

POS 6006 Study of Politics  
Summer 2007  
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Office hours through mid-June and then again July 9-26.  
T & Th, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.; W, 11:00 – 3:00 p.m.; F, 1-5:00 p.m.  
If you need to see me, please call Sheila at 474-2337 for an appointment.

Political science is the study of politics. Politics is about governing: who rules, to what ends, by what means, and with what results. Ruling means the making and enforcing of laws and regulations, including assigning of rights and imposing of duties, requisitions and prohibitions, by which members of a politically organized community, i.e., a state, must abide, subject to penalties ranging from fines all the way to deprivation of liberty and, in extreme cases, of life.

In studying just about anything associated with politics, political science covers a wide range of phenomena varying in scale from the relatively small group that seeks to influence or seize control of government at any level to international relations that can potentially result in wars involving millions of deaths, untold destruction, and massive population shifts. Moreover, these studies are done according to diverse methods ranging along a continuum from “soft” (qualitative) to “hard” (quantitative). However, what unites all political scientists *qua* scientists is a devotion to the objective pursuit of truth by means of reason and evidence. Political science is an empirical or practical science, that is, its truth claims are ultimately verifiable or falsifiable by observation and experience. This is the case whether or not those truths may be put to use by statesmen, politicians, or administrators.

By convention, the discipline is divided into four principal fields: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory. Each of these is in turn divided into subfields. Additionally, there are cross-cutting subfields, like research methods, the systematic collection and analysis of evidence relevant for answering questions or testing hypotheses about politics. These divisions are recognized in the curriculum of political science programs, undergraduate and graduate, including our own. Students are usually required to take one core course in each of the traditional fields, plus another in research methods.

This course, POS 6006 The Study of Politics, is an overview of the discipline. The objective of the course is twofold: that you familiarize yourselves with the principal things that political scientists claim to know about the main subjects we study, and that you convey this understanding as clearly as you are capable, both orally and in writing. To that end, you are going to read, think, discuss, and write about three recently published books, one each in American, comparative, and international politics. They represent some of the very best work being done by political scientists today. Also, you will read and write about selections from the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue in *The American Political Science Review*, which includes articles on the evolution and development of the discipline, along with commentaries on “classic” contributions to the field. In the process of learning this material, you will develop or sharpen analytical and communication skills that have applications in the practical world of work in your life after UWF.

**Requirements.** As in any graduate course, faithful attendance and informed contributions to class discussion are expected. You will also write four essays and make an oral presentation.

You are expected to arrive to class on time, having read and summarized every assigned chapter or article separately, in no more than 300 typed words each (Times New Roman #12 or equivalent font). Again, each chapter or article constitutes a separate item to be summarized. The opening sentence of each summary shall encapsulate the theme of the item. You will upload the summaries in the drop box available in the e-learning site for this course *no later than five minutes before class starts*, and bring a copy to class.

Please note that I will not assign a letter grade to these summaries (but see below for an unsatisfactory one), but will review them before assigning the daily P&C grade. To do an excellent summary, start with a dense sentence that lays out the central proposition developed in the chapter or article. Do not leave any doubt in the reader's mind as to what the chapter or article is all about. Then, in the rest of the page, expand on that sentence, giving the details of the argument and evidence presented by the author. (For what, exactly, it is that you should summarize of an essay, a book chapter, or a book review, [see](#) "Tips for Studying" on the UWF Department of Government website.)

To improve the quality of your summaries you should compare them with mine. These will be made available after every class session. By design my summaries are longer than yours because I not only summarize more but also sometimes insert, in brackets, comments throughout. But as well as the content pay special attention to the structure of my summaries, especially the opening sentence and paragraph. Strive to model future summaries according to what I have done. This will help you develop analytical and communication skills.

You will get a daily preparation and contribution grade (P&C for short) ranging from 0 to 100. Starting from a base of 80, I will (1) subtract 40 points if you're absent, (2) subtract 40 points for failure to upload the summary or if I find it to be unsatisfactory, and (3) add up to 20 points if you make meaningful contributions to the class in the form of answering my questions, or asking questions or making comments rooted in the readings that add something of value to the discussion. (If you catch me in an error, that will only redound to your credit.) Note, then, that to earn the maximum score on the daily P&C grade you have not only to work hard on your own doing the reading and writing, but also to be an active listener and to insert your points into an on-going discussion. An equivalent scale will be used during the oral presentations. Those of you asking pointed questions or making interesting comments to the presenters on their papers will get the higher scores.

During the first five weeks of the summer, May 16-June 14, we will meet twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. In effect, we will "double up" during this period. That will make up for the five weeks when we will not meet while you research and write your essays. Class may start with a short lecture by me on the material, which may include direct questions to individuals. Alternatively, I may begin simply by posing a series of questions about the readings designed to start a discussion. Halfway through the session we will have a 10 minute break. Then we will resume the discussion, pursuing points that are brought up by you or me.

Please note that all your essays need to be done according to *The Style Manual for Political Science*. (A copy is posted on the e-learning page for the course.) There will be three review essays, one per book, and one thematic essay. The review essays will run no more than 10 pages of text (Times New Roman #12 or equivalent), exclusive of title page, tables, endnotes and bibliography. In those essays you will summarize and evaluate reviews of each book in light of your own understanding of the same. The thematic essay, devoted to a set of “classic” articles originally published in the APSR will run no more than 15 pages of text (again, excluding title page, tables, bibliography, Appendix, etc.). The specifications and formats for all essays will be made available in due course. Finally, you will make an oral presentation on the final essay.

Needless to say, plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any verbatim copying of a text without quotation and attribution, or close tracking of another’s writing with minimal changes in words or sentence structure constitutes plagiarism. This is a serious offense and will be treated accordingly. You need to do your own compositions, weaving into your prose choice quotes, duly referenced, as needed to make your points.

The following weights will be assigned to the course components: Essays 1, 2, and 3 will count 15% each, for a total of 45%; Essay #4, 30%; and P&C, 25%.

**Texts.** The following texts are required:

Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, *The Macro Polity* (Cambridge University Press, 2002). Henceforth “EMS.”

Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development. Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge University Press, 2000). Henceforth “P.”

Bennett and Stam, *The Behavioral Origins of War* (The University of Michigan Press, 2004). Henceforth “B&S.”

Seligman and Sanders, “Thematic Issue on the Evolution of Political Science, in Recognition of the Centennial of the Review.” *American Political Science Review*, 100, 4, November 2006. Henceforth S&S.

All three books include highly technical passages of varying lengths, including mathematical formulae and complex statistical computations. Only a specialist in research methods or statistics can evaluate these passages for accuracy. We will take most of it on faith. That is, we will assume that the formulae are correctly written, that the appropriate statistical tools were applied to relevant data sets, and so on. Thus, as a general rule, you simply skip the methodological appendixes. Other than making note of the fact that these political scientists employ highly quantitative (“hard”) tools for the study of politics, what we want to get out of these readings are the substantive results. What questions did they ask, what answers did they arrive at and, to a less detailed extent, how?

### Reading schedule (subject to change)

May 15	Introduction to the course.
May 17	<p>NO CLASS. Instructor out of town. Instead, you will do background reading on the evolution of the APSR and political science fields. First, you will read and upload summaries of the items shown below. Then, you will post a statement of no more than 500 words offering some synthetic reflections on what these readings add up to in the discussion forum created for that purpose. Note: For obvious reasons, this is the only time that a set of summaries are not due before class. Still, you will need to upload them by 11:45 p.m.</p> <p>Sigelman, "The Coevolution of American Political Science and the <i>American Political Science Review</i>," in S&amp;S, pp. 463-478.</p> <p>Ubertaccio and Cook, "Wilson's Failure: Roots of Contention about the Meaning of a Science of Politics," in S&amp;S, pp. 573-578.</p> <p>Loewenberg, "The Influence of European Émigré Scholars on Comparative Politics, 1925-1965," in S&amp;S, pp.597-604.</p> <p>Converse, "Researching Electoral Politics," in S&amp;S, pp.605-612.</p> <p>de Mesquita, "Game Theory, Political Economy, and the Evolving Study of War and Peace," in S&amp;S, pp.637-642.</p> <p>Bennett and Ikenberry, "The <i>Review</i>'s Evolving Relevance for U.S. Foreign Policy 1906-2006," in S&amp;S, pp. 659-665.</p>
May 22	EMS, Preface and Chs. 1, 2, 3 (and my summary of Ch. 4.).
May 24	EMS, Chs. 6, 7 and 8.
May 29	EMS, Chs. 9 and 11 (and my summary of Ch. 10).
May 31	P, Introduction and Ch. 1.
June 5	P, Ch. 2 and Ch. 3 (pp. 142-144 and 176-179 only).
June 7	P, Ch. 4 and Conclusion.
June 12	B&S, Preface, Ch. 1, Ch. 2 (pp. 15-17 and 25-34 only) and Ch. 3 (pp. 35-43 and 62-69 only).
June 14	B&S, Chs. 4 and 5 (and my summary of Ch. 7).

June 19-20 NO CLASS. Essay #1 due no later than 11:45 p.m. on Thursday, June 20, in the electronic drop box found on the e-learning site for this course. No late submissions accepted, no excuses allowed.

June 26-June 28 NO CLASS. Essay #2 due no later than 11:45 p.m. on Thursday, June 28, in the electronic drop box found on the e-learning site for this course. No late submissions accepted, no excuses allowed.

July 3, 5, and 10. NO CLASS. Essay #3 due no later than 11:45 p.m. on Tuesday, July 10, in the electronic drop box found on the e-learning site for this course. No late submissions accepted, no excuses allowed.

July 12-24 NO CLASS. Essay #4 due no later than 11:45 p.m. on Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, in the electronic drop box found on the e-learning site for this course. No late submissions accepted, no excuses allowed.

July 26 CLASS MEETS. Presentations on Essay #4.