Political Science 1025F Section 650
The University of Western Ontario
Political Ideas and Institutions
Course Outline

Type: Distance Studies (Essay) 6 week course May 4 to June 12 (exam TBA the week after June 12th))
Place: Online/Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Robert F. Jonasson
E-mail address: rjonasso@uwo.ca (please e-mail anytime)
Office Hours: no in person; email any concerns

Required Reading: (hopefully available at U.W.O. bookstore)

1/ Andrew Heywood and Matthew Laing. Politics. 6th Edition. (Bloomsbury: 2025.)

POL 1025F: https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=N2026&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/POL1025F

NOTE: You may use used copies. Please try to order a physical or e-copy of the text.

Delivery: The course is asynchronous, which means no formal class times (i.e. no in person or Zoom classes). Materials will be posted to OWLBrightspace that you will need. There are still strict due dates on certain items, but the point is to learn the material at the rate that suits you. The weekly breakdown of topics, lectures and readings below is only suggested – you may wish to go faster or slower through the materials. Please note that asynchronous learning may not be ideal for everyone. Please respect the fact that 650 Distance level online courses are meant to offer maximum flexibility for learning, especially for those in different parts of the world or who have jobs etc. during certain hours of the day. Note that some material is identical in the 1026F course (i.e week 1).

Structure: Political Science 1025F 650 is an introductory course in the field of politics.

Objectives: (1) Students will learn some of the most important ideas, arguments, theories and ideologies produced in the history of political thought and science in the West, including power, democracy, the state, nationalism, liberalism, conservatism, facism and socialism, As well, students will focus primarily on political institutions and the political processes associated with them. The topics to be covered include the following: liberal democracy, authoritarianism/totalitarianism, parliamentary and presidential systems and multilevel politics. (2) Students will develop the capacity to think critically about politics. In particular, students will acquire and strengthen their abilities to understand and analyze arguments on controversial political issues, such as the obligation to obey the law, the nature of justice and the good, the legitimacy of democracy, the nature of freedom, the status of dominant ideologies, the value of key political systems and institutions.

Topics: Readings from the Heywood textbook (6th ed.) are given below**. In OWL Brightspace Content there are corresponding weekly lecture topics which you should**

watch. However, as stated above, there are suggested weekly breakdowns – it is up to you how you learn the material.

OWL: This course uses Western OWL Brightspace as a learning tool on a regular basis.

Week 1: May 4-8

Course outline and on-line information
How to write an essay (see Essay Guidelines on OWL); What is political science? (Ch.1)
Basic Concepts: Society, Gov't, Power, The State of Nature (Ch.1)
Basic Concepts: Authority, Obligation, Legitimacy, Sovereignty, The State, The Nation, Nation-State, (Chs.3,4,6)
Basic Concepts: Law, Constitutionalism, Democracy (Chs.4,13)

Week 2: May 11-15

Ideology: What is Ideology?; The Origins of Liberalism – Classic and Modern (Ch.2)
Ideology: Liberalism: Freedom, Property, Rights (Ch.2)

Friday, May 15 – **Assignment due**

Week 3: May 19 (May 18 is a holiday)

Ideology: Conservatism; Fascism (Ch.2)
Ideology: Socialism, Marxism (Ch.2)

Week 4: May 25-29

Forms of Gov't: Liberal Democracy, Types (Ch.5); Totalitarianism, Authoritarianism (Ch.5)

Friday, May 29 - **Essay due**

Week 5: June 1-5

Forms of Gov't: Parliamentary and Presidential Systems (Ch. 5)

Week 6: June 7-12

Forms of Gov't: Federalism and Multi-level Governance (Ch.17)

Final Exam: during exam period (TBA)
- essay format: *online, take home, open book 24 hours*

Grade Breakdown:

Final Exam: 35% (TBA)
Essay: 50% (6-8 pages, double-spaced; due Friday, May 29/26 online submission by 11.59pm)

Assignment: 15% (3-5 pages, double-spaced; due Friday, May 15/26 online submission by 11.59pm)

NOTE: All page requirements in the outline use the Times New Roman 12 standard.

Late Penalty for Essay: 2% per working day (not including weekends); after 2 weeks late (including weekends), the paper gets a zero; late penalty goes by e-file submission time; computer breakdown is not an excuse; you must keep a backup copy of your paper (e-file);

POL.SCI. 1025F ESSAY

Length: 6-8 pages double-spaced minimum

Due date: Friday, May 29/26 11.59pm – to be put into OWL Brightspace – Assessments - Assignments – Essay (do not wait until the last minute – lates will be strictly enforced; if you submit the wrong file, you must e-mail me the correct one before the deadline)

Files: the e-files must be in Word or PDF format and must have your last name as the start of the file name

Lost Assignments: It is your responsibility to have other copies of your paper.

Bibliography: You must include a bibliography.

Citations and other items: See Essay Guidelines document on OWL.

Essay questions/ thesis statements

Choose one as the core argument of your paper (you may take the reverse of each).

1/ The Russian Federation is an example of an authoritarian regime.

2/ The Canadian Senate does not adequately carry out its functions and should be abolished.

3/ Marxist-Leninism was a radical departure from the ideas of Karl Marx.

NOTE: You must do one of the above.

IMPORTANT: SEE ESSAY GUIDELINES DOCUMENT ON OWL FOR MORE INFO

Please note that this assessment is considered to be central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with an extension to hand in the essay without any late penalty which is based on an extension period recommended by the Academic advisors...

1025F ASSIGNMENT

Length: 3-5 pages double-spaced minimum

Due date: Friday, May 15/26 11.59pm– to be put into OWL Brightspace – Assessments - Assignments – Assignment (do not wait to the last minute – lates will be strictly enforced; if you submit the wrong file, you must e-mail me the correct one before the deadline)

Lost Assignments: It is your responsibility to have other copies of your paper (e-file)

Bibliography: not needed

Citations: not needed

You must do the video below which is posted to Brightspace Content and answer the questions/themes below.

VIDEO
Animal Farm film (1999)

This 1999 film is based on the novel by George Orwell entitled Animal Farm (1945). Orwell, though a socialist and a critic of capitalism, was deeply disillusioned by the socialism of the Marxist-Leninist Soviet Union. The novel is really an allegory of the USSR using humans and farm animals to make his observations. The film follows the novel fairly closely.

Themes in the video to consider in your answer:

1/ Does power need to be properly checked no matter its form or ideology?
2/ Note how the control of language/communication is a key feature of dictatorship.
3/ Can a true socialist revolution happen?

QUESTION: What are your impressions of the video?

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1/ This is not a formal essay, so you do not need a formal introduction and conclusion.

2/ However, write in complete sentences and paragraphs.

3/ The Essay Guidelines document may give you some help here, so consult it, but remember this assignment is not an essay.

4/ This assignment is pass/fail: if you do the above properly, you will get 15/15. If it is not done correctly, you will get 0/15. **I will not comment in detail on these opinion assignments but I will let you know if there are any serious concerns.** I will post the grades to OWL by late May. If it is late, it gets 8/15 (if done properly). The final date for late submission is June 12/26 by 11.59pm

Students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will not be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with an extension to hand in the essay without any late penalty which is based on an extension period recommended by the Academic advisors...

COURSE PROCEDURES

1/ **E-Mail:** You may e-mail me at rjonasso@uwo.ca anytime. I will check e-mail several times a day Monday to Saturday (not including any holidays) – from 10am to 6pm. I will endeavour to answer your e-mails within several hours during the above period (from 6pm to 10am, you may e-mail, but I will take longer to respond). There may be some exceptions to the above, but I will try to stick to this schedule. Please always be courteous.

2/ **Questions:** Ask questions intelligently. Do not ask questions for the sake of asking them (i.e. to show 'interest', to 'stick out' etc.). Please ask specific questions about the topics; questions like 'can you explain this topic to me?" are too broad. I cannot tutor each student obviously. Questions about course material can usually be answered in this course outline or on other documents. Of course, ask away! I'm especially glad to answer thoughtful questions.

3/ **Course Notes:** These are on OWL Brightspace. They are now the most detailed ever. They are crucial to what I want you to know. The textbook is excellent but use it to illuminate the material in the notes (you must read it though!). Material in the textbook not covered in the notes will not be tested (even If I still hope you will read it!). If the notes and text disagree, go with me. Professor Heywood is not teaching this course. I have placed all the notes together by topics (in order). How you go about learning them is up to you, but the outline is suggesting a certain weekly breakdown.

4/ **Lecture files:** These audio/visual files will be posted in OWL Brightspace and are like my usual in class lectures (mainly spontaneous, unscripted) and are relatively long. How you go about learning them is up to you, but the outline is suggesting a certain weekly topic breakdown. They help explain the course notes.

5/ **Grading:** All grade values in the course outline are 'set in stone'. There will be no re-weighting or bell-curving. No extra assignments will be given. No items will be omitted from the final grade.

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

A+ 90-100% One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A 80-89% Superior work which is clearly above average
B 70-79% Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C 60-69% Competent work, meeting requirements
D 50-59% Fair work, minimally acceptable
F below 50% Fail

6/ Appeals: You may ask me to revisit your grades, but be aware that I mark carefully! YOU MUST PUT ALL CONCERNS IN WRITING. I will only change a grade if you prove to me

that I am in error about certain pieces of factual information in your assignment, paper or exam. Please remember that I do not give grades according to your personality - try not to be personally offended by what you consider a poor grade (indeed, it is difficult to get to know students in an on-line course in any case). An appeal must go to me first. Your grade may go up, stay the same or go down (I would give then you an average of the old grade and the new grade). Your grade may go down if I discover critical things I missed the first time.

NOTE: Do not assume your past (eg. past grades, experience level, age) is the key to your future performance. Profs assume everyone wishes high grades. Please do not indicate to the prof that you need or expect a certain grade in the course.

7/ Due dates: All due dates (eg. essays, assignments, tests, exams) in the course outline are 'set in stone', unless they are moved to a later date by the instructor. Under no condition will due dates be made *earlier* than the dates indicated in the course outline.

8/ **Extensions:** As indicated in the policy of the dept., there are some legitimate excuses which may allow students to get limited extensions for essays, tests and exams. ALL EXCUSES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFICIAL NOTE (eg. doctor's note) which is shown/sent to **Academic Advising.** Dates must be present to indicate the time period the student was affected. The Instructor must be notified by **Academic Advising** within 2 weeks of the missed essay or test/exam. **I must have the clear approval of Academic Advising for any extension which requires this office (the essay and final exam).** The permission must be produced immediately in the case of the final exam. If an extension is warranted, the prof and the student will negotiate a time frame for submission. This time frame cannot be just what the student wants.

9/ **Problems with OWL/Internet:** If OWL is officially down for all students generally for a period of more than 12 hours on the day something is due, I will permit an extension to all students – generally, the next day. However, short problems cannot justify this, even to the deadline itself. My advice is do not wait to submit work to 11.59pm on due days! *Personal computer/internet/OWL issues are not valid grounds for an excuse.*

10/ If you are a student with a serious concern, whether valid or not, and you are unable to keep up with the course for a long period of time, the prof strongly advises that you drop the course. Students who get too far behind generally do not finish in any case or receive an uncharacteristically low grade. Sometimes unfortunate events occur in our lives; try to persevere, but if you cannot, it is no shame to reduce your course load in certain situations.

11/ Please do not ask the instructor for final grades (or final exam grades). These must be released by the Registrar's Office first.

12/ <u>NOTE: the following updated policy has been in effect for all reference requests since August 1, 2021 for past or current students</u>

I will give students basic references (for jobs, student exchange programs etc.) if their grade is above 75% in a class in which I have taught them (final grade). **For all post-graduate references (law school, grad school, teachers' college etc.) and scholarships, students must have completed at least 3 courses (half or full) with me beyond 1020E and have a grade of 85% or better (as an average in the courses). If students took 1020E with me, they may or may not factor the grade in this class into their average, but they will need 2**

more classes (half or full). However, good character is an important consideration for promotion as well. I do not promote opportunists (eg. those who ask for higher grades without merit) or those with 'entitlement' attitudes. Make sure you give me at least 3 weeks notice for any deadlines and always give me all forms and postage**. I will do a maximum of 4 paper/online references for a student in a term.**