

PSCI 130: Introduction to Politics
Exemplar Syllabus #1

Instructor:

E-Mail:

Office:

Office Hours:

Phone:

Blackboard Website:

Foundational Studies Credit:

Students who successfully complete “Introduction to Politics” will meet the 2010 Foundational Studies Social and Behavioral Science requirement.

Foundational Studies and “Introduction to Politics”:

Beyond preparing you for your profession, a central goal of higher education is to assist you in understanding the world in which you live and to help you navigate it effectively. One way in which to do this is to master different “ways of knowing.” The primary learning objective of “Introduction to Politics” is to introduce you to the *social science* way of knowing or how individual choices and/or evolving social institutions affect human decision-making.

Since “Introduction to Politics” is offered by the department of Political Science the course content and the social science methodologies discussed will be those relevant to understanding politics, political institutions, and political behavior. That being said, upon successful completion of this course you will have a sound understanding of the social science way of knowing--more broadly understood--and how to apply the knowledge you have gained and the skills you have developed to contemporary social issues.

Upon successful completion of this course, you will also be able to articulate the ways in which Political Science is informed by Philosophy, History, Sociology, Psychology, and Economics and the ways in which it informs these disciplines as well as other disciplines (Organizational Business, Nursing, Life Sciences, Allied Health, etc.).

Course Description:

Core concepts—e.g. power, influence, authority, values, justice, the state, democracy, and authoritarianism—relevant to **thinking critically about both normative and empirical questions central to human life**. As one of the courses in the FS 2010 social and behavioral sciences category, this course is designed to provide understanding and skills useful both in other class work and in daily life. Student participation is emphasized and the lecture approach generally avoided.

Foundational Studies Program Outcomes:

Taking **“Introduction to Politics,” as well as meeting other requirements in Foundational Studies**, will help ensure that upon graduating from Indiana State University you will have the knowledge base and skills to be successful professionals, consumers, and citizens (SEE the General Education website <http://www.indstate.edu/gened>) for a listing of the Foundational Studies program objectives).

Specifically, this course will move students towards competence in the following Foundational Studies outcomes. **This course meets the Foundational Studies Outcomes listed below and only the Foundational Studies Outcomes listed below:**

- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems;
- ✓ Critically evaluate the ideas of others;
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship;
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context;
- ✓ Express yourself effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

Foundations Studies Learning Objectives for Social and Behavioral Sciences:

As noted above, when you successfully complete this course, you will be able to do the following:

- ✓ Describe how individual choices and/or evolving social institutions affect human decision-making;
- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome;
- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues; and
- ✓ Explain how the specific discipline informs and contributes to other disciplines.

Skill and Applied Learning Requirements:

Every Foundational Studies designated course must assist students in developing and improving their critical thinking, information literacy, and written communication skills. In this class, you will complete assignments that will help you to develop these skills. These will include weekly application assignments as well as a paper assignment where you will have the opportunity to write a first draft of a paper, receive feedback, make changes, and submit a final draft.

Course Information and Policies:

Attendance: Study after study report that students who attend class regularly do better than student who miss frequently. Since this is the case, I will take attendance each class period. You may miss four times throughout the semester without penalty. It is not necessary to explain the reason for your absence. I will not make a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Once you have exceeded the four class limit, you will begin to lose attendance points. If you miss twenty percent (1/5) of the scheduled courses you will earn an F out of the course.

Participation: You cannot meet the objectives of this course by being a passive learner. To develop critical thinking skills and information literacy skills—two of the required skill and applied learning requirements of this course—you must do. That is you must engage in active learning (e.g., write and re-write, research, assess the quality of your sources, and conduct better more refined research, and apply that which you have learned to real world scenarios).

Sycamore Standard: Students at Indiana State University are expected to accept certain personal responsibilities that constitute the "standard" for behavior in a community of scholars.

As a student at Indiana State University:

I will practice personal and academic integrity; I will commit my energies to the pursuit of truth, learning, and scholarship; I will foster an environment conducive to the personal and academic accomplishment of all students; I will avoid activities that promote bigotry or intolerance; I will choose associations and define my relationships with others based on respect for individual rights and human dignity; I will conduct my life as a student in a manner that brings honor to me and to the University Community; I will discourage actions or behaviors by others that are contrary to these standards.

Adopted by the Indiana State University Student Government Association April 17, 2002

Civility: I expect that you will treat me and your classmates with respect. Disrespectful behavior includes but is not limited to distracting side-bar conversation, using technology (cell phone, pda, laptop) for non-class purposes, and rude actions or verbal responses. Moreover, since discussion is a key component of this class, you are expected to listen closely to what people say and to formulate your responses with the understanding that reasonable people can disagree.

Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism): In academia, our ideas are our currency. Since this is the case, we make sure that we recognize appropriately the work (or ideas) of others that we use and we expect them to do the same when they use our ideas. You, too, are expected to give credit when using another person's ideas. When writing a paper, you must use correctly either the MLA or APA citation style. If you intentionally plagiarize (falsify or contrive sources, lift text directly from a book or website, submit another person's work as your own, etc.), you will earn an F out of the course and I will report your conduct to Student Judicial.

Laptop Required for Course: Irregular Usage: For the purposes of this course, it will be assumed that you are in compliance with the mandatory laptop policy of the University. You will be expected to bring your laptop and be ready to use it for those class periods noted (below/above). Usage of the laptop must conform to the provisions of this course as laid out in this syllabus as well as the Code of Student Conduct.

Academic Freedom: "Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject."

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm>

ADA Policy: "Indiana State University seeks to provide effective services and accommodation for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, you are required to register with Disability Support Services at the beginning of the semester. Contact the Director of Student Support Services. The telephone number is 237-2301 and the office is located in Gillum Hall, Room 202A. The Director will ensure that you receive all the additional help that Indiana State offers. If you will require assistance during an emergency evacuation, notify your instructor immediately. Look for evacuation procedures posted in your classrooms."

Required Reading

Reading Packet (selections will vary depending upon the instructor)

Electronic Sources (e.g., New York Times, Washington Post—will vary depending upon the instructor)

Possible text books selections (**The text book will vary depending upon the instructor—however the instructor must select a textbook which exposes students to a wide variety of view points, providing the students ample opportunity to critically evaluate the ideas via discussion, application assignments, and examinations**)

Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, Principles and Practices of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings (\$44.05)

Kenneth Mingue, Politics: A Very Short Introduction (\$9.32)

Trevor Munroe, An Introduction to Politics: Lectures for First Year Student (\$20.00)

Course Requirements:

Attendance	50
Participation	100
EXAMS (3) (100 points x 2)	300
Exam # 1 (approximately 5 th Week)	
Exam #2 (approximately 10 th Week)	
Exam #3 (Week of Finals)	
Weekly “Applications” (20 points x 10)	200
First Draft Paper #1	50
Due Week #8	
Returned by Week #10	
Final Draft Paper #1	100
Due Week #12	
Final Project	200
Written Component (100)	
Presentation Component (100)	

The Purpose of the Assignments as They Relate to the Foundational Studies Outcomes, Objectives, and Skill and Applied Learning Requirements

Participation: **Your oral communication skills** will improve as you participate in class discussion. They will also improve as you **learn to critically (although civilly) evaluate the ideas of others**. Participation in class discussion, as well as class activities, will engage you in **active learning** which will help you to better understand the course material—in this case—the **knowledge and methodologies associated with the social science “way of knowing.”**

Exams: Each exam will be comprised of two sections: one which includes true or false, fill in the blank, multiple choice, and short answer questions and the second which includes an in-or-out-of-the-class essay. You will benefit in two ways from this structure: (1) you will have an opportunity to develop your exam taking skills across different exam modes, and (2) **the written component** of the exam will help you to further develop your written communication skills as well as **synthesize, integrate, and apply the social science knowledge you have acquired**.

Weekly Application Assignments: Through these assignments you will have the chance to **locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems** and **critically evaluate the ideas of others**, as well as **apply the social science knowledge and methodologies** you have acquired. **Sometimes, I will provide you with a text and (after you have critically read it) ask you to write a one page paper that critically evaluates it.** Other times, I will ask you **to locate the information yourself** (e.g. locate specific polling information) and then critically evaluate it.

Paper: Writing is a process—not simply an outcome. To improve the quality of your writing, **you must be willing to write an initial draft, receive feedback, revise your paper based upon that feedback, and resubmit your paper for final review.** To facilitate the process of writing, **I will either ask you to respond to a text or solve a problem-based inquiry.** Either way, the writing assignment will require you to move beyond the descriptive to the **analytical**. To do well on this assignment, you will have to demonstrate competence in the following areas: **writing, critical thinking, and information literacy.**

Final Project: This is your summative assignment. That is, through the final project you will demonstrate the degree to which you have mastered the **Foundational Studies learning outcomes, learning objectives and skill and applied learning requirements for this course.** The final project includes two components: (1) a paper and (2) an individual or group presentation. You (or your group) will select a **contemporary issue to dissect (critically interrogate) through the lens of social science** (that is **using your acquired social science knowledge and appropriate social science methodologies**). In addition to analyzing the problem, you will **provide a strategy for solving the problem.**

To do well on this assignment, you will have to demonstrate competence in the following areas: **oral and written communication, critical thinking, and information literacy.**

Grading Scale:

970-1000	A+	770-799	C+	F	599 and below
940-969	A	740-769	C		
900-939	A-	700-739	C-		
870-899	B+	670-699	D+		
840-869	B	640-669	D		
800-839	B-	600-639	D-		

Please note that even if you attend regularly, you may still earn a deficient grade if the quality of your work is poor (deficient).

Please also note, I will assign an incomplete grade only if you have been attending regularly and have completed at least seventy-five percent of the assigned work.

Course Outline:

WEEK 1: Introduction: What is a social science? How can you better understand the world by better understanding this particular “way of knowing”? Which social or behavioral science disciplines inform political science (e.g., **sociology, psychology, and economics)? Which social or behavioral science disciplines does political science inform (e.g., **sociology and economics**)? What disciplines outside of the social or behavioral sciences does political science inform (e.g., **history, organizational business, life sciences, allied health, nursing etc.**) ?**

An entry point to this discussion will be the October 19, 2009 New York Times article on NSF funding for Political Science research (Field Study: Just How Relevant is Political Science?)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/20/books/20poli.html>

The following political science methodologies will be introduced and discussed more fully in following weeks

Institutionalism (historicism, structural functionalism)

Behavioralism (rational choice, political psychology, small group theory)

Neo-institutionalism (normative political science, sociological jurisprudence)

- ✓ Explain how the specific discipline informs and contributes to other disciplines.

WEEK 2: What are the methods for understanding institutional influence and political behavior (The Science of Politics)?

Quantitative Approaches (e.g, surveys, computer generated models, statistical analysis)

Qualitative Approaches (e.g., case studies, comparative analysis)

Assignment # 1

- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome;

WEEK 3: Where can I find good quality information: Sources of Political Information (Information Literacy--The Key to being an Informed Citizen)?

Assignment # 2

- ✓ Improve information literacy skills
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems;
- ✓ **Critically evaluate the ideas of others;**

WEEK 4: Why do I view the “political” world the way I do (Political Socialization)?

Assignment # 3

- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context

WEEK 5: The “uneducated” masses: How do they know what I don’t know (Political Knowledge)?

EXAM #1

- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome
- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues

WEEK 6: The ABC’s of Institutions (Executive, Legislative, Judicial)

Assignment # 4

First Draft of Paper

- ✓ Describe how individual choices and/or **evolving social institutions** affect human decision-making
- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome

WEEK 7: How do the “rules of the game” affect behavior and outcomes (Institutions Matter)?

Assignment # 5

- ✓ Describe how individual choices and/or **evolving social institutions** affect human decision-making
- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome

WEEK 8: How do individuals and groups affect the “rules of the game” and outcomes (Individuals Matter)?

Assignment # 6

- ✓ Describe how individual choices and/or evolving social institutions affect human decision-making
- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome

WEEK 9: Contemporary Issue (Instructor’s/Students’ Choice)

Possible Topic: Students may be asked to locate these items normally associated with politics in settings not normally associated with politics like families, schools, social organizations, clubs, organized athletics, clinics, hospitals, etc.

Assignment # 7

- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems
- ✓ **Critically evaluate the ideas of others (through readings, class discussion, and application exercises)**
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship

WEEK 10: Contemporary Issue (Instructor's/Students' Choice)

Possible Topic: Students may be challenged to determine the lessons that emerge from the presence of politics in specific social settings, and what these lessons tell us about ourselves as humans, social creatures, and cultural agents.

EXAM #2

- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems
- ✓ **Critically evaluate the ideas of others (through readings, class discussion, and application exercises)**
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship

WEEK 11: Contemporary Issue (Instructor's/Students' Choice)

Possible Topic: Activism/Campaigning/Civic Agency (Experiential Politics)

Assignment # 8

- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems
- ✓ **Critically evaluate the ideas of others (through readings, class discussion, and application exercises)**
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship

WEEK 12: Contemporary Issue (Instructor's/Students' Choice)

Possible Topic: Negative Ads: How do political advertisements affect my understanding of politics (Political Communication)?

Assignment # 9

Final Draft of Paper

- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems
- ✓ **Critically evaluate the ideas of others (through readings, class discussion, and application exercises)**
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship

WEEK13: Contemporary Issue (Instructor's/Students' Choice)

Possible Topic: + 3/-3 Degrees of confidence: What do those polls mean (The Social Science of Polling)?

Assignment # 10

- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems
- ✓ **Critically evaluate the ideas of others (through readings, class discussion, and application exercises)**
- ✓ Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship

WEEK 14: Student Presentations—Written Component

Group or Individual Presentations

- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems
- ✓ Critically evaluate the ideas of others
- ✓ Express yourself effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing

WEEK 15: Student Presentations—Written Component (Study Week)

Group or Individual Presentations

- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues
- ✓ Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems
- ✓ Critically evaluate the ideas of others
- ✓ Express yourself effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

WEEK 16: Exam #3 (Finals Week)

Exam #3

- ✓ Describe how individual choices and/or evolving social institutions affect human decision-making;
- ✓ Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome;
- ✓ Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues; and
- ✓ Explain how the specific discipline informs and contributes to other disciplines

Additional Possible Topics for Application Assignments

Students may be asked to identify and explore things normally associated with politics like authority, legitimacy, power, who gets what when and how, influence, rule making, and governance.

Students might select paper presentation topics that explore political phenomenon in non-traditional political settings like prisons, religious organizations, and the theater.

Students might elect to visit sites to witness first hand political activity in a variety of non-political settings like recreational centers, public gatherings, and official ceremonies.

Students may be challenged to explore specific societal actors like the teacher, mother, clergy, or policeman to understand their roles as maintainers or change agents.

Students might be challenged to examine socially constructed gender roles and other socially constructed roles like race in America to understand how they perpetuate and reinforce political hierarchy and hegemony.

Students might be asked to explore and discuss these and other issues in small group breakout sessions.

Students may be encouraged to engage in interviews, observations, and field work related to their academic major to identify the political aspects of “non-political” social settings.

Students may be encouraged to explore systematically certain literary, social, or ideological traditions for their apparent political impacts.

Paper presentation Guidelines

The paper presentation will be graded on the basis of the following 3 criteria. (1) The degree to which the paper offers a compelling argument, in the view of the instructor, (2) The extent to which the paper adheres to the written guidelines specified below, and (3) the quality of writing displayed in the paper.

The first criterion, the degree to which the paper offers a compelling argument will be measured by the logic of the arguments presented, the strength of the evidence provided, and the quality and quality of the research materials used. The second and third criteria will be measured by the degree to which the paper adheres to the written guidelines listed below. All papers must be presented at their regularly scheduled time.

1. Select a topic in the form of a question from the list of approved topics provided.
2. List on page 1, the 10 strongest pros (in sentence form) to your paper's question.
3. List on page 2, the 10 strongest cons (in sentence form) to your paper's question.
4. Elaborate and discuss on pages 3-7 key pros and cons identified on pages 1 & 2.
5. Present and support your position, pro or con, on your paper's question, on pages 8-10.
6. Your paper must be 10-pages long, PLUS an endnote and work-cited or bibliography page.
7. Endnotes, not footnotes or in-text notes must be used. Examples of endnotes are found throughout your *Global Issues* textbook at the end of each chapter.
8. A Notes and Bibliography page must be added to your 10-page paper. A sample of both are included in the sample paper(s) posted on blackboard. Your bibliography (which is distinctly different from your endnotes page) must include at least ten sources.
9. Website information can be found at the end of each chapter of your text (e.g., p. 24).
10. Please remember to number and staple all the pages of your paper.
11. The topics must not be modified or changed without prior permission.
12. All pages must be type-written and double spaced, using 12 point font.
13. All major writing styles are acceptable. Please do not use Wikipedia or Webster.
14. A well-written paper that uses good grammar is required.
15. No electronic submissions please. Only hard copies of the paper will be accepted.
16. All papers must be presented at their scheduled time. A schedule will be provided.
17. Students must not assume that their scheduled presentations dates will be changed.
18. Students who fail to present their papers may receive a 0 for the paper presentation.
19. Written papers are due at the time of the scheduled in class presentation.
20. No paper will be presented or accepted after the end of the paper presentation period.
21. Students are expected to remain after their presentations for questions and answers.
22. Papers that fail to include the above items will be returned to the student, ungraded.

Students who adhere to all the above criteria shall receive an "A" for the assignment.