

POLITICAL SCIENCE 105-05–SVL–POLITICAL ISSUES–SPRING 2008

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Office Hours: MWF 8:00-9:00/TR 8-9:30

Texts: Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impacts–9th Edition--Baradat

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues–15th Edition--McKenna and Feingold

This course will deal with a variety of political terms and concepts. It is, in effect, an introduction to "political science" as opposed to an introduction to American Government (PSC 100). As do all courses that meet the "Philosophical, Religious, Ethical Perspectives" requirement here at UNCG, this course is more philosophical and conceptual than others. Therefore, we will spend time discussing the basic, underlying concepts of all political systems (power, the state, the individual, politics, etc.) as well as the underlying concepts of specific political systems (Socialism, Marxism, Anarchism, Democracy, etc.)

However, I will attempt, both in the lectures/discussions and through the use of Taking Sides, to draw these concepts and theories into our current experience. There is intrinsic value in knowledge, especially knowledge that underpins our political world. However, I will attempt to make this relevant to you and, frankly, will expect you to do the same. I expect us to work together to accomplish this. You are expected to read all assigned material prior to class, because reading the material assigned and having a willingness to discuss and ask questions will make the course more interesting and stimulating for you. Therefore, it is required that you come to class prepared and involved. Hopefully, you will feel comfortable discussing issues and opinions. Class discussion and pop quizzes will reveal to me whether or not you have done the readings and will reward both those who come to class as well as those who have done the readings. My goal is to make class time as interesting as possible while adhering to the utmost necessity-that I both present to you and help you discover relevant and accurate information about some of the political philosophies of the past and present and how they relate to your present and future.

In this course, we will also use a third tool to “bring the material home.” As you may know, this is a service-learning course. Some of you are probably wondering what that means. Here is a working definition:

Service learning links community action and academic study so that each strengthens the other. Students, faculty and community partners collaborate to enable students to address community needs, initiate social change, build effective relationships, enhance academic skills and develop civic literacy. Service learning encourages critical consideration of the ethical dimensions of community engagement.

A student engaged in service learning will volunteer, in a “hands-on” way, with a nonprofit or government agency that is actively working to improve the lives of people who have needs of some sort. You will work a minimum of 25 hours spread out over the semester. You have four weeks to locate your site and begin your work, so this requirement will be spread out over approximately ten weeks. It is NOT acceptable for your assignment to be accomplished in 2-3 long days. You must have at least 8 work sessions with your program/agency. Part of the experience is for you to have regular contact with individuals working for one of these agencies as well as you having regular contact with those they are attempting to serve. You will have significant choice in picking your service learning site. However, you MUST work with an agency or program that works with individuals with needs, whether they are physical, educational, emotional or financial. And, you MUST work directly with those individuals who have the need. In other words, being a fund-raiser or a file clerk for an appropriate agency will NOT count. You may NOT work with a for-profit entity.

Hopefully, this course will allow you to develop in three ways. As a “Philosophical, Religious, Ethical Perspectives” course, you should learn about some of the basic political philosophies that have impacted our world in the past as well as today. Using the Taking Sides text, you will have the opportunity to apply those philosophies to significant issues of our day. Finally, you will work, on a limited basis, side by side with those who are attempting to solve, or at least work on, the issues of our day as well as be exposed to those who live in those issues on a daily basis.

Specifically, by the end of the course you should be able to:

- 1.) utilize a common set of definitions relating to the political world so as to better understand that world as well as facilitate issue discussions in class;
- 2.) be able to name and identify the basic principles of a number of significant political philosophies;
- 3.) be able to name and understand the background of a number of influential political philosophers;
- 4.) read, understand and discuss opposing viewpoints on many of the critical political issues of today;
- 5.) understand some of the difficulties faced by those working in an organization which attempts to improve the lives of people;
- 6.) understand some of the difficulties faced by the clients of an organization which attempts to improve the lives of people;
- 7.) process in verbal and written form items 5 & 6;
- 8.) successfully complete tests which require discrete knowledge (definitions and/or short answers) as well as discrete knowledge combined with larger thoughts and bodies of material (essays).

The grade structure of this class will have five components. First, there will be two tests. Each will cover a set of political philosophers and philosophies. These tests will be largely essay in nature.

Second, there will be three short papers. There are specific technical instructions for these papers noted later on this syllabus. Deviations will result in significant grade penalties. Papers will be graded on style, punctuation, spelling and grammar as well as substance. The first and second papers’ topic will require you to examine a Taking Sides issue in light of one of an assigned set of philosophers. These papers will NOT involve your opinion on the issue. You will have to examine the issue through the eyes of another and explain why you believe THEY would hold a particular opinion. The third paper’s topic will be different in nature but will require you to incorporate your service-learning experience. The written assignments should improve your ability to read, analyze, and write, and encourage you to read and think about the issues of the day with more regularity and insight.

The third component will be class participation/attendance. Because some are more comfortable with class discussion than others, this will not simply be a measurement of who talks the most/least. Participation quality will be more important than quantity. However, you will have to participate in class in order to achieve a satisfactory grade in this area. To aid in this, some class discussion sessions will be small group rather than large group. Attendance will be taken regularly. It’s hard to participate if you aren’t here!!

The fourth component will be a journal, with an entry for each day you work at your service learning site and the number of hours you worked. These entries should be approximately ½ page to one page in length. Your journal should reflect that day’s activities. Some of your entries will reply to specific prompts that will be given during the semester. In addition, it is expected that you will relate your activities to our class readings.

Last, but not least, will be your 25 hours of service. Your service will be graded. Each supervisor will be asked to complete a brief evaluation of your work. Remember that our goal is to assist agencies and their clients, not be an irritation or a hindrance to their work. The service hours should help you see the depth of problems faced by many people today, allow you to critically analyze those problems, and help you see the need for you to become active and involved in your community while at UNCG and after you leave UNCG.

Grading Structure:

2 tests—20% each (02-27/04-14)	40%
3 papers—5%, 10%, 15% (02-20, 04-09, 05-12)	30%
Attendance/Participation/Pop Quizzes	10%
Academic Journal (Due 05-07)	10%
Employer Evaluation (Due 05-07)	<u>10%</u>
	100%

The papers must adhere to the following technical rules/restrictions:

- * these are formal papers--no creative writing or questionable language;
- * minimum length—1 1/2 pages/maximum length--2 full pages in word content length;
- * the pages will be stapled together (no covers/binders/folders);
- * your name will be on a separate sheet attached to the back of your paper;
- * no title/cover page--simply type your title at the top of page 1;
- * typewritten, double-spaced, Times New Roman-12 font;
- * margins will be 1/2 inch on right/left and 1 inch on top/bottom (like this syllabus!);
- * the paper will be graded on style/spelling/grammar/punctuation/substance.

Violation of these rules will invoke an automatic one letter grade penalty per infraction. Generally, don't bother me with excuses; I've heard most of them. Real, serious and documented excuses may be considered. If you have any questions about any of the above, they are to be asked before your paper is completed. Ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse once you have submitted your paper.

All papers/assignments are due on the day assigned, at the beginning of class. Late work receives a one letter grade per day late penalty. Any assignment not completed and turned in will result in a grade of "0". It is your responsibility to know about and have prepared all assignments.

I have an attendance policy because the taxpayers of North Carolina and others are paying a decent chunk of change for your education. Since this class meets twice a week you have two cuts. I do not live in the "excused" and "unexcused" absence world. Whether you have a bug or want to go home early for the weekend, you get two and that's all. There are two exceptions. If you are ill for a lengthy period (one week or longer), present me with the appropriate documentation and we can discuss it. And, if you are required to miss class due to a university function, those absences will not count against you. Finally, if you are later than 5 minutes to class, stay out. You will disrupt the class. If you enter the room, I will count you as absent. Be in class. Be on time.

TURN ALL CELL PHONES, PAGERS, IPODS, ETC. OFF AND PUT THEM AWAY!!

SCHEDULE

01-14	Introduction
01-16	TBA
01-21	NO CLASS!!!-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY!!!
01-23	Baradat, Chapter 1
01-28	Baradat, Chapter 2
01-30	Baradat, Chapter 3
02-04	Baradat, Chapter 3, <u>Taking Sides</u> Issue—Issue 21
02-06	Baradat, Chapter 4/ Paper #1 Topic Assigned
02-11	Baradat, Chapter 4
02-13	Baradat, Chapter 5/ SERVICE LEARNING SITE SECURED
02-18	Baradat, Chapter 5
02-20	<u>Taking Sides</u> Issues 01/11/ Paper #1 Due
02-25	<u>Taking Sides</u> Issues 15/16
02-27	Test 1
03-03	Baradat, Chapter 6
03-05	Service Learning Discussion/ <u>Taking Sides</u> Issue—Issue 3
03-10/12	NO CLASS!!!-SPRING BREAK!!!
03-17	Baradat, Chapter 7
03-19/24	Baradat, Chapter 8
03-26	Baradat, Chapter 9
03-31	Baradat, Chapter 9/ Paper #2 Topic Assigned
04-02	Baradat, Chapter 10
04-07	<u>Taking Sides</u> Issues—Issues 5, 7
04-09	Service Learning Discussion/ Paper #2 Due
04-14	Test 2
04-16	Baradat, Chapter 11/ Employer Evaluations Distributed
04-21	<u>Taking Sides</u> Issue—Issue 13, 14, 17
04-23	Service Learning Discussion
04-28	<u>Taking Sides</u> / Paper #3 Topic Assigned
04-30	<u>Taking Sides</u> / SERVICE LEARNING COMPLETED
05-05	<u>Taking Sides</u>
05-07	Reading Day—Journals/Employer Evaluations--due by 5:00 p.m.
05-12	Paper #3 Due—in person, no later than noon