

## **Appendix A: Assignment criteria**

Below are descriptions of all the assignments for “The Worlds of Politics”. Each assignment has been employed in a generally consistent fashion, with updating in response to such factors as student feedback, and the current topicality of political issues, from the Fall 2017 semester to present.

### ***Assignment #1: News Analysis* (approximately 10-15% of course grade; this varies depending on the semester)**

The goal of this assignment is to make an initial step in the process of writing by working on the first part of the research process: reading and documenting. It gives you an opportunity to think, learn, understand, and engage with the process of academic writing. In Assignment #1, we encourage you to use good writing principles; you will receive feedback on the paper, commenting on proper grammar and academic writing format. Marks will be deducted for failure to properly cite any of your utilized news sources. You may use any one of the widely accepted academic citation formats—Chicago Manual of Style, APA, and MLA would be three basic examples—while making sure to employ that format consistently and correctly.

#### Format requirements:

- Each student will keep a running ‘journal’ in a Word document outlining the news that you followed over at least five distinct days during the month of January. This document should be at least three pages double-spaced; there is no maximum page limit (but please keep it reasonable).
- In this journal, we ask you to please report on what you read/heard/watched, where it came from, an articulation of why this news piece is politically relevant, and how you reacted to it.
- In terms of your own reaction/reflection, consider the following questions during each day of your documentation: What is the political relevance of the news item? How did you come across this news item (e.g. newspaper, social media, roommate), and what does this suggest about how news ‘trends’? Do you detect any kind of bias or political preference in the way the news item is being portrayed – if so, how?
- Correctly formatted citation of every utilized news source.

#### Learning outcomes:

- Basic expression, while being given an opportunity to get some initial feedback on your writing and grammar;
- We encourage you to consider what kind of news you follow and where you get it from;
- An explicit articulation of the political relevance of the news you are writing about;
- The importance of properly attributing all sources that you use.

**Assignment #2 (Analytical paper) (approximately 20-25% of course grade; this varies depending on the semester)**

Students are asked to select a political topic from the list provided below, and to write a short analytical paper of 1500-2000 words. This paper should present an overview of the problem, different perspectives on the problem, and then offer a critical assessment of the various perspectives presented.

One of the purposes of this assignment is to distinguish between fact and opinion, to learn to recognize bias in the written materials that you consume, to learn to recognize your *own* bias when assessing a current event, and to practice the skill of summarizing an argument and a counter-argument. Students must use, and properly cite/reference, at least 6 (six) sources for this assignment (see more details in 'Format', below). Scholarly sources (to be discussed in class) typically include books from academic presses and peer-reviewed journal articles. Depending on the topic, it may be appropriate or even necessary to introduce other kinds of sources (for example, journalistic and government resources), which we will talk about in class. *If you are unsure if a source is reliable, please consult with the instructors.*

**Topics:**

A list of suggested issues is provided below, but students are also free (in consultation with the instructor) to design a topic of their own interest – if doing so, students must obtain approval from the instructors in advance of starting the writing process:

1. Should statues be removed and/or should names of buildings be changed to reflect current perceptions (for instance, removing the statue of John A. MacDonald from downtown Victoria, BC, or the statue of Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, VA)?
2. What are some potential policy implications stemming from the “Defund the Police” call that has arisen within the context of the Black Lives Matter movement?
3. What are the competing perspectives surrounding the initiative to establish bike lanes downtown at the exclusion of parking spots?
4. Is the potentially advantageous effect for climate change a legitimate rationale for pursuing COVID-related behavior restrictions, or should these restrictions be geared solely toward addressing the pandemic? In either event, what sorts of behavior restrictions are justifiable?
5. Should every 18-year-old citizen be required to provide 12 months of military/public service?
6. How does the recently established treaty between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain fit within the current dynamics of Middle East politics, and for whom does the agreement hold especial promise and/or disadvantage?
7. Is the rise of populist and far-right right parties around the world a cause for concern or a valid democratic shift in ideological trends?
8. Are the EU’s criticisms of the rule of law infringements in Hungary and Poland a valid source of protection for democratic governance? Or are the EU’s concerns—as the Hungarian and Polish governments assert—an attack on political differences?
9. Should it be permissible to ban specific sites from social media platforms?
10. In considering the idea of “sovereignty”, please explain the competing perspectives on recent protests and the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong.

In this short paper, students are to outline the different viewpoints on this issue: how the issue is defined, what the different perspectives are, and what the competing proposed policies are. Students should make

every effort to write clearly and with neutrality. This means writing with attention to grammar, appropriateness, and fairness (grading will reflect both substance and the quality of writing).

**Format:**

- Double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font
- Please include a title page and page numbers in your document
- Minimum of 6 references: 4 academic and 2 from reliable news sources (if in doubt as to what constitutes a reliable news source, please consult with the instructors). Please make sure to cite all sources that you use, by correctly employing any one of the widely accepted academic citation formats like Chicago Manual of Style, APA, or MLA (*see each of these three style guides posted on class website*).

**Learning outcomes:**

1. Research skills
2. Developing an argument (formulating an interesting research question)
3. Presenting your views
4. Understanding the arguments in writings and relating them so as to include them in your paper
5. Writing skills (language)
6. Writing skills (convincing argument with presentation of argument and with connection to sources)
7. Layout and tidy presentation of the work
8. Proper referencing
9. Meeting the academic integrity policy
10. Critical thinking

**Evaluation:**

A percentage mark will be based on:

- a. Writing skills (clarity of expression and grammatical accuracy);
- b. Neutrality (the reader should not be able to detect a student's own preferences or partisan leanings);
- c. Whether competing positions from multiple sources are provided, and whether these positions are given fair expression;
- d. Logical expression – if the different viewpoints are linked to different understandings of the problem and different potential solutions.
- e. Following academic integrity rules, including proper citations, quotations and references (where applicable).

**Assignment #3: Engaging with theory and practice (approximately 15-20% of course grade; this varies depending on the semester)**

For this assignment, students are to engage with different theories of International Relations (IR) (a sub-field in the study of Political Science) and assess the explanatory power of each theory in relation to the film “The Fog of War” (Morris 2003, available online, and some portions will be shown in class). In the paper, students will briefly describe how something shown and/or described in the documentary relates to one or more of the International Relations (IR) theories studied in class.

The purpose of this assignment is to have students engage in the linking of theory with practice. Students will practice integrating their understandings of theoretical frameworks and applying them to real-life situations. Students will also practice assessing the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical frameworks in comparison to each other.

**Topic and Format:**

1. Students are assigned a documentary film to watch: “The Fog of War” (Errol Morris 2003).
2. After viewing, you are to write a short paper (maximum 4 pages, double-spaced or 1000 words maximum; list of references would be additional) explaining which IR theoretical framework best explains the narrative of any excerpt of the film. In so doing, you need to accurately explain the theoretical framework, succinctly describe the portion(s) of the film to which you are referring, and offer convincing justification for why the particular theory in question offers the greatest explanatory power. Students are only expected to reference the film and assigned course materials in this short paper.
3. Double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, title page, page numbers.

**Learning outcomes:**

1. Critical thinking
2. Entering into an academic discussion about ideas
3. Linking theory with practice
4. Academic writing skills

**Evaluation:**

- Academic writing skills, to include proper citing and referencing;
- Substantive linking of film excerpts to IR theory;
- Analysis of theoretical frameworks in use;
- Meeting the format requirements.

## **Appendix B: Syllabus**

Below is an excerpt from the Spring 2020 “The Worlds of Politics” syllabus (the most recent iteration of the course taught on-campus, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic’s having moved the course to an online format).

### **Outline of Course Content**

What is politics and what is political science? Political science deals with political activity and behaviour, which can be found in a vast array of areas and contexts. The first that comes to mind are systems of government—in Canada, and across the globe. But politics also appears in, for example, such everyday manifestations as consumer choices that you make about food to eat or what products to buy; and modes of communication that you use. Politics can be conceptualized, experienced, and engaged in from many different angles, depending on the settings and actors involved. The aim of POLI 103 is to introduce students to some basic ideas and methods that are used in political science to explore, and develop arguments about the political dimensions of our world. This course engages the discipline of political science through case studies and academic material organized into four units: an introduction to political science and its research methods; political theory; comparative politics; and international relations.

In POLI 103 we offer an introduction into the question, ‘what is politics?’ Specifically, how do we understand politics through diverse lenses offered by the discipline of political science, together with crucial issues playing out in the world today? We will begin the course by exploring the tools, assumptions, and definitions used in political science research. We then reflect on the significance of political theory, including key political ideas like state sovereignty that might claim to have a universal validity, transcending place and time. Here, though, a crucial part of the analysis is asking whether those ideas do in fact hold true, everywhere, or are there fundamentally different ways of envisioning politics? This leads us to the aspect of comparison, whereby we can examine how politics works on the ground within different countries and other political settings. The aim here is to identify, compare, and evaluate varying ways that government works in practice, within different countries and political systems. Not least, we will explore politics and government from the standpoint of international relations. As a representative question, is it the case, as some have maintained, that democratic states tend to behave differently than non-democratic states within the global arena? Then, too, what have been some of the impacts of globalization, i.e., the forging of direct linkages among people around the world, across increasingly blurred boundaries?

#### **Learning outcomes:**

- Understanding basic concepts and units of study in the discipline of Political Science;
- Ability to apply political ideas, institutions, and outcomes within different settings;
- Critical thinking: the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts;
- Developing and practicing academic writing skills;
- Developing and practicing research skills related to the discipline of Political Science.

#### **Methods of Evaluation**

Your performance in POLI 103 will be evaluated and weighted in the following fashion:

- Tutorial attendance and participation: 10%
- Assignment #1 (News journal): 10%
- Midterm exam, to be held in class: 15%
- Assignment #2 (Short analytical paper): 20%
- Assignment #3 (Applying theory): 15%
- Final Exam, to be held during the final exam period: 30%

Note: *All assignments must be completed for a student to be permitted to write the final exam. Failure to complete all assignments and attend at least 65% of the tutorials will result in an Incomplete grade for the course. If you are unable to meet these conditions you need to obtain permission based on documentation and written approval.*

### **POLI 103 Schedule (Subject to adjustment)**

#### **Unit I: Introduction to Political Science, Its Research Methods, and the Vital Relationship between Politics and Language**

##### **Week 1**

Welcome to POLI 103: what is Political Science? What is ‘politics’? How does politics manifest in everyday life? What are some of the enduring themes in the study of Political Science? Why is it important to think about the relationship between politics and language?

- Readings:
  - Textbook [Eric Mintz, David Close, Osvaldo Croci, *Politics, Power, and the Common Good: An Introduction to Political Science*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Don Mills, ON: Pearson Canada Inc., 2019)], Chapter 1 (pp. 1-21).
  - *CourseSpaces*: George Orwell (1946) ‘Politics and the English Language’ 4 pages.

##### **Week 2**

**\*\*Discussion of Assignment #1\*\***

Philosophy of Science; what is a ‘scientific approach’ to Political Science?

- Readings:
  - *CourseSpaces*: Brown & Hale 2014, excerpt from *Applied Research Methods* (Jossey-Bass, pp.28-39).
  - *CourseSpaces*: Okasha 2016 *Philosophy of Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, excerpt from chapter 1 ‘What is Science’ (pp. 10-15).
  - *CourseSpaces*: David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds) (2010) *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Houndmills: Palgrave-Macmillan, excerpt from chapter 1 ‘Introduction’, pp. 4-12.

##### **Week 3**

**\*\*Assignment #1 due on Jan.24 in-class\*\***

How do we evaluate sources? When and where can we find reliable data? What role does the news play in our political socialization? How can we objectively assess the news material that we consume?

- Readings:
  - *CourseSpaces*: Keith Dowding (2016) *The Philosophy and Methods of Political*

*Science*, Houndmills: Palgrave-Macmillan, Chapter 7 ‘Methods and Methodologies’, pp. 160-188.

- *CourseSpaces*: Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2017) *Political Research. Methods and Practical Skills* (second edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 7 ‘What is data?’ pp. 168-187.
- *CourseSpaces*: Turnitin 2013, White Paper on “What’s Wrong with Wikipedia?”
- *CourseSpaces*: Levitin 2016, excerpt from Chap.8 on *A Field Guide to Lies* (Penguin Random House, pp.129-151).

## **Unit 2: Political Theory**

### **Week 4**

**\*\* Tutorials begin this week \*\***

Introduction to enduring questions of political theory, through the case study: why does Thucydides’s history of the Peloponnesian War still matter to us, after some 2400 years?

- Readings:
  - Textbook, Chapter 2 (pp. 22-48), Chapter 10 (pp. 229-252), and part of Chapter 18 (pp. 420-427 only).
  - *CourseSpaces*: Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), pp. 349-357.
  - *CourseSpaces* (recommended, but not required): Thucydides, *How To Think About War: An Ancient Guide to Foreign Policy*, Johanna Hanink, trans. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2019), pp. xv-liv and 263-267 [‘Introduction’].

### **Week 5**

How are political theories applied in current forms of governance? What do we mean by nations and nationalism?

- Readings:
  - Textbook, revisit Chapter 2 from last week, and Chapter 13 (pp. 300-326).
  - *CourseSpaces*: Parag Mahanna, ‘Dismantling Empires through Devolution’, *The Atlantic*, 26 Sept 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/09/stronger-than-democracy/380774/>

### **Week 6**

**\*\*Midterm Exam in-class on Feb.14\*\***

Case study: comparing world revolutions as an entryway into political theory questions concerning the state, society, and ideology. How do religion and politics interact in different parts of the world?

- Readings:
  - Textbook, Chapter 4 (pp. 75-90), & Chapter 9 (pp. 205-228).
  - *CourseSpaces*: Linda Herrera and Heba Khalil, ‘Critical voices in critical times: revolution without revolutionaries, an interview with Asef Bayat’, *openDemocracy*, Dec. 14, 2017, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/linda-herrera-heba-khalil/critical-voices-in-critical-times-revolution-withou>

**Week 7 READING BREAK! (Feb. 17-21) All classes and tutorials cancelled!**

### **Unit 3: Comparative Politics**

#### **Week 8**

**\*\*Discussion of Assignment #2\*\***

Introduction to Comparative Politics and comparative institutions

- Readings:
  - Textbook, Chapter 5 (pp. 97-120) & Chapter 6 (pp. 121-146).

#### **Week 9**

Comparative politics; what are institutions? What kinds of political institutions do we see regularly in different parts of the world? What influence do institutions have on political outcomes?

- Readings:
  - Textbook, Chapter 7 (pp. 147-175), Chapter 14 (pp. 327-350) & Chapter 11 (pp.253-275).

#### **Week 10**

**\*\*Assignment #2 due on March 10 in-class\*\***

Populism as a phenomenon / US politics

- Readings:
  - Textbook, Chapter 15 (pp. 351-370), Chapter 19 (pp. 449-483) & Chapter 8 (pp.176-204) – *it's recommended that you read chapters in this order.*
  - *CourseSpaces*: Joan C. Williams, 'What So Many People Don't Get About the U.S. Working Class', *Harvard Business Review*, Nov. 10, 2016  
<https://hbr.org/2016/11/what-so-many-people-dont-get-about-the-u-s-working-class>

**Week 11 March 17, 18 & 20** Instructor XXX concludes Unit 2; Instructor XXX begins Unit 3.

Completing Unit 3: Comparative public policies.

- Readings:
  - Textbook, Chapter 16 (pp. 371-394)

### **Unit 4: International Relations (beginning March 18).**

Case study: exploring global political questions, and theoretical perspectives on international relations, through the movie "The Fog of War" (Morris 2003). We will view select clips from the movie together in class.

#### **Week 12**

**\*\*Discussion of Assignment #3\*\***

Viewing international politics through "The Fog of War", cont'd. What role does/should intervention have on international affairs?

- Readings:
  - Christian G. Appy, 'What Was the Vietnam War About?', *The New York Times*,



March 26, 2018: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/26/opinion/what-was-the-vietnam-war-about.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Mothers-Visible&moduleDetail=inside-nyt-region-4&module=inside-nyt-region&region=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region>

- Textbook, Chapter 17 (pp. 395-419) & Chapter 18 (pp. 420-447).
- *CourseSpaces*: Pankaj Mishra (2018) 'The Mask It Wears', *London Review of Books*, 40(12): 9-13 <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v40/n12/pankaj-mishra/the-mask-it-wears>

### **Week 13**

**\*\*Assignment #3 due on March 31 in-class\*\***

International political economy and interdependence. Also – course conclusions, course evaluations, and final exam review.

- Readings:

- *CourseSpaces*: Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr. (1974) 'Introduction: The Complex Politics of Canadian-American Interdependence', *International Organization*, 28(4): 595-607.
- *CourseSpaces*: Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr. (2000) 'Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)', *Foreign Policy* No.118: 104-119.
- April 3 with both instructors: course evaluations, course conclusions, review for Final Exam. Please review the "Study Terms and Concepts for POLI 103", which will be posted on CourseSpaces towards the end of the term.

**\*\*Final exam to be held during the university's final exam period in April. More details TBA\*\***