**Political Science 110: Introduction to Political Science**



**Spring 2016**

**POLS 110: MWF 10:30 – 11:20**

**Rm: ASB 113**

***Instructor Information:***

Dr. Amy L. Atchison

323 ASB

Office Hours: M/W 2:00 – 3:30, or by appointment[[1]](#footnote-1)

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 **Course Description**

You see politics everywhere you look. When you hear a news report about tax policy, a new prime minister in the United Kingdom, or tensions between Chad and Sudan over refugees, you’re witnessing political disputes. Political science seeks to understand and appreciate the causes and meanings of such conflicts in a systematic fashion.

Sounds a little boring, right? Well, it doesn’t have to be. We see important political science concepts illustrated throughout popular culture, too—movies, books, and TV shows are full of political science. Mr. Burns stealing the oil under Springfield Elementary? The formation and breakdown of alliances on *Survivor*? The voting on *American Idol*? Terrorist groups working together in *Team America: World Police*? These all illustrate crucial aspects of political science. Over the course of this semester, we’re going to explore some of the most fundamental ideas in political science via both traditional means and popular culture.

***COURSE MATERIALS***

There is **one** required book for this class, and **one** web subscription. You can get either the hard copy of the book (listed first) **or** the e-book (listed second). You are welcome to purchase the book anywhere you’d like. If you want to go directly to the publisher for the ebook, the website the publisher gave me for the *rental* ebook is: <http://store.vitalsource.com/show/9781483368481R180>

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| **ISBN** | **Author(s)** | **Title** | **Year** | **Publisher** |
| 978-1-4833-6849-8 | Van Belle & Mash | A Novel Approach to Politics (4th Edition) | 2015 | CQ Press |
| **OR** |  |  |  |  |
| **Rental E-Book ISBN****9781483368481** | Van Belle & Mash | A Novel Approach to Politics (4th Edition) (e-Book)  | 2015 | CQ Press |

**You must also get a subscription to Soomo Publishing:**

1. You **must** purchase a subscription to Soomo Publishing—make **sure** you have it by the 1st day of class.
	1. You can purchase this through the bookstore ($36) or directly from Soomo ($25) at [www.soomopublishing.com](http://www.soomopublishing.com)
	2. The bookstore has to mark it up because they have overhead costs & a corporate office that demands a profit—don’t hate the player, hate the game. However, I know that some of you have to get your books through the bookstore & wanted to make sure you had the opportunity to get Soomo that way, as well. You will buy a “passkey” from the bookstore & it will have the info you need for registration.
	3. Either way:
		1. Sign up at: [www.soomopublishing.com](http://www.soomopublishing.com)
		2. I sent you a “Quick Start Guide” to help with the registration process.
		3. This is the only way to get and submit homework assignments.
2. If you have technical difficulties with Soomo (logging in, difficulties subscribing, etc.) please contact Soomo directly.
	1. If you cannot get into the site, try the Support page (link at the top right of the screen) or click “Get Help” (it’s on the login page, just below the password entry field).
	2. If you are already into the site, click Help🡪Contact Us.
3. If you have difficulty with one of the links in the assignments, please contact me (amy.atchison@valpo.edu)

***Reading Assignments***. Our class time will not be used simply to "go over" the readings. Instead, the readings are intended to serve as the point of departure for our class sessions and discussions. Therefore, it is important that students come to class prepared.

To keep up, it is recommended that students do the following:

1. Complete the assigned reading before a topic is taken up in class. The class is structured (and I operate) under the theory that students have read the assigned material.
2. Reading Notes. Students should make a list of key terms as they read each assignment. In addition to key terms, students are well advised to take “reading notes” which briefly summarize the arguments and developments discussed by the authors. Hint: Use the power points on Blackboard as a guide.
3. Check the Assignments: Reading assignments are posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check the site to see what you need to read for upcoming classes. Do so regularly.

***Participation:*** Students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's discussion, and the comments of other students. Simply put, meaningful participation is strongly encouraged and will enhance the quality of our class sessions.

***Writing Assignment.*** There is one writing assignment. You will select one film or one novelfrom the list I have provided. You will then select one of the essay questions associated with the film/novel. Each of the essay questions refers to a common theme in political science research. You will find **THREE**  scholarly research articles to help you answer the essay question. The essay should be 3-5 pages , double spaced, not including the works cited. The essays should be properly organized (Intro🡪Body🡪Conclusion). They should also be properly cited, using in-text citations. The writing assignment and an example paper are provided to you on Soomo (look under Chapter 13).

***Grades:*** Your grade (500 points total) will be based on:

* Soomo — 50 points (10%)
* Writing Assignment- 100 points (20%)
* Test One – 75 (15%)
* Midterm - 125 (25%)
* Final – 150 (30%)

At any point in the semester you can calculate your grade by dividing points earned by points available to date.

***Grade Scale***

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| A | 95-100% |
| A-  |  90-94% |
| B+  |  86-89% |
| B  |  83-85% |
| B-  | 80-82% |
| C+  |  76-79% |
| C  |  73-75% |
| C-  | 70-72% |
| D  |  60-69% |
| F  |  Under 60% |

**Objectives, POLS 110**

**University, Department, and Course Objectives**

**University Wide Student Learning Objectives** (General Catalog, 2014-15, p 10-11)

 1. Students will demonstrate skill in various methods of acquiring knowledge in the humanities, social and natural sciences, quantitative reasoning, and the creative arts

2. Students will master and demonstrate content knowledge by using methods such as inference, generalization, and application

3. Students will become active learners by finding, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information

4. Students will demonstrate the ability to build logical and persuasive arguments, cases, reports, and/or responses

5. Students will communicate clearly and effectively in both oral and written forms

6. Students will achieve a basic level of technological adeptness, appropriate to their field(s) of study

7. Students will interact and collaborate effectively in groups and teams

8. Students will explore the relationship between faith and learning

9. Students will practice the virtues of empathy, honesty, and justice in their academic endeavors

10. Students will appreciate that diversity in areas such as culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, and religion is pertinent to functioning successfully in a global community

**POLS Departmental Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students will understand the political world in which they live and possess knowledge of the theoretical, structural, historical, and scientific dimensions of politics.

2. Students will critically and objectively analyze political information and effectively communicate results of their analyses.

3. Students will demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance of racial, cultural, and other human differences.

4. Students will demonstrate commitment to being politically responsible citizens.

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| **POLS 110 Objectives** | **POLS Departmental Objectives** | **University Wide Learning Objectives** |
| **Subject Area Objectives** |
| 1. To gain an understanding of the nature of politics
 | 1, 3 | 1, 9, 10 |
| 1. To gain an understanding of how political processes affect your life
 | 1, 3 | 1, 9, 10 |
| 1. To help you think more systematically about the political processes at work in society
 | 1, 2, 3 | 3, 4, 5, 7 |
| 1. To encourage you to think about how various political actors influence the political system
 | 1, 2, 3 | 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 |
| **Comprehensive Learning Objectives** |
| 1. Apply political science theories and models to current political events.
 | 2, 3, 4 | 2, 3 |
| 1. Critically and objectively analyze political information.
 | 1, 2 | 3, 4 |
| 1. Effectively communicate that analysis in written and verbal formats.
 | 2 | 3, 4 |

***EXPECTATIONS AND CLASSROOM RULES***

1. ***Grammar:*** I expect you to use proper grammar; this includes all assignments and communications with me. In addition, please make sure to write proper emails. I reserve the right to not reply to emails that are unprofessional (e.g. do not include greeting/closing, and/or do include text-speak). If you need help learning to write a professional email, try this site: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>
2. ***Cell Phones/Electronics***- use of cell phones, tablets, or communication devices of any sort (including laptops) is prohibited.
	1. Students caught using these devices in class will lose their attendance for the day (Translation: if I catch you texting, I mark you absent.)
	2. I reserve the right to bring a basket to class & require that all devices be placed in the basket.
3. ***Civility***- civility is expected at all times from everyone in the classroom.
	1. Respect for others is mandatory. This includes not talking over the instructor or your classmates. A warning will be given first, then 10 participation points will be deducted from your participation points total (see 1a above for additional information)
	2. Use of abusive language, name calling, disruptive behavior, etc. is subject to disciplinary action. Penalties will be determined based on the severity of the incident.
4. ***Communication***- the primary forms of communication for this course are **e-mail** and **Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check both regularly**. It is my responsibility to communicate with you if class is cancelled or the assignment is changed. I will endeavor to do so in a timely manner when at all possible
	1. *Do note that I have a life. If you email me in the evening or on weekends, you should not expect a fast answer.*
5. ***Food/Beverages***- you may bring beverages & quiet food to class, however noisy food is not permitted (seriously, it’s hard to concentrate if your neighbor is crunching Doritos…)

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Departmental Policies

“All academic work completed by a student while enrolled at Valparaiso University shall be governed by the Honor System as it is defined in the Constitution. **The Honor Code** is: "I have neither given or received nor have I tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid."[[2]](#footnote-2) Every student must write out the Honor Code in full and sign it for all work submitted for academic credit.”

According to the Faculty Handbook, 3.3.1, students are required to attend every one of their classes unless the absence has been approved by the instructor concerned or the dean. In cases of flagrant or excessive absences, especially when they are related to failing work, an instructor may recommend to the dean of the college concerned that a student be dropped from a course with the grade of F. **Attendance** is taken at the beginning of class.

*As a side note: I really hate it when people are consistently late. It’s rude. Once or twice is fine…more than that, it reflects poorly on you and will be reflected in your grade. Punctuality, like written and verbal communication, is a major key to success in your professional life.*

**Excused absences** are given because of documented serious illness/serious personal difficulties, or excuses granted by the university administration. The important point is that you should let the instructor know in advance when you will miss a class. If advance notice is not possible, notify the professor as quickly as possible thereafter. As the university policy states, it is your responsibility to discuss this with the instructor.

**Unexcused Absences:** after a total of 1 week of unexcused absences (e.g. 3 in a MWF class, 2 in a TR class, 1 in a once-a-week class), you lose 1 percentage point per absence from your final grade. *Example: if you have a 90% average on all assignments at the end of the class, but have 5 unexcused absences, you’ll receive an 88% for the class (you get three unexcused absences “free,” but the ones after that “cost” you).*

According to the Faculty Handbook, 3.2.4, all **electronics** must be turned off prior to entering the classroom. The use of any electronic device during class work is strictly prohibited. This includes cell phones (including the clock feature), computers, and tablets. The only exceptions to this policy are at the express direction of the professor. **Each time** I catch you texting, I will mark you as **absent** for the day (see the “Unexcused Absences” policy, above). Students with **zero** texting-related absences will receive two percentage points added to their final grade. *Example: if you have an 88% average on all assignments at the end of the class, but have 0 texting-related absences, you’ll receive a 90% for the class.*

 All **exams** will be taken at the scheduled time only. The only exception to this is when arrangements are made with the instructor in advance about taking the exam at another time. Generally, changes in exam schedules will be made only because of illness, serious personal difficulties, or excuses granted by the university administration. Having several exams on the same day is not an acceptable excuse, except during finals, and then only when approved by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. If you do not make acceptable arrangements to alter the exam before the regularly scheduled exam, be prepared to present a written excuse from appropriate authorities. Missed exams without proper excuse will not be made up and will result in a grade of zero (0). Individual faculty will set the parameters of possible make-up assignments.

Please contact the **Director of Disability Support Services** if you believe you have a disability that might require a reasonable accommodation in order for you to perform well in this class. It is your responsibility to discuss any necessary accommodations with me well in advance of the assignment.

Notifications of **class cancellations** will be made through your campus e-mail account. If you do not monitor your Valpo e-mail, you may not get the message in a timely manner.

**To get help in this course**, the best place to start is to work with your instructor during office hours and ask your professor if there are any Help Sessions or department-level tutoring offered for this course. The next step is to use the Academic Success Center (ASC) online directory (valpo.edu/academicsuccess) or contact the ASC (academic.success@valpo.edu) to help point you in the right direction for academic support resources for this course. Valpo’s learning centers (Writing Center and the Academic Success Center) offer a variety of programs and services that provide group and individual learning assistance for many subject areas.

**Office hours** are an opportunity for you to talk with me without making an appointment. Any time you have a question on class material, upcoming assignments, or anything else, you should stop by my office during these posted times. If these times do not work, please contact me to set up an appointment.

The Political Science and International Relations Department has an assigned **librarian**; his name is **Prof. Mark Robison**. He can be reached at Mark.Robison@valpo.edu

Valparaiso University is a community that strongly promotes mutual respect among its diverse members. **The university does not tolerate discrimination** on the basis of race, color, gender, age, disability, national origin or ancestry, sexual orientation, religion or other characteristics. This policy governs every aspect of university life, including the classroom.

# One other thing:

**Grade Discussions:** By law, I am not allowed to discuss your grade/class progress your parents. If you would like to give permission for profs to discuss your grades with your parents, please see the Registrar’s office; they can tell you how to set this up in DataVU. If you do not provide permission, I will refer all questions about your grade to you. Also, federal law prevents me from handing your graded papers to a friend to return to you. If you want your paper, you'll have to come get it yourself!

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus as I see fit

Course schedule (until we get behind and/or I have to update it):

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| **Week starting:** | **M** | **W** | **F** |
|  | - | Syllabus/Introductions*Fun for everyone* | Read: Ch. 1  |
| Theory & Ideology How do you study politics? | Continue Ch1Read Paxton & Hughes Ch 9 (on BB) | Read Ch. 15 |  |
| States & Governments | Read Ch. 2**In Class:** Collective action exercise | Continue Ch. 2 | Read: Paxton & Hughes, Ch 1(Does the “social contract” encompass everyone?) |
| Elements of Society | Read Plato & Marx – posted on Soomo, Ch. 3. Part 1 | Make sure you’ve signed up for a paper topic (film or novel) | **Library Day – CCLIR 261A** |
| Power, Legitimacy & Authority | Read Ch. 3 | Continue Ch. 3**In class:** *Stasi* (film) | **Test 1 handed out in class** |
| Government’s Role in the Economy | **Test 1 due in class & via email**Read: Ch. 4 | Continue Ch. 4 | **Read:** Bajtelsmit, V. L., & Bernasek, A. (1996).(On BB)(Differences between women & men in investing)**In class: Redistribution exercise (laptops & tablets welcome)** |
| The Economy & Whatnot | Finish Ch 4 | In Class: Bonds | Finish Bonds |
| Structures & Such | Read: Ch. 5 and True (2013) and Bekoe, D., & Parajon, C. (2007) (on BB) | Continue Ch. 5**In class: Rebuilding Myappia –** **Steps 1 & 2**  | Finish Ch. 5**In Class: Rebuilding Myappia – Step 3** |
| The Executive | Read: Ch. 6 | Continue Ch. 6 | **In Class: Rebuilding Myappia – Step 4** |
| Legislatures | Read Ch. 7 and Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer (2012), Ch 2 (On BB) | Continue Ch7& Read Ch. 10, pgs 256-258 only | **In Class: Rebuilding Myappia – Step 5** |
| Bureaucracy | Read Ch. 8 & Wilkins, V. M., & Keiser, L. R. (2006) (Representative Bureaucracy – on BB) | Continue Ch. 8**In class: “You be the Bureaucrat”** | **In class: Policy Implementation Sim – “Smoke-Free Myappia”****Test2 handed out in class** |
| Courts | **Test 2 due in class & via email**Read Ch. 9 | Continue Ch. 9**In class:** Judicial Review exercise |  |
| International Politics | Read Ch. 12 & Chant & Sweetman (2012 – Fixing women or fixing the world) | Continue Ch. 12 | Finish Ch. 12 |
| International Law & Human Rights | Read Red Cross & Human Rights handouts (on BB) andIn class: Are rights universal or relative | Continue Law & Rights | Finish law & rightsIn class: Artillery Exercise (IHL) |
| Media & Political Culture | Read Ch. 11 | Read Ch. 14In class: Whale Rider  | **Finish Whale Rider - (Discuss how Maori political culture excludes women & the impact on minority women in NZ)****Final exam handed out in class****Paper Due in class & via email** |
| 5/2 | **Final due in class & via email** |  | GOOD LUCK WITH FINALS! ☺  |

1. I am in the office most days from around 8:30 am until around 4 pm, though I obviously leave to teach, go to meetings, etc. You are welcome to pop in any time my door is OPEN. When our doors are closed, please do not disturb the faculty! (We get crabby.) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Constitution of the Valparaiso University Honor System, Article 1, Section B. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)