INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE
Course website: through CANVAS

Professor Craig Parsons
Email: cap@uoregon.edu
Office: 930 PLC, tel. 6-4402

Time/room: MWF 10-10:50/101 LIB
Office Hours: Thurs. 12-3

Discussion sections: TIME ROOM
                TIME ROOM

In the information overload of the 21st century we are bombarded with messages and images
telling us what to think about politics at local, state, national, and international levels. The
aggressiveness and noise of political life lead many to simply tune out.

This course offers you the tools to sort through and grasp politics on your own terms. Rather than
telling you what to think about politics—one way of analyzing or judging the world—it teaches
you how to think about politics in a critical, thoughtful way. It teaches you to see the alternatives
from which we can choose in political life: alternative ideologies, alternative institutions and
policies around the world, and alternative ways to explain the politics that surround you.

With these tools we will survey and debate a variety of key topics in political life: the sovereign
state, democracy, collective action, representation, policy-making, the politics of the economy,
authoritarian governments and democratization, war and terrorism, and globalization. On most of
these topics we will give special attention to how politics in the United States today compares to
politics in other places and times, giving you opportunities to develop your own critical thinking
about what to appreciate, defend, criticize, or change in the politics around you.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

1. Attend class. The lectures will highlight key themes and will often contain material that is not
   in the readings. If you do not come to lecture and take good notes, you will fail the exams.
   Section attendance is recorded and required. You can miss one section without penalty; thereafter
each unexcused absence takes 1% off your overall course grade.

2. Read. Reading will be heavy at points. When it isn’t heavy, get ahead. The essays and exams
   will require you to draw on reading material that isn’t in the lectures.

3. Participate. Talk in class, ask questions, or make me aware that you’re engaged in other ways.
   Do this even more in section. I know some people don’t like to talk in class; if that is you, come
   see me and/or the GTF in office hours and show us that you’re alive and interested.

4. Check your email every day. This is not optional at a 21st century university. I will often send
   you information on scheduling, corrections to lectures, and other messages that you need to see. It
   is your responsibility to check your email. Once I have sent you a message, I assume that you
   have that information.
5. **Essay 1.** An initial short essay (4-6 p.) will be due on Monday of the fourth week of class (Monday 10/19), uploaded to Canvas by the beginning of class. It will address political ideologies (precise topic TBA).

6. **Midterm.** There will be an in-class midterm exam on Monday October 26. It will consist of short-essay answers to straightforward questions about major points from readings and lectures. You will receive a study sheet before the exam.

7. **Essay 2.** A second short essay (4-6p.) will be due at the end of the eighth week of class (Friday, 11/20), uploaded to Canvas by the beginning of class. It will address the politics of economic policies (precise topic TBA).

8. **Final Exam.** Comprehensive exam in our normal room, DATE TIME. It will consist of short-essay answers to straightforward questions about major points from readings and lectures. You will receive a study sheet before the exam and optional study sessions will be available.

9. **Note the following policies:**

**With apologies, no computers in class.** Presumably you come to class to listen, take notes, and participate. Computers are not necessary for any of these things, and it is too seductive for many people to take notes on a computer without checking Facebook every so often. To make this class the serious, engaged enterprise that it should be, please leave your computers at home or in a bag.

**Give 24 hours advance notice or doctor’s letter to request excused absence or assignment extension.** Extensions requested within 24 hours of a deadline will generally not be granted. Late assignments lose a half letter grade each day. Assignments are due at the beginning of class, and a late penalty of one day (half grade) applies for assignments handed in later on the due date.

**Use your own words and don’t cheat.** I use software to compare papers to multiple databases. Plagiarism is serious business, as is cheating on closed-book exams like our midterm and final. At the very least cheating or plagiarism will result in failing the class; such cases will also be brought to the attention of the university, as required by university policy. See details at http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/.

How do you avoid plagiarism? In all of your assignments you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, Web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. That means that you fully identify the original source and extent of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthetical cite (Parsons 2003, p. 29). In all cases the bulk of your written work must be your own original thoughts, and citations to published or web-based information must be used only to supplement your own ideas.

As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a Web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two), place it in quotation marks. If you employ a longer passage, indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

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¹Like: Craig Parsons (2003). *A Certain Idea of Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), p. 29. [You may use any widely-used format for references in your assignments, as long as you are consistent].
Submit grading disputes in writing. If you want to dispute a grade on a paper or exam, please submit in writing a description of your concerns at least 24 hours after you have received the grade in question. The 24 hours should be used as a cooling off period. Please note, however, that if I or a GTF review your work, we will review the entire exam or paper. This can also result in a lower grade.

If an incomplete may be necessary, please let me know as soon as possible. In general incompletes will only be permitted under extenuating circumstances (health, family issues, emergency). Students who have outstanding assignments at the time that grades are due and who have not received preapproval for an incomplete will receive an “F” for the assignments they have not completed. In order to receive a passing grade in the class you must hand in all assignments.

EVALUATION

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5% (includes online discussion, clicker participation, vocal participation in class and/or coming to office hours)</td>
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COURSE MATERIALS

There is one required textbook, *Reclaiming Politics*. It is a special print run of a text by Prof. Parsons that is in the publication process with Pearson Publishers. Additional short readings (newspaper articles etc.) will occasionally be posted on the Canvas site. The book is available at the UO Bookstore.

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### I. BASIC TOOLS FOR RECLAIMING POLITICS

**WEEK 1**

**Mon. 9/28: Why and how to reclaim politics (and how we explain it)**

*Read for Weds. 9/30:*


**Weds. 9/30: Philosophical roots of today’s political science (I)**

*Read for Fri. 10/2:*


**Fri. 10/2: Philosophical roots of today’s political science (II)**

*Read for Mon. 10/5:*


**Mon. 10/5: What’s a liberal? What’s a conservative? Are you one of these?**
Read for Weds. 10/7:


**Weds. 10/7:** Socialists, fascists, and the bounds of legitimate politics

Read for Fri. 10/9:

*Reclaiming Politics*, Ch. 3 remainder, Pp. 76-84.

**Fri. 10/9:** Alternative value systems: environmentalism and Islamism

Read for Mon. 10/12:

[no new reading]

**Mon. 10/12:** In-class discussion/debate between the ideologies

Read for Weds. 10/14:


**Weds. 10/14:** Is it good that our world is divided into states?

Read for Fri. 10/16:

*Reclaiming Politics*, Ch. 4 remainder. Pp. 96-117.

**Fri. 10/16:** Who’s to blame for failed states?

Read for Mon. 10/19:

[no new reading]

**Mon. 10/19:** Is liberal democracy “rule of the people”?  

*IDEOLOGIES ESSAY DUE!*

Read for Weds. 10/21:

*Reclaiming Politics*, Ch. 5 through section A3. Pp. 119-144.

**Weds. 10/21:** Is limited or “illiberal” democracy ever acceptable?

Read for Fri. 10/23:

*Reclaiming Politics*, Ch. 5 remainder. Pp. 144-162.
Fri. 10/23: What keeps authoritarian governments going?

Mon. 10/26: IN-CLASS MIDTERM

Read for Weds. 10/28:

Reclaiming Politics, Ch. 6 (whole chapter). Pp. 163-194.

Weds. 10/28: Why do (or don’t) you and other individuals participate in politics?

Read for Fri. 10/30:

Reclaiming Politics, Ch. 7 through section A2. Pp. 195-208.

Fri. 10/30: Rules of the game in elections

Read for Mon. 11/2:

Reclaiming Politics, Ch. 7 section A3. Pp. 208-216.

Mon. 11/2: Parties: can’t live with ‘em, can’t live without ‘em?

Read for Weds. 11/4:

Reclaiming Politics, Ch. 7 remainder. Pp. 216-237.

Weds. 11/4: Should the US Constitution be celebrated…or fundamentally revised?

Read for Fri. 11/6:

Reclaiming Politics, Ch. 8 though section A1. Pp. 239-248.

Fri. 11/6: Presidents, prime ministers, legislators: who calls the shots in policy-making?

Read for Mon. 11/9:

Reclaiming Politics, Ch. 8 through section A2. Pp. 248-260.

Mon. 11/9: The death of democracy? The power of bureaucracy

Read for Weds. 11/11:


Weds. 11/11: The death of democracy? The power of judges

Read for Fri. 11/13:
**Reclaiming Politics**, Ch. 9 (whole chapter). 288-316.

**Fri. 11/13**: Markets as political creations: is the free market good for you?

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**Mon. 11/16**: Becoming wealthy: what’s the best strategy for poorer countries?

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**Weds. 11/18**: Sustaining growth: what’s the best strategy for richer countries?

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**Fri. 11/20**: How authoritarians fall

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**Mon. 11/23**: What prospects for democracy around the world?

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**Weds. 11/25**: Is major war a problem of the past?

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**Friday November 27 THANKSGIVING BREAK**

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**Read for Mon. 11/30: **

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**Mon. 11/30**: Is terrorism the problem of the future?

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<th>Read for Weds. 12/2:</th>
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Weds. 12/2: Does globalization suck (your life chances away)?

*Read for Fri. 12/4:*


**Fri 12/4: Globalization: brave new world or *Brave New World***?

Final exam in our normal room, DATE TIME.