Course Syllabus

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Wiki Home page: http://falcon.tamucc.edu/wiki/MarkMcNamara/Home

Courses:
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II - 82171 - UCCP 1102 – 292 OCNR 110 T/TH 11-11:50  
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II - 82448 - UCCP 1102 – 293 OCNR 127 T/TH 3:30-4:20  
POLS-2305, taught by Dr. Ashley Ross in BH- 103, T/TH 2-3:15

Course Description:
First Year Seminar II is a continued discovery of the skills necessary for your success as a university student. Seminar is an integral part of your political science learning community. You must succeed in seminar to do well in large lecture, as a significant portion of your large lecture final grade will come from seminar. Acquisition of these skills is integrated into an exploration of the concepts encountered in your large lecture course, POLS 2305.

Theme
Gateways will be the theme of Triad F this semester. You will examine how understanding different topics in Political Science, including ideology, can serve as a gateway to participation in politics. We will also explore the different types of gateways we will encounter throughout our collegiate experience and future careers. Throughout the semester, you should continually ask yourself how different concepts serve as open or closed gateways.

A list of class plans will be available on Blackboard. You must complete activities in class and on Blackboard. This is a dynamic course. Check Blackboard frequently and always come to class to be successful.

You are expected to have regular access to a computer with Microsoft Office and fully understand how to use Blackboard, including how to upload MS Office documents to Blackboard. Computers are available in CCH, CI, and the Library. Please visit me in my office if you have trouble with technology.

Seminar Course Objectives:

The primary objectives of First Year Seminar are for students to:
- Explore the interconnections among the Triad/Tetrad courses;
- Develop critical thinking skills and significant learning;
- Clarify personal values, goals, and strengths
- Develop the ability to learn through study, discussion, writing, cooperation, and collaboration

Seminar Learning Outcomes:
- Students will apply interdisciplinary knowledge to address and analyze real-world issues
- Students will interpret and evaluate various research materials and/or perspectives

Seminar Specific Learning Outcomes:
- Take personal responsibility and become a self-directed college learner.
- Understand divergent political viewpoints.
- Effectively read and comprehend articles, reports, and books.
- Evaluate the accuracy of claims made in literature relating to politics.
- Collaborate effectively as both an effective leader and follower.
- Communicate on controversial topics related to politics.
- Relate politics to other ways of knowing.
- Understand the nature of political process.
- Apply politics to your own life.
- Understand the role and purpose of different forms of literature.
- Effectively use library research tools to research on political topics.
- Communicate about political topics verbally, in writing, and via video presentation.
- Get along with others.
- Develop awareness of one's present and future role in the American politics.
- Understand the role of politics in greater sociopolitical world context.
- Be able to use logical and empirical means to support a political viewpoint.
- Develop interpersonal communication skills.
- Use online learning technology effectively.
- Be successful in POLS 2305 and in life.

Course Materials:
Seminar is a discussion course focused on the readings and information gained in your large lecture course. You will work with the book from your US Government and Politics course. Additional readings may also be supplied to you as handouts, online postings, or from your textbooks for discussion in seminar. As in your lecture classes it is vitally important that you keep up with readings that are assigned at all times. If you do not keep up with readings it will affect your ability to participate in seminar discussions and will lower your participation grade.

You will need a Turning Technologies clicker or ResponseWare on your smart device. Clickers are available at the bookstore or ResponseWare may be purchased as an application for web-enabled (or "smart") devices at: http://store.turningtechnologies.com with school code TaMcc3. Clickers devices and ResponseWare applications must be registered at: http://webreg.turningtechnologies.com/. It is highly recommended that you join the Triad F Facebook Group. http://www.facebook.com/groups/373621339400533/. The Facebook group is primarily used for informal communication with your peers and instructors.

You will need the following for seminar and other learning community courses:
- Regular computer access with Microsoft Office (available on campus).
- Email and ability to check it regularly.
- Ability to use Blackboard.
- Positive attitude and desire to make your life extraordinary is highly recommended!

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<th>Important Dates</th>
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<td>January 23, Wednesday</td>
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<td>January 30, Wednesday</td>
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<td>January 31, Thursday</td>
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<td>March 8, Friday</td>
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<td>March 11-15, Monday-Friday</td>
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<td>March 26-28, Thursday</td>
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Course Evaluation:

Attendance: (20%) - Active participation is absolutely vital to this class. To learn politics and begin your journey as an active member of a democracy (as most of us are) you must be present and prepared for class. Your knowledge and opinion is valued and appreciated at every class meeting. Attendance is taken randomly many times per semester at the beginning, middle, or end of class, or via Blackboard.

- I will record many attendance grades throughout the semester randomly worth 100 points each.
- I will randomly chose 10 attendance grades to use in you final attendance grade.
- I will average the attendance grades.
I will curve your attendance grade by 20%, to account for any illnesses, or absences.
This means you may earn up to 120 out of 100 possible attendance points.
You may also miss 2 days and still have 100% for attendance.
These random attendance grades may come from completing online assignments, in class writings or handouts, informal reading quizzes, sign in sheets.
It is up to the student to pay close attention at all times to know when and how attendance is counted since any exercise at any time may become proof of attendance.
Since I already have two built in “free” days you need not bring notes or email excuses to me.
If you are injured, hospitalized, or have a serious problem that will cause you to be out for an extended period of time you must contact the Office of Student Engagement and Success to document your absence.

Participation: (10%)- This course is designed to be effective when students actively engage and contribute to the success of the class, therefore a participation score of 0 to 100 will be given based on your contribution to the class. An A is not difficult to attain if you come to class, bring in any requested material, are prepared for discussion, and actively engage in a positive way. However, simply showing up will not earn you full points. Your participation in discussions, group work, etc. will determine your participation grade. Obviously if you have an attendance problem, you can expect this score to be correspondingly low, but factors such as excessive off topic talking, sleeping, inappropriate internet use (Facebook, email, games, chat) and other inappropriate behaviors will lower your participation grade. Being a good citizen of the university and learning community is required!

Learning Community Assignments

PEW Typology Assignment (10%)- You will use an online inventory called the PEW typology quiz to determine your political ideology at the beginning of the semester and middle of the semester.

Political Poll Group Presentations (15%)- In groups of 3-5 people, you will design a political poll, administer the poll, analyze the results of the poll, and present the findings to your seminar classmates. You may also present the results of your poll to the campus community at the First Year Research Conference (See me FMI).

Ideology Essay (15%)- Essay exploring how knowledge of personal political ideology (based on PEW typology quiz) is or is not a gateway for affecting politics in the United States. This is the shared learning community integrated assignment and will count for points in both seminar and large lecture.

Reflective Assignments (30%): You will do two reflective assignments this semester for seminar each worth 15% of your grade. Consider these assignments to be like your “exams” and the Ideology Essay to be like your final exam. The reflective assignments are designed to develop your metacognitive abilities. Metacognition basically means thinking about your own thinking. The more you reflect on your own experiences in college and make positive steps to improve, the better you will do. The assignments are as follows. More information will be given in class.

Mid-Semester Portfolio- (Individual assignment)- A collection of your college work and a > 2 page reflection proving how you are succeeding at TAMUCC (15%).

Living Your Islander Pledge- (Group Assignment)- Reflect on the first year college experience, the Islander Pledge, and how you have lived according to this pledge by writing and producing a YouTube video on the subject of “Living Your Islander Pledge” as a team (15%).

I require few assignments, so note that if you fail to turn in any assignment your final grade will drop one to two full letter grades. Failing to turn in assignments is likely to result in failing the class and doing poorly in other learning community courses.

Late Assignments
Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day late. In the event of an emergency or excused absence, a student may be given additional days to complete the assignment without penalty if we discuss it and agree that additional time is necessary.

Extra Credit
None.
Expectations:
In this class we are learning how to be successful both in college and in life as university educated professionals. For this reason my philosophy is to treat you as the professional that you are aspiring to be. Let this thought guide you any time that you are not sure how you should conduct yourself in seminar:

"How would I be expected to conduct myself if I were already working as a professional and if my paycheck depended on professional behavior."

To further guide you here are a few suggestions:
- Your participation is appreciated and expected, but make sure that you have the floor before speaking!
- Only one person should speak at any given time.
- Silence all electronic devices during a meeting.
- Use laptops and handheld devices only when appropriate and do not allow them to prevent your class participation. If you are unable to multitask then please do not use a computer in my class.
- Limit the use of electronic devices to class work and emergencies only.
- Absolutely do not check e-mail, text messages, MySpace, play games, surf the web, or receive non-emergency communications of any kind via any electronic device.
- You must use Blackboard email or islander email to communicate with me. If you are emailing me about the course, then please use Blackboard email.
- The preferred method of contacting me is via Blackboard email. If you ask me something in class, be prepared to follow up the discussion with a reminder email.
- Your writing in e-mail should be very concise and to the point, but should also be professional.
- E-mail is not the same as instant messaging or text messaging and should have appropriate grammar, punctuation, and capitalization throughout.

Rights Responsibilities and Civil Discourse:
In this course we will engage in active learning including frequent group activities and interactions. We will be exploring real world political topics that may at times result in heated discussions as we meet the objectives of the course such as developing attitudes of caring and clarifying personal goals and values. To meet these many significant learning objectives it will be necessary to establish some ground rules for class discussions so that no one individual dominates the discussion and so that the diverse opinions of others can be respected. You and your classmates will make suggestions that will ultimately be compiled into a set of rules responsibilities and guidelines for civil discourse in this class. Students are expected to read and follow the University Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook, given to them in class at the beginning of the 1st semester.

Students with Disabilities and Veterans:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeal Process:
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

I am thrilled that you chose Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi and Science Learning Communities. Go Islanders!