

Dalhousie University
Department of Political Science

Political Science 1103 (01): Introduction to Political Science – Writing (2016/17)

Instructor: Florian Bail

Office: HH 354; Tel.: 494 6608; E-mail: fbail@dal.ca

Office Hours: M/W 12:30 – 13:30 or by appointment.

Note: This syllabus contains important information about Political Science 1103.
Study it carefully and keep on hand for the duration of the course.

Description

Political Science 1103 is an introductory course. It is designed to familiarize you with the terminology and methods of political analysis and with the basic structure of modern government in a comparative perspective. The emphasis is on the Canadian political system and process but other political systems, particularly the American and some European political systems and processes will also be discussed. In the last month we will focus on global politics.

The purpose of this course is to establish a basis for political judgment. You will therefore not only deal with straight facts alone but also with theories and ideologies that try to make sense of them.

This course is also a **writing course**. You will be asked to submit six essays, varying in length, style, and format, three in each term. At the end of each term you will also write a formal essay under exam conditions. Some Friday sessions will be writing workshops in which you will receive detailed instructions about how to organize your research and how to compose your essays.

Dalhousie University also offers a **writing workshop** located in the **Learning Commons** on the ground floor of the **Killam Library**. If you intend to make use of it you should contact it at **494 1963**. Further details will be provided in class.

Please note as well that the **Dalhousie Student Services**, located in the **Killam Library** also offers a very popular series of workshops called **Studying for Success Program** to help you organize your studies. For further information call **494 3077** or see the website <http://sfs.studentservices.dal.ca/>.

Early in the term the class will receive a **library tutorial** during class time in the **Killam Library, Room # 2616**. In this tutorial you will be instructed in how to plan your research by using the **Novanet** system, library holdings, the reference library, data banks, trade and academic journals, as well as general indices. These resources are important for conducting your research on current events and developments. While most of your research will be conducted on-line, a good amount of it will still have to be done with

print copies of books and journals held in the metro university library system (Dalhousie, King's, Saint Mary's, Mount St. Vincent) and the HRM public library system.

In addition to being a writing course, Political Science 1103 will also help you to develop and practice distinct skills in four categories:

- 1) Critical Thinking - (Perceptual development/ conceptual design/ logic/ strategies of interpretation);
- 2) Written Communication - (Formal business letter/ editorial and speech-writing/ memorandum and brief/ strategy paper/ backgrounder for in-depth broadcasts/ reflective essay/ formal research paper);
- 3) Research Methods and Skills - (Hands-on interdisciplinary research of primary sources/ archival research/ official documents/ content analysis of position papers);
- 4) Planning and Organization - (Organizing and preparing for debates/ strategizing for meetings/ taking minutes/ drafting resolutions).

This course, therefore, does not only teach about politics, it also teaches you how to get your own politics right and to exercise effective leadership - in professional and leisure activities no less than in political situations.

Since the course will closely follow political developments, you are expected to create **files** on certain topics, countries, and on leaders. Your files will form the basis of your own data bank for preparing your essays. Obviously, you must read a daily quality newspaper and clip or mark relevant articles on a regular basis. It is recommended that you subscribe to, or bookmark on your computer, the GLOBE&MAIL and routinely study the national and international press, among them the WALRUS, ADBUSTERS, WIRED, the MONTREAL GAZETTE, the NATIONAL POST, the OTTAWA CITIZEN, the EDMONTON JOURNAL, the VANCOUVER SUN, L'ACTUALITE, LA PRESSE, LE DEVOIR, the GUARDIAN, the ECONOMIST, LE MONDE, LE MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE, the NEW YORK TIMES, the WALL STREET JOURNAL and the WASHINGTON POST.

TV, social media, and radio news as well as blogs and sites such as RaelClearPolitics, of course, will keep you informed – and you should make it a habit to regularly listen to CBC Radio 1, FM 90.5 ('The National News' at various times during the day; 'The Current' M-F mornings, 'As it Happens' in the evening; 'The House' on Saturday morning, the 'Sunday Morning' show and 'Cross-Country Checkup' on Sunday evening – all of these programs can be read/ followed on the net as well). But it is print media that will help you research a topic more deeply so that you can form a considered judgment

on a given issue. We will therefore pay close attention to how news are generated, perceptions shaped, and opinions induced. Through your own writing you will learn how editing can shape or misshape a message.

POLI 1103 also participates in the program 'Dal Reads'. This year's choice is Jon Tattrie, *The Hermit of Africville* and is available for free at several locations in the Dal libraries.

Required texts (available from the **Bookmark**, 5686 Spring Garden Rd.)

Robert Garner, Peter Ferdinand, Stephanie Lawson, David MacDonald, **Introduction to Politics (Canadian Edition)**, Oxford University Press, 2013

Jane Aaron and Elaine Bander, **The Little Brown Essential Handbook for Writers. 6th Edition**

I did not order but recommend that you purchase the following dictionaries and writing guides:

The Student's Oxford Canadian Dictionary

Iain McLean, **Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics**

Penguin Dictionary of International Relation

Margaret MacMillan, **History's People**

Classical Political Writings on the Net

Political science is an old science whose insights and ideas have a long lineage. Beneath the empirical methodology of modern political science lies a foundation of classical treatises of politics you should read at least in excerpts. The major texts are accessible on the net.

Aristotle, Politics

Thomas **Hobbes**, Leviathan

Immanuel **Kant**, Perpetual peace

John **Locke**, The Second Treatise of Government

Niccolo **Machiavelli**, The Prince

Karl **Marx** and Friedrich **Engels**, The Communist Manifesto

John Stuart **Mill**, On Liberty

Plato, The Republic

Jean-Jacques **Rousseau**, The Social Contract

Other reading material for this course may be placed on the **Reserve Desk** located on the main floor of the **Killam Library**. Librarians will assist you in obtaining the reserved material.

Grading Scheme

First term: Three essays (between 1000 and 2000 words, depending on the nature of the assignment); exam at the end of the term.

Second term: Three essays (between 1000 and 2000 words, depending on the nature of the assignment); final exam.

All assignments are of equal value (**12%**). The final grade will be the average of the grades you received on your completed assignments and participation/presentation in class (**4%**). Improvement over the year will be taken into account in the evaluation. Essays must be carefully typed, properly edited and annotated – following the detailed

instructions given in class. They must be handed in on time. You have approximately three weeks to prepare each essay. Topics will be handed out in class at least three weeks before the essays are due. There will be a special session at the end of each term to instruct you about the format of the exam. If your work is late because of medical reasons you must produce an acceptable medical certificate. If you have no acceptable excuse for handing in your essay after it is due the grade on your late paper will be reduced by one full grade (e.g. instead of an A you will only get a B). Grading is by letter (A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F). For more information see the **Dalhousie Calendar 2014/15**, pp 36-38.

Note: Exams must be written on the date and at the location **announced in class**. Supplementary exams are available only for medical reasons. Further details regarding the nature of the exams will be explained in class.

It is mandatory that you complete all assignments.

You are encouraged to discuss your work and compare your notes with your classmates. But the assignment must be completed by your-self alone. **Please take note of the university policy on plagiarism:**

‘Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree.’

For further information regarding plagiarism consult with the **Department of Political Science** located at **HH, Third Floor, Room 302**. The department has issued a clear and strict policy on the matter and is committed to enforce it vigorously. See also the **Dalhousie Calendar 2016/17**.

Assignment Schedule for Term A

First assignment due **October 5, 2016**

Second assignment due **October 26, 2016**

Third assignment due **November 23, 2016**.

The **exam** for term A to be held **in class December 2, 2015**.

Changes to due dates, if any, will be announced in class.

Topics, length, format and further details will be discussed in class during Friday sessions. You are advised to produce and hand in well before the given due date outlines or rough drafts to the instructor or teaching assistant (TA). This will help you avoid missing the topic and enable you to sort out your ideas in an informal setting.

The schedule for term B will be announced in the first session of the spring term.

A note on **withdrawal**: If you wish to withdraw from this course you can do so without a financial implication by **Sept. 19, 2016** or without a **W** by **Nov. 14, 2016** but with a **W** by **Feb. 10, 2017**.

Course Outline

Because this course steers close to current political events, some class time will be devoted to discussing and analyzing them. An effort will be made to integrate topical debates with the scheduled material. The general plan of the lectures follows the outline of the text. You should always keep it as well as your personal data file on current events on hand. In order to respond to developing events, no dates have been fixed for the topics listed below. Readings are mandatory.

Fall Term

| Topic | Readings |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 The nature of political argument. Definition of basic terms and concepts. | Garner, Introduction, pp 1-9 Aristotle, Book 1 Plato, Book 1 |
| 2 The nature of political science and political judgment. | Garner, Introduction, pp 9-17 |
| 3 Evolution of the state | Garner, Ch. 1 |
| 4 Power and the modern state. | Garner, Ch. 2 Hobbes, Ch. 10, 14 Machiavelli, all |
| 5 The evolution of democratic government and governance. | Garner, Ch. 3 Locke, Ch. 7-13; Mill, all Rousseau, Ch. 6 & 7 |
| 6 Values and Ideologies | Garner, Ch. 4,5,and 6 Marx/Engels: Communist Manifesto, Ch. 1 |
| 7 The Nation State | Garner, Ch. 7 |
| 8 Modern Constitutionalism | Garner, Ch. 8 |

Kant, Perpetual Peace, all

9 Representation and Legislation Garner, Ch. 9

10 Executive power and administration Garner, Ch. 10

Winter Term

11 Elections, electoral systems, parties Garner, Ch. 11

12 Civil Society, NGOs, Public Opinion Garner, Ch. 12

13 Socialization and Political Culture Garner, Ch. 13

14 Conflict and Conflict Resolution Hobbes, Ch. 13

15 The Westphalian State System Garner, Ch. 14

16 Analyzing International Relations Garner, Ch. 15, 16

17 Security and Securitization Garner, Ch. 17

18 International Law, Diplomacy,
and Foreign Policy Garner, Ch. 18, 19

19 Political Economy Garner, Ch. 20

20 Trends and Contingencies: A Final Reflection

A Note on Reading, Research, and Writing

In your professional life you will have to do a great deal of reading (and listening), a fair amount of research, and a good bit of writing. You will have to be efficient and versatile to get the point and to get to the point. Reading is the key. It can be skillful and artful – if you do it right. Highlighting and underlining important passages is useful but insufficient. You need to make excerpts and file them on cards or in your computer. Of important books or articles you should write brief **précis** (summaries). Your précis should contain a condensation of the major thesis of the book or article, its style or methodology, evidence, open questions, and a brief assessment of the text. Reading will also improve your writing. But do not limit yourself to textbooks. Include essays, novels, poems, and plays in your daily excursions. Language is objective as well as subjective. Try to listen to the inflection, the voice, the personal tone. As a reader you will be convinced by lean, imaginative, and provocative writing – not by mass. As a writer you want to accomplish the same. How to get there is the main objective of this course. Its other purpose is to sharpen your political judgment. That, too, is a skill that can be honed by attentive reading and listening. The idiom of bureaucrat or activist, the style of a feature article, the blarney of a TV moderator, the rhetoric of a politician often reveal more about their political weight than their actual words. Speech, as it were, has its own body language. In order to get the full meaning of a text you need to go beyond its literal meaning and probe its intentional meaning. Politics, after all, is theatre.

To get started on reading try

Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading*. Toronto (Knopf), 1996 and

Francine Prose, *Reading Like a Writer*. New York (Harper Perennial), 2006.
