter break.

In addition to readings and deadlines, the table notes a number of goals to clarify the learning objectives for each lecture in the course; these appear in italics under the topic heading for each lecture. The idea is that students who have completed the course readings and actively engaged with lectures will be able to “do” the objectives indicated for each lecture. After lecture 2, for instance, students should be able to “define politics as an object of study”. To check your progress in the course, consult the goals at the end of each week to see how you’re doing. If you find you haven’t reached the stated goals for a given week, you should review the relevant readings and lecture material or contact the professor for assistance. It bears emphasis, however, that satisfying the specific learning objectives for each week is not sufficient to succeed in POSC 1000; students are expected to develop a solid understanding of all content in lectures and course readings.

Finally, note that readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on D2L under “Course Readings”.

INTRODUCTION

1. January 7: Course Introduction
   - Goal: Understand course syllabus.
   - Read: POSC 1000-003 Course Syllabus

STUDYING POLITICS

2. January 12: What is Politics?
   - Goal: Define politics as an object of study. Understand three “faces” of power.
   - Read: Understanding, Ch. 1, & Three Faces of Power*

3. January 14: What is Political Science?
   - Goals: Identify key features of the scientific approach to the study of politics. Distinguish normative and empirical theory. Contrast political science with political journalism.
   - Read: Understanding, Appendix: Political Analysis

POLITICAL IDEAS

4. January 19: Political Ideologies I
   - Goals: Define ideology. Identify key features of conservatism.
   - Read: Understanding, Ch. 2 (esp. pp. 25-33) [11e: Ch. 2, pp. 26-34]
   - Note: Critical Review Guidelines and List of Scholarly Articles for Critical Review 1 provided.

5. January 21: Political Ideologies II
   - Goals: Identify key features of liberalism and socialism.
   - Read: Understanding, Ch. 2 (esp. pp. 33-40) [11e: Ch. 2, pp. 34-42]
   - Note: Bonus online syllabus quiz due, 5 pm today.

6. January 26: Ideological Thinking
   - Goals: Characterize ideological thinking. Define concept of belief system. Explain how the sources of public opinion are pluralistic.
7. January 28: Political Socialization
   - Goals: Define political socialization. Identify the nature of parental influence. Explain the life-cycle of socialization.
   - Read: Understanding, Ch. 4, & Political Socialization*

8. February 2: Political Culture I
   - Goals: Define substantive and proceduralist conceptions of political culture. Explain connection between political culture and regime stability.
   - Read: Understanding, Ch. 2 (esp. pp. 45-52) [11e: Ch. 2, pp. 48-56], & Civic Culture*

9. February 4: Political Culture II
   - Goals: Define participant, subject and parochial citizen-types. Understand the “civic culture”. Characterize the state of the civic culture in Canada.
   - Read: Understanding, Ch. 2 (esp. pp. 45-52) [11e: Ch. 2, pp. 48-56], & Civic Culture*

10. February 9: States and Nations
    - Goals: Differentiate the concepts of state and nation. Contrast civic and ethnic national identity.
    - Read: Understanding, Ch. 5, & Ethnic Nationalism*
    - Note: Check-in exercise conducted.

11. February 11: Nationalism
    - Goals: Define nationalism. Understand the “politics of recognition.”
    - Read: Understanding, Ch. 5, & Politics of Recognition*
    - Note: Format and expectations for the midterm discussed.
    - Note: Critical Review 1 due at the beginning of class. List of Scholarly Articles for Critical Review 2 provided.

12. February 16: Can States be Secure?
    - Goals: Identify key assumptions of realist theory. Understand the prisoner’s dilemma and the security dilemma. Define idealism. Identify key actors in international relations. Characterize key structures of the United Nations.
    - Read: Understanding, Ch. 11 & Ch. 12 (esp. pp. 340-350) [11e: Ch. 11 & Ch. 12, pp. 334-348], & Prisoner’s Dilemma*

13. February 18: Midterm Exam

14. February 23: Class cancelled (winter break).
15. February 25: Class cancelled (winter break).
16. March 1: Democracy and Non-Democracy
    - Goals: Contrast minimal democracy and liberal democracy. Define democratic values of participation, representation and deliberation. Identify types of non-democracies.
    - Read: Understanding, Ch. 7 (esp. pp. 163-179)

17. March 3: The Branches of Government
    - Goals: Characterize the executive, legislative and judicial branches. Explain the separation of powers doctrine.
    - Read: Understanding, Ch. 6, & Separation of Powers*
18. March 8: Responsible Government

- Goals: Explain conventions of collective responsibility and confidence. Contrast majority and minority governments. Identify values of responsible government.

- Read: Understanding, Ch. 7 (esp. pp. 179-196), & Parliamentary Systems*

DEcratch POLITICS

19. March 10: Political Parties and Party Systems I

- Goals: Contrast office- and policy-seeking visions of parties. Identify levels of affiliation with parties. Describe nature of party membership in Canada.

- Read: Understanding, Ch. 3 (esp. pp. 74-77) & Ch. 7 (esp. pp. 185-196) [11e: Ch. 3, pp. 76-79, & Ch. 7, pp. 187-196], & Median Voter Model*

20. March 15: Political Parties and Party Systems II

- Goals: Understand the median voter theorem and its importance. Identify dimensions of party systems. Relate party systems to democratic performance.

- Read: Understanding, Ch. 3 (esp. pp. 76-79) & Ch. 7 (esp. pp. 187-196) [11e: Ch. 3, pp. 76-79, & Ch. 7, pp. 187-196], & Median Voter Model*

21. March 17: Interest Groups and Social Movements

- Goals: Differentiate interest groups from other political actors. Contrast interest groups and social movements. Understand the free rider problem.

- Read: Understanding, Ch. 3 (esp. pp. 65-74) & Ch. 9 (esp. pp. 240-254) [11e: Ch. 3, pp. 68-76, & Ch. 9, pp. 239-256], & Collective Action Problem*

- Note: Critical Review 2 due at the beginning of class.

22. March 22: Conceptualizing Political Participation


- Read: Understanding, Ch. 3 (esp. pp. 55-65) [11e: Ch. 3, pp. 57-67]

23. March 24: Why Don’t (Do) People Vote?


- Read: Election, Ch. 12*

24. March 29: How Voters Decide

- Goals: Define party identification. Explain the economic voting model. Identify the impact of policy attitudes on the vote.

- Read: Election, Ch. 11*

25. March 31: The Influence of the Media

- Goals: Identify the democratic functions of the media. Explain the “minimal effects thesis” and theories of selective exposure and perception. Understand priming theory.

- Read: Public Opinion, Ch. 3*

CONCLUSION

26. April 5: Course Wrap-up

- Note: List of key terms for the final exam provided.