

Dalhousie University
Department of Political Science

**Political Science 1103 (01): Introduction to Political Science – Writing
(2013/14)**

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Office Hours: M/W 12:00 13:00 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 second term we will also look at global politics.

The purpose of this course is to establish a basis for sound 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.

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 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/>.

In the first 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 indexes. These resources

are important for conducting your research on current events and developments. While you are encouraged to conduct research on the internet, much of your research will also have to be with paper copies of books and journals held in the metro university library system (Dalhousie, King's, SMU, MSVU) and the HRM public library system.

In addition to being a writing course, Political Science 1103 will also give you an opportunity to develop and practice distinct skills in five categories:

- 1) Critical Thinking - (perceptual development; conceptual design; logic; strategies of interpretation)
- 2) Written Communication - (Formal business letter; editorial and speech; memorandum and brief; strategy paper; backgrounder for broadcasts; reflective essay; formal research paper)
- 3) Research Methods & Skills - (Hands-on interdisciplinary research of primary sources; archival research; content analysis of position papers)
- 4) Planning and Organization - (Organizing and preparing for debates; strategizing for meetings; drafting resolutions)
- 5) Leadership – (practical thinking; strategic judgment; motivating through presentations and debates).

This course, therefore, does not only look at politics academically but also teaches you how to get your own practical politics right.

Since this course will closely follow political developments as they unfold, you are expected to create **Files** on certain countries and issues. These 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 read or check The GLOBE & MAIL; The NATIONAL POST; LA PRESSE; L'ACTUALITE; The (Manchester) GUARDIAN; The ECONOMIST; LE MONDE; LE MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE; Le NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR; The NEW YORK TIMES; The WALL STREET JOURNAL and the WASHINGTON POST.

While TV and radio news as well as blogs will keep you informed – and you should make it a habit for this course at least to listen to **CBC Radio 1 on 90.5 FM** (The National News at various times during the day; The Current' on weekday mornings ;'As it Happens' on workday evenings; 'The House' on Saturday morning, and 'Sunday Morning' on Sunday morning from 9 am to 12) – the print media will help

you research a topic more deeply so that you can form a considered judgment on a given issue. You must therefore pay close attention to how the news is presented, perceptions shaped, and opinions induced by the media. Through your own writing you will learn how editing can shape a message.

Required Texts

**James John Guy, People, Politics, and Government. A Canadian Perspective
Seventh Edition**

The Little Brown Essential Handbook for Writers

They are available only from the **Bookmark, 5686 Spring Garden Rd.**

It is also recommended that you acquire a good desk dictionary. The **Oxford English Dictionary (OED)** and special dictionaries regarding politics are kept in the **Reference Section** on the ground floor of the **Killam Library**. But you will find it useful to always have your own copies of

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and the
Penguin Dictionary of International Relations at hand.

In order for you to have easy access to print excerpts from classical texts in political theory, I put **on reserve** at the **circulation desk** of the **Killam Library**

Jene M. Porter, Editor, Classics in Political Philosophy, Third Edition

Recommended readings are indicated in the outline of this course by an **(R)** behind the name and passage.

Grading Scheme

First Term: Three essays (between 1000 and 1500 words, depending on the nature of the assignment) and one in-class exam at the end of the Term.

Second Term: Three essays (between 1000 and 1500 words, depending on the nature of the assignment) and the final in-class exam at the end of the Term.

All assignments are of equal value (12.5 %). The **final grade** will be an **average** of the grades you received on your completed assignments. 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 by myself or the TAs**. 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 your late paper will be reduced by one full grade (e.g. instead of an A you will only get a B).

Grading is done by letter (A+,A, A-,B+,B,B-,C+,C,C-.D.F).

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 assignments and the exams will be explained in class. In order to obtain a final grade you must complete all assignments before the last day of classes.

You are encouraged to discuss your work and compare your notes with your classmates. But you must complete all assignments yourself.

Please take note of the university policy on plagiarism!

'All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism referenced in the Policies and Student References sections of the <academic integrity.dal.ca> website. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations.

Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation

of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Dalhousie website. The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to be checked electronically for originality.

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

Policy on Accommodation

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests, quizzes and exams should make their request to the Office of the Student Accessibility & Accommodation (OSAA) prior to or at the outset of each academic term (with the exception of X/Y Courses). Please see www.studentaccessibility.dal.ca for more information and to obtain Form A: Request for Accommodation.

A note taker may be required to assist a classmate. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term. If you are interested, please contact OSAA at 494-2836 for more information.

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom so that students who require their usage will be able to participate in the class.

Assignment Schedule for Term A

First assignment due October 7, 2013
Second assignment due October 28, 2013.
Third assignment due November 18, 2013.
In-class exam December 2 2013.

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

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

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 by MacLean/Wood. You should always keep it and your dossier on current events on hand.

Fall Term

Topic	Readings
1 Introduction: An inventory of the issues	Guy, Ch. 15
2 The nature of political argument	Guy, Ch. 1. Porter (R) Aristotle, The Politics
3 The nature of political science and political judgment	Guy, Ch. 1. Porter (R) Plato, The Republic,1
4 Truth in politics and the nature of ideologies	Guy, Ch 2. Porter (R) Nietzsche, On Truth ...
5 Power and the modern state	Guy, Ch. 3. Porter (R) Machiavelli; Hobbes; Marx and Engels, Manifesto
6 Governance and government	Guy, Ch. 4. Porter (R) Locke; Rousseau, Social Contract
7 Executive power	Guy, Ch 5. Porter (R) Plato, The Republic, 3-5

Winter Term

8	Legislative power	Guy, Ch. 6. Porter (R) Locke
9	Bureaucracy	Guy, Ch.7.
10	Constitutionalism and Rights	Guy, Ch. 9 Porter (R), Mill, On Liberty
11	Political participation	Guy, Chs. 10 and 11
12	International politics	Guy, Ch. 12
13	International law	Guy, Ch. 13.
14	Foreign policy and diplomacy	Guy, Ch 14.
15	Conclusion: Power and Justice	Porter (R), Plato, Republic; Aristotle, Nic. Ethics; Rousseau, Inequality Mill, Utilitarianism; Marx, Manuscripts; Nietzsche, Genealogy

A Final 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 – of 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 and 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 a bureaucrat or activist, the style of a feature article, the blarney of a TV moderator, the rhetoric of a political 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 intended 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.

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