



POLS 2523 Foundations of Government & Politics

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
CRN 11131 Section 101; 10-10:50AM, Fall 2021, PY200

Instructor: Dr. Rebekah Dowd

Office: O'Donohoe Hall 204

Office hours: Virtually Tues/Thurs.10-11:45am; Monday afternoons 2-3:30 pm

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Course Description

In this course, we will provide an overview of the social science discipline of Political Science. Political theory, political institutions, and how we study political science will be the main themes of the course. Students are assumed to have no prior knowledge of the material. In addition to the foundations of political science, students will also learn critical reading strategies to better understand social science research as well as analytical writing skills needed to perform their own original research. The syllabus provides a general plan for the course; changes are sometimes necessary. Any changes may be announced in class and/or posted to D2L. The instructor reserves the right to reduce the number of assignments, and will readjust the grade calculations, which may result in assignments increasing in value.

Note: The course fulfills the Cultural and Global Understanding component of the core curriculum and is a requirement for majors and minors in Political Science, as well as social studies education majors. POLS 2523 is a writing intensive course.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and explain the various components of Political Science
- Be proficient in critically reading political science research material and understand how to identify the key theories, hypotheses, data and methodology, and conclusion in these works
- Explain the need for states, define what a state is, and describe the main characteristics of states
- Classify regime types along the continuum of democratic and non-democratic governments of states
- List the main political institutions, and describe the characteristics of executive, legislative, judicial branches of government
- Compare types of constitutions and court systems
- Give details on electoral systems and how this impacts political participation
- Articulate some of the main causal factors involved in social movements and political conflict
- Utilize data and digital tools to compare political variables across countries
- Produce an original case study written paper, comparing two aspect of politics across countries or regions

Required Textbook & Instructional Materials:

The Essentials of Comparative Politics, by Patrick O'Neil; W.W. Norton, ISBN: 978-0-393- 532777, 7th edition

- Additional readings may be posted to D2L in PDF form
- It is suggested that students follow international news through such sources as [The Washington Post](#), [The New York Times](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), [al Jazeera](#), [Foreign Affairs](#), and [Foreign Policy](#). You may use this material within your research paper.

Office Hours:

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, I will have virtual office hours during this term, unless special arrangements are made. See the top of the syllabus for the times in which I am “virtually” in my office. To speak with me during the posted times, just click the office hours link on D2L. If this time presents a conflict for your schedule, send me an email using the address at the top of this syllabus and I will schedule a virtual Zoom appointment with you.

Communication:

The best way to reach me is by email. I will make all attempts to answer emails within 48 business hours unless it is over a holiday break. You must check your email listed as the primary account in your Banner information, as I will use this address to communicate with you outside of class. I will use D2L for posting syllabi, course communication, course schedule and changes, attendance, and the gradebook. There may be some online office hours announced through D2L, if they vary from the office hours posted above. You should regularly check D2L and the email hosted via D2L for important course information.

When sending me an email, please include the following:

- Your first and last name
- Your student ID number (M#)
- Your class title and section (POLS 2523 – X30)

Appropriate email etiquette means you should address an email to ANY professor with the following greeting: Dear Dr./Professor Dowd...

Attendance Policy:

This course has been planned as a fully face-to-face course for Fall 2021. Per state mandates, and the decision of MSU administrators, mask use and social distancing is not currently mandated for classrooms. However, face mask use is welcome and encouraged by me as the instructor, in accordance with CDC guidelines, Section 3, found here [CDC Guidelines for Higher Education](#). In the event of increased incidence of COVID-19 active cases that results in MSU moving back to protective measures, I will notify you through an announcement on D2L. As the course instructor of record, I reserve the right to move the course online, either partially, or in full, in the event of a personal emergency that prohibits me from delivering the course fully in-person. More instructions will be given at that time.

I am required by the university to report failure to attend and complete assignments. I will randomly take in-person attendance on 5 random days during the semester. If you are absent on those dates, nor have you provided a legal or medical excuse for non-participation, your attendance grade will be marked as absent for that date. See the grading policy and breakdown of your grade calculations for more details.

Disability Accommodations:

Any student having an education disability plan on file with the university needs to inform me within the first week of the class so I make make the appropriate arrangements to accommodate your situation. In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make

application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Clery Act Notification:

Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature; sex or gender discrimination violate University policies. Any person experiencing such behavior may receive confidential support from the Counseling Center. Counseling Center staff will hold what you share in strict confidence. If you disclose sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex or gender discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) to me, I as the instructor of this course am required to forward such information to the MSU Title IX office. This should not prevent you from speaking to me should you wish to do so, but know that what you tell me in this area cannot be held confidential, but must be shared with the Title IX office.

Grading

<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Points</i>
Attendance	20
Exam 1	15
Exam 2	15
Exam 3	15
Written Paper	20
Reading Quizzes	10
TBD Assignment	5
TOTAL	100

Grading Scale:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Less than 60

Class Attendance and Participation (20%):

Class meets three times a week. Participation is based on attendance AND in discussion in class. I expect you to talk during class, engaging with me as the instructor, and your fellow students. Science has shown we learn best by asking and discussing our questions about issues. I encourage questions, dialogue, and open debate, just do not monopolize class discussions. I randomly take attendance at 5 time points during the term.

Reading quizzes (10%):

These are to insure you are reading and understanding the assigned texts each week. Read thoroughly, take notes, jot down questions, and bring these to class, so we can discuss them together. I expect you to complete the readings and reading quizzes BEFORE each class, so that we may discuss them in full. The lectures will be to help you synthesize the concepts across the readings, not only to introduce the readings. The reading quizzes are posted in D2L, under the Quizzes tab. They are open book. Two attempts each quiz.

Exams (15% each):

These have multiple choice and essay questions, based on lecture content and readings (the textbook readings and additional readings posted on D2L). Each exam will feature material introduced since the last exam only.

- Exam 1: Monday, September 27 – in class
- Exam 2: Friday, November 5 – in class
- Exam 3: Monday, December 6 - ONLINE

Case Study Research Paper (20%)

The critical thinking required of political science research cannot be easily developed or tested using traditional exams. Writing encourages research, formulation of argument, and articulation of supportive statements. Therefore, in this course you will be required to write an 8-10-page research paper. The good news is that 1) I don't grade solely based on grammar mistakes, and 2), you submit the paper in steps throughout the term. In other words, the idea is to teach you how to be organized, plan a paper, choose your sources, outline the argument, write in sections, and then write and edit the draft. Together these steps will help you grow in your knowledge of politics AND develop professional writing skills that are useful in the job market. A folder of support materials for this paper will be posted to D2L. I will also teach about the paper formatting in class. The paper sections are submitted as follows:

1. *Thesis statement* (a brief paragraph explaining your core argument; 3-5 sentences only), and *Outline* (3 main points plus supporting sentences). 5%, due Friday, **September 10**, 11:59 PM.
2. *Research question and introduction* (a clear question that you use to argue for why this research project is important to political science, and an introduction paragraph that tells me what you are about to explain in the details of the full paper), *Bibliography of resources* (8-10 reputable sources from news, professional journals, or books). 5%, due Friday, **October 8**, 11:59 PM.
3. *Rough draft* (the full 8-10-page paper, 12-point font, double-spaced, not counting bibliography). 5%, due Sunday, **November 7**, 11:59 PM.
4. *Final draft* (the edited paper, with changes made after I returned the first draft to you). 5%, due Wednesday, **December 1**, 11:59PM.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [2021 MSU Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures:

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given). Plagiarism also includes using content you have produced for other classes or assignments, without prior approval from all instructors involved to "recycle" this material in this Global Studies class. I have a zero tolerance policy on plagiarized assignments. You will earn an automatic zero, and no resubmissions will be accepted. Students are strongly recommended to get written material reviewed by the writing support staff at MSU ([TASP](#)) before submitting it. Additional guidelines on procedures for plagiarism and cheating can be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [MSU Student Conduct](#)

Electronic Devices:

Laptop computers and tablets are allowed for the purposes of taking notes and completing in-class assignments. Cellphone use is prohibited unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Please mute all electronic devices before coming into class.

Many assignments in this course will be conducted in D2L. Tests and exams may utilize the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor for testing. In order to install these programs, you will need the following:

- A desktop computer or laptop other than a Chromebook. NOTE: Chromebooks DO NOT WORK with the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor.
- Apple iPads may be used for quizzes and exams, but these are not advised for any assignment with a written component.
- Mobile phones and similar devices are not compatible with the required programs.
- A working webcam on the computing device used for the exam.
- Microsoft Office or a compatible program for written assignments. Access to Microsoft Office 365 available through the Office 365 for Students on the Microsoft website.

Please note: a limited number of webcams and laptops with cameras are available for check-out through the MSU Texas Moffett Library.

Withdrawal by midpoint:

Please note, the semester's midpoint is **October 25. This is the last Day for "W"**. Students can **withdraw from the class up to this point and** receive a W for the class. However, there is a limited number of W's a student can receive over their academic career. **Drops after this date will receive grades of "F."** If you intend to withdraw from a course, you must do so yourself. If you are still on the roll when I have to assign grades and you haven't done any passing work, then you will fail. Also note, I have to report to the university whether students have attended class, and how regularly you attend. If you have never attended this class when I have to submit my report to the university, or you have stopped attending, it is possible that the university will reduce your financial assistance.

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L):

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a required part of this course, and it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact technical support and [Submit a Problem Report](#) for help. I do not post my PowerPoint notes to D2L, nor do I provide study guides for the exams in D2L. Students are expected to attend class and take their own notes to use for study purposes.

Class Behavior Policies

In order to make this a successful class, it is important that we create an environment where everyone has an opportunity to learn. This includes in-person and online classes. **During class periods, no cellphones are allowed to be out and visible.** Laptops may be used ONLY for the purpose of taking notes. Please put away all headphones/earbuds/Airpods as well. You should know that the university policy on disruptive behavior in class applies. Disruptive class behavior includes, but is not limited to, verbal or physical threats, repeated obscenities, unreasonable interference with class discussion, making/receiving personal phone calls or pages (text messaging) during class, leaving and entering class frequently in the absence of notice to instructor of illness or other extenuating circumstances, and persisting in disruptive personal conversations with other class members. For purposes of this policy, it may also be considered disruptive behavior for a student to exhibit threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates outside of class. If your behavior is disruptive to other students or the instructor, this will violate University guidelines, and you will be reported to administrative authorities.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Course Schedule:

You are expected to complete all readings BEFORE the class date listed.

Class/Reading Quiz Open Date	Reading Assignment	Reading Quiz Due Date/Time
Monday, August 23	Introduce course, review syllabus, how to read chapter content	
Wednesday, August 25	"What is Political Science" by Cameron, PDF online, p207-top of 213 incl Political Theory"	
Friday, August 27- Political Theories Section; Rationalism & Social Contract Theory	Chapter 7, "The Contractual Origins of Society" by Thomas Hobbes in <i>Political Theory Reader</i>	
Monday, August 30 – Liberalism	Chapter 3, "Why Liberalism Works" by Paul Starr <i>In Political Theory Reader</i> -PDF online	
Wednesday, September 1– Communism	Chapter 2: Marx and Engel's, "Communist Manifesto"	Reading Quiz 1, 10 am
Friday, September 3-	Chapter 1, O'Neil, Introduction Lecture: How to Write a Political Science Paper	
Monday, September 6	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY	
Wednesday, September 8- State Formation Section	Chapter 2, O'Neil, States	
Friday, September 10	Charles Tilly, Chapter 3, "How War Made States" from <i>Coercion, Capital, and European States</i> – PDF online	Reading Quiz 2, 10 am; Part 1 of paper due, 11:59PM
Monday, September 13 – Political Identity Section	Chapter 3, O'Neil, Nations and Society	
Wednesday, September 15	"Traditional Ideologies" pgs. 117-137, by Robert Garner – PDF online; will also discuss how to read an academic journal article.	
Friday, September 17	Citizenship and Immigration, by Irene Bloemraad- PDF online	Reading Quiz 3, 10 am
Monday, September 20 – Political Economy Section	Chapter 4, O'Neil, Political Economy, p. 98-111	
Wednesday, September 22	Chapter 4, O'Neil, Political Economy, p. 112-128	

Friday, September 24	Pgs. 1-15 in “Welfare States and Welfare Theory”, by – Jørgen Goul Andersen - PDF online	Reading Quiz 4, 10 AM
Monday, September 27	Exam 1	
Wednesday, September 29- Regime Types Section	Chapter 5, O’Neil, Democratic Regimes, p. 138-top of 150	
Friday, October 1	Chapter 6, O’Neil, Non-Democratic Regimes	Reading Quiz 5, 10 am
Monday, October 4	Chapter 7, O’Neil, Political Violence	
Wednesday, October 6 – Political Institutions Section; Constitutions	Caramani Chapter 9, by Alec Stone Sweet, “Constitutions, rights, and judicial power” – PDF online	
Friday, October 8 - Judiciary	NO IN-PERSON CLASS; DR. DOWD AT CONFERENCE. LECTURE WILL BE POSTED IN D2L Chapter 5, O’Neil, Democratic Regimes” pgs. 152-153 on Judiciaries AND Christopher Larkins 1996 article, “Judicial Independence & Democratization...” – PDF online	Reading Quiz 6, 10 am; Part 2 of paper due, 11:59PM
Monday, October 11	Lecture: Locating data Read Freedom House – PDF online	
Wednesday, October 13 – Executive Leadership	Chapter 5, O’Neil , pg. 153-160 on Executives and Heads of Government)	
Friday, October 15- Bureaucracy	“Politics as a Vocation” from GREAT POLITICAL Theories –by Max Weber PDF online- the Bureaucracy	
Monday, October 18	Lecture - Writing a Case Study Paper	
Wednesday, October 20 – Presidential v. Parliamentary Systems	Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism by Fred Riggs – PDF online	
Friday, October 22 - Legislatures	Caramani, Chapter 7: Legislatures, by Amie Kreppel – PDF online	Reading Quiz 7, 10 am
Monday, October 25 – Electoral Systems	O’Neil Chapter 5, Electoral Systems, Referendum, p. 161-175,	
Wednesday, October 27- Representation & Selection Section; Group Politics	What is minority/group representation? Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005 article, “Women’s Representation” – PDF online	
Friday, October 29 – Political Parties	Chapter 12 by Richard S. Katz, “Political Parties” pgs. 208-222 – both PDFs online NOTE: OCTOBER 25 is semester midpoint; last day to withdraw; must be done by 4pm.	
Monday, November 1 - Factionalism	“The Federalist No. 10” by James Madison and	

	Chapter 13 by Daniele Caramani, "Party Systems", pgs. 225-233	
Wednesday, November 3 – Interest Groups	Grossman & Helpman 1996 article, "Electoral Competition and Special Interest Politics" – PDF online	Reading Quiz 8, 10 am
Friday, November 5	Exam 2	Part 3 of paper due Sunday, November 7, 11:59PM
Monday, November 8 – Civil society; Media	"Media & Politics", Read pgs. 324-334 by Peter Ferdinand– PDF online	
Wednesday, November 10 – Social Media Activism	<i>New Yorker</i> article by Gladwell, and <i>The Atlantic</i> article - Social Media Ruining Political Discourse – PDF online	
Friday, November 12 – Political Culture	Almond & Verba, <i>Civic Culture</i> , p. 1-32 PDF online	Reading Quiz 9, 10 am
Monday, November 15 – Collective Action and Social Movements	Mancur Olson excerpt from 1971 book, <i>The Logic of Collective Action</i> ", excerpts from p. 5-52 and Sidney Tarrow, excerpt from 1998 book, <i>Power in Social Movement</i> , Chapters 1 and 5. – PDF online	
Wednesday, November 17 – Case Study Section	Case: Hong Kong Protests Read: "Hong Kong in Protest", by Melvin Barnes, Jr. – PDF online	
Friday, November 19	Case: Black Lives Matter Read: The Atlantic and NY Times articles on Black Lives Matter movement – both PDFs online	Reading Quiz 10, 10 am
Monday, November 22	Case: Brazil O'Neil Chapter, Brazil – PDF online and Sad Decline article – PDF online	
Wednesday-Friday, November 24-26	Thanksgiving break, No classes	
Monday, November 29	Case: China – PDF online O'Neil Chapter, China – PDF online	
Wednesday, December 1	Case: South Africa O'Neil Chapter 13, "South Africa" – PDF online	Part 4 of paper due, 11:59PM
Friday, December 3	NO IN-PERSON CLASS; LECTURE WILL BE POSTED IN D2L Case: United Kingdom O'Neil Chapter 13, UK – PDF online	
Monday, December 6	Exam 3 - ONLINE	

Final grades will be posted to D2L