

**BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE [BMCC]
INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS
POL 110 -1600**

Fall 2018

Tuesdays and Thursdays 4- 5:15pm

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Office hour: by appointment only

SYLLABUS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

DESCRIPTION

This class involves students in observation and critical analysis of political affairs. Topics and themes will include both American and global perspectives and both contemporary and historical cases. The class introduces a range of approaches to the study of politics, such as empirical research, quantitative analysis, theoretical questioning, and the examination of literary or artistic works. Central concepts will include politics, power, government, conflict, and justice.

"... why am I so interested in politics? If I were to answer you very simply I would say this: why shouldn't I be interested? That is to say, what blindness, what deafness, what density of ideology would have to weigh me down to prevent me from being interested in what is probably the most crucial subject to our existence, that is to say the society in which we live, the economic relations in which it functions, and the system of power which defines the regular forms and regular permissions and prohibitions of our conduct? The essence of our life consists, after all of the political functioning of the society in which we find ourselves." - Michel Foucault.

Learning Objectives: In today's world, it is critical that the students have a solid comprehension of government and politics. The objective of this course is:

- 1) To familiarize students with a framework of the various fields and topic areas in Political Science including American politics, comparative politics, international politics and political philosophy.
- 2) Students examine the origins of our political values, analyze political ideas, theories, ideologies, systems and policy, and then investigate political problems on a national and global level.
- 3) This course is designed to promote citizenship and engagement in political issues and events. The uninformed citizen is the easiest one for political leaders and government to take advantage of.

ZERO TEXT OER COURSE

1] Intro to Politics

Analyzing Politics: An **Introduction to Political**. (2009). Science, Fourth Edition. Ellen Grigsby. Executive Editor: Carolyn Merrill. Editorial Assistant: Katherine Hayes. - Cost: FREE PDF download. <http://www.nicat-mammadli.narod.ru/b1.html/b35.pdf>

2] Journal articles and other resources

Journal articles, web / video links will be posted on BB for use as in class discussion.

3] Alapo, R. **Generation X: The Role of Culture on the Leadership Styles of Women in Leadership Positions**. ASTA Publications. Published Feb. 2016. ISBN: 978 – 1 - 934947 – 95 – 1. Available on Amazon / Barnes and Noble - Book: \$19.99, ebook: \$9.99. [This is not required but a resource from the instructor].

RESOURCES

Some of the required course readings will be available on Electronic Reserve. These are indicated on the course schedule with the abbreviation “Eres”. To access these readings, go to reserves.bmcc.cuny.edu and when prompted, use the password_____.

GRADING

Attendance / Participation	25%
Quiz - Short answer essay	25%
Midterm Exam: Response / Research paper 1	25%
Final Exam: Response / Research paper 2 and PPT presentation	25%
Total	100%

Grading Criteria for Papers

Purpose	15%
Content	35%
Organization	15%
Grammar, Spelling, Writing Mechanics	10%
References	15%
APA	10%
TOTAL	100%

This is not a writing intensive course. You are however expected to be able to write at the college level. Your major writing assignments in this class will include reading responses, observation reports, and essays as follows:

ATTENDANCE – 12.5%

You are expected to attend every class as schedule. If you will be absent, please let the professor know by sending an email to her bmcc.cuny.edu account and in case of emergency, an excused absence will be allowed. Please bring in a doctor's note or a letter from your academic advisor. We will observe BMCC's attendance policy as stated on page the student handbook:

The maximum number of absence hours is limited to one or more class hour than the contact hours as indicated in the BMCC College handbook. For example, you may be enrolled in a four hour class that meets four times a week. You are allowed five hours of absence, NOT five days. IN the case of excessive absence, the instructor has the option to lower the grade or assign an "F" or "WU" grade.

CLASS PARTICATION – 12.5%

You are required to participate in class discussions as much as possible. Come to class with questions. Listen to your classmates and respond to their ideas. Take lots of notes. Give your full attention to in-class activities.

QUIZ

Short answer essays: will be drawn from some of the questions at the back of each chapter including journal articles, films, and other lectures. Questions will be posted on BB.

MIDTERM EXAM

Response / Research Papers 1: There will be 2 short response essays / research papers (750 words double spaced 3 typed written pages excluding title and reference pages). The particular topic and due date will be discussed later on during the semester – see the back of this syllabus for possible research paper topics – Intro and preliminary findings of issues related to the topic (s) selected. You will add to this paper in the 2nd response / research paper for the final exam.

FINAL EXAM

Response / Research paper 2 and PPT presentation: The 1st response paper will be the midterm exam. The 2nd response paper, and the powerpoint oral presentation will be the final exam. All exams will cover assigned readings, class lectures, discussions, trips and films.

Exactly what you write is up to you. You might want to explain what you think the passage means, and why it matters. Show what (if anything) makes it hard to understand, ask questions about it, share what personal experiences or previous knowledge the passage made you think of, or explore a problem or issue that the passage raises. A good reading response will honestly reflect your own approach to a reaction to the readings and will allow you to think on the paper, as a preparation to our class discussions.

It is required that each person make a presentation during the semester on any subject related to the course readings, observation trips, and other class materials and content etc. Each presentation will be 15 minutes summarizing both response papers 1 and 2.

OBSERVATION REPORTS (optional) – Extra credit

These series of assignments offers an opportunity for you to observe political life in around New York City through the city’s public spaces, government institutions, and citizen organizations such as the Mayor’s Office, City Hall, Borough presidents office, Community Board meetings, Courts, United Nations etc (other places of interest will be discussed). We will visit several places together as a class to observe “real life” politics in action. **You will make a presentation in class and write a 2 page summary.**

No makeup exams will be given unless documentation under the college guidelines is provided. NO INCOMPLETE GRADES GIVEN AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER – PLAN AHEAD.

*This syllabus is a rough outline of the course work we will be exploring this semester. It might change as we get inspired by a particular topic over another.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY PASSING THIS CLASS

Conduct yourself in a courteous and scholarly manner. Engage actively in class discussions, and at observation events, Submit your assignments on time. Arrive early to class. No eating and talking to others. No cell phone use. Maintain a One mic rule.

WRITING INTENSIVE (WI)

This is not a writing intensive course that fulfils the WI requirement for graduation with a 10 -12 page writing assignment. Please double check with your advisor that you have registered for the correct course. The WI program has issued the following description of BMCC WI classes:

Writing intensive courses pay special attention to the developing critical reading, writing, and analytic skills to prepare students for college-level coursework in general. Both informal and formal writing will be designed to maximize your understanding of the subject matter.

DO YOU WORK WITH INTEGRITY

Here is a BMCC statement regarding the college policy on plagiarism and academic integrity:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words, or artistic / scientific / technical work as one's own creation. A student who copies or paraphrases published or on-line material, or another person's research, without properly identifying the source (s) is committing **plagiarism**.

Plagiarism violates the ethical and academic standards of our college. Students will be held responsible for such violations, even when unintentional. To avoid unintended plagiarism, students should consult with their instructors about when and how to document their sources. The library also has both print and digital guides designed to help students cite sources correctly.

Plagiarism carries a range of penalties commensurate with severity of the infraction. The instructor may for example, require the work to be redone, reduce the course grade, fail the student, or refer the case to the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee (see Article 15.4 of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees). Cases referred to that committee could result in suspension or expulsion from the college. Please cite all sources appropriately. The writing center is available for your to consult and has a variety of options available to help students with their writing.

Office of Accessibility

Please note the BMCC policy on academic adjustments for students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodation or academic adjustments for this course must contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. BMCC is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students.

SmartThinking

Online tutoring, writing services, and homework help is available at <http://www.smarthinking.com>

OFFICE HOURS

I am NOT required to hold office hours this semester but can be available for an hour each week in Social Sciences Dept. Adjunct office room N658. I will be happy to go over material or any concerns relating to syllabus content. I am available to meet on **Tuesdays from 3pm – 4pm** (Tentative) and 15 minutes before or after class if you would like to discuss anything from lectures to assignments. Please send me an email if you need any type of assistance. You can always send me a text or let me know after class. I usually arrive around and stay for about 15 minutes after class in case students have any questions or concerns. I can also schedule you for a session at the tutoring / writing center if you need further assistance.

CLASS SCHEDULE

POWER

WEEK 1

Introduction: Read: Grigsby chapter 1, 2.

WEEK 2

Key concepts in Political Science: Power, State and Nation

Read: Grigsby Ch. 3, “bases and types of power” - Alapo ch. 1

Anastasios Syrianos articles: 1) “How to make your government do the right thing” 2); “How to control politicians and their exercise of political power”.

WEEK 3

Political Ideologies: Liberalism, Conservative, Socialism. Read: Grigsby chapter 5.

WEEK 4

Political Ideologies 2: Fascism, Totalitarianism

Read: Grigsby chapter 6

WEEK 5

Political Ideologies 3: Feminism, Environmentalism, Post Modernism

Read: Grigsby Chapter 7

QUIZ (post responses on BB).

GOVERNMENT

WEEK 6

Government Systems: Democracy and Non - Democracy

Read: Grigsby Chapter 8

What is Democracy? **Read:** article on “meaning of democracy”.

“The 9 fundamental principles common to all democracies”.

WEEK 7

Interest Groups, Political Parties and Elections

Read: Grigsby Chapter 9

Article on “Interest Groups and Political Parties / Voting and Elections.”

WEEK 8

Interest Groups, Political Parties and Elections (cont.)

Read: Grigsby Chapter 9

Article on “Political Parties”.

WEEK 9

Interest Groups, Political Parties and Elections (cont.)

Read: Grigsby Chapter 9

Article on “Voting and Elections”

MIDTERM EXAM (post response / research paper on BB).

WEEK 10

Governing Democracies: Executives, Legislatures and Judiciaries

Read: Grigsby Chapter 10

Article on “The Presidential and Parliamentary types of government; Systems of Government: Parliamentarism and Presidentialism”.

POLITICS

WEEK 11

International Relations: The United Nations

Read: “About the United Nations” and “UN Charter” and “Main organs of the UN”.

CONFLICT

WEEK 12

Contemporary Issues in Politics: Global conflict

Read: “Conflict theory by Karl Marx”.

“Economic and Political Causes of Conflict: An Overview and Some Policy Implications”.

“Global issues overview”.

JUSTICE

WEEK 13

Contemporary Issue in Politics: Global Justice

Read: “Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to Transform our World”.

WEEK 14

Civic and Political Action

Read: “Young People’s Civic and Political Engagement and Global Citizenship” (Brown and Sterwart, 2015).

“Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Global Competency for an Inclusive World” (Paris, 2016).

WEEK 15

Review for Final Exams.

RESPONSE / RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS

Choose one of the following topics and answer IN 3 PAGES the questions posed. You should make use of these questions as the starting point to define your essay topic and thesis statement. Make sure to include and discuss references to course material and overall class content from the reading materials. **See page Grisby page 15 for select topics in Political Science that you can choose from or select any of the topics below.**

1) Political socialization is a very important process that creates and conveys the political culture of a society. Examine one of the agents of political socialization for the way in which it operates and the effects it may have in the country of your choice and keeping the following in mind when responding: What are some political ideologies that exist in some parties and identify some ways in which you think your life would be different if you lived in a high-income versus a low-income country. How do you think these differences would change the way you view politics or political socialization? How would these differences influence the types of governmental policies you would like to see enacted? Ch. 6, 7, 8.

2) What are the different functions of political parties in different political systems? This answer should cover the roles of parties in a variety of political systems and discuss the positive and (if any) negative sides of the functions. In your response, include what the roles or functions of interest groups are on political parties. Do they complement or undermine political parties and the institutional channels for political decision-making? Are they too powerful? Why or why not? Ch. 9, 10.

3) What is the definition of democracy? What is implied by this definition? That is, what does democracy presuppose? Would you rank the United States as high, low, or medium on a democracy scale? Why or why not? Compare your previous response with what the definition of a nondemocratic government is? Five components of a nondemocracy are discussed in this chapter. Identify and discuss these five components. Give an example of a country illustrating each component. Ch. 8, 9.

4) What are the main roles that the United Nations plays in international politics? To what extent is it successful, and how should that success be gauged? Keep in mind that you should identify the main bodies of the UN and their legal powers (here you must choose which ones to discuss). Analyze the way in which the political context of the UN's operation affects the use of its powers. In your response, keep the following in mind: what can reasonably be expected? What are the arguments in favor of viewing the UN as an effective organization? What are the arguments against this position? Ch. 11.

5) What are some Contemporary Issues in Politics? Ch. 12.

For these questions, you may wish to analyze issues such as:

1) Media and politics (“fake news” in the era of Trump and its implications on US politics)

2) Economics and Politics (intergovernmental organizations, unequal access to world resources, poverty and global issues, justice issues, globalization, immigration).

3) Gender equality, climate change etc see weeks 11 – 13 class content.

4) Identify three ways in which you think your life would be different if you lived in a high-income versus a low-income country. How do you think these differences would change the way you view politics? How would these differences influence the types of governmental policies you would like to see enacted?

5) Democracy and due process: example kavanaugh senate hearing and confirmation etc.

