

# **POLS 110**

## **Introduction to Political Science**

3 Credits • Fall, 2007 • Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:40 to 11:05

**INSTRUCTOR:** Brian Richardson  
**OFFICE:** Na‘auao 124  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 to 12:15  
and by appointment  
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### **WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT**

*Windward Community College is committed to excellence in the liberal arts and career development; we support and challenge individuals to develop skills, fulfill their potential, enrich their lives, and become contributing, culturally aware members of our community.*

### **Catalog Description**

Introduction to politics as a human activity. Discusses theories, ideologies, systems, and processes of politics. (3 hrs. lect.) WCC: DS

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The student learning outcomes for the course are:

1. Identify and describe the structure of political issues and political relationships.
2. Clearly explain and evaluate complex political thought and the positions of several thinkers in political theory.
3. Examine and interpret contemporary political issues through the application of political theory.
4. Relate media, technology, and language to the formation and maintenance of the political order.
5. Carefully justify one's own political position.

## Course Content

Classes will combine discussion and lecture. Because of the heavy emphasis on discussions, the success of the class relies on the involvement of every one of the course participants.

The course will introduce basic arguments concerning the role of information in a democratic society. What kinds of information are valuable? What value does information have? Why do we want information anyway? It seems that most of the information we get is pretty useless (imagine not reading the newspaper for a month - what would you lose? Or maybe what have you lost already). What is the relationship between information and politics? What is at stake in the way that information occurs in our society? What kinds of bias are there? Can there be an unbiased account?

The course combines a philosophical analysis with a concern for the material conditions (the media) on which political debate depends. It should be noted that "media" is not only television and newspapers, but includes anything we communicate through. Different kinds of media have different strengths and weaknesses. What kinds of information can a particular media communicate? How do different media organize information differently? How do media affect how people look at the world?

### Concepts or Topics

- Media
- Bias
- Freedom
- Propaganda and Lies
- Perception and Perspective
- Power (different definitions of)

### Skills or Competencies

1. Identify structural impacts on individual behavior
2. Analyze the impact of different media technology on human understanding
3. Evaluate normative arguments regarding the quality of information suitable for a democracy
4. Discuss implications of patterns of media ownership on a democratic political system.

## Course Tasks

This is a reading intensive class. Students must come to class having read the assigned material and being prepared to discuss it. Many of the readings are not easy, and students should expect to have to read them several times to understand them well.

Students will write two papers (roughly 3 to 5 pages), which critically address topics discussed in class. The paper topics will focus on class readings and students will be evaluated for critical analysis and clarity of thought. For late papers, one point (out of the possible 20 points) will be deducted for every day that the paper is late.

The midterm and final exams will be held in class. The final exam will be held during the exam period.

Short assignments will include reaction papers, in class analytical writing and others.

## Assessment Tasks and Grading

Students will write two papers (roughly 3 to 5 pages), which critically address topics discussed in class. The paper topics will focus on class readings and students will be evaluated for critical analysis and clarity of thought. For late papers, a full letter grade will be deducted for every weekday (not class) that the paper is late.

The midterm and final exams will be held in class. The final exam will be held during the exam period.

Attendance in class is very important. Students are allowed to miss two classes with no excuse necessary. Beyond that, students will lose 1 point (1% of their grade) for every class missed (with no exceptions). Students who are late for class will be penalized half a day absence.

### Grading

Papers (2 papers, 20 points each)	40 points
Exam (midterm and final, 20 points each)	40 points
In class and short writing assignments	20 points

## How I Assign Letter Grades on Papers

When grading a paper, I ask myself the following questions:

1. Does the paper have a thesis?
2. Does the thesis address itself to an appropriate question or topic?
3. Is the paper free from long stretches of quotations and summaries that exist only for their own sakes and remain unanalyzed?
4. Can the writer produce complete sentences?
5. Is the paper free from basic grammatical errors?
6. Has the choice of key words made the basic points understandable?

If the answer to *any* of these questions is “no”, I give the paper some kind of “C”.

If the answer to *many* of the questions is “no”, its grade will be even lower.

For papers which have emerged unscathed thus far, it becomes possible to add the following questions:

7. How thoughtful is the paper? Does it show real originality?
8. How adequate is the thesis? Does it respond to its question or topic in a full and interesting way? Does it have an appropriate degree of complexity?
9. How well organized is the paper? Does it stick to the point? Does every paragraph contain a clear topic sentence? If not, is another kind of organizing principle at work? Are the transitions well made? Does it have a real conclusion, and not simply a stopping place?
10. Is the style efficient, not wordy or unclear?
11. Does the writer betray any special elegance?
12. Above all, can I hear a lively, intelligent, interesting human voice speaking to me (or to another audience, if that’s what the writer intends) as I read the paper?

## Learning Resources

### Textbooks (in order of appearance)

George Orwell. *Animal Farm* (NAL: 0-451-526341: \$7.05)

John Berger. *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin: 0-14-013515-4: \$14.00)

Daniel Quinn. *Ishmael* (Bantam: 978-0553375404: \$17.00)

Aldous Huxley. *Brave New World* (Harper: 0060929871: \$13.95).

Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Penguin: 0-14-009438-5: \$14.00).

Additional readings will be handed out in class or made available via the MyUH Portal (which students are responsible for printing and bringing to class).

Students **must** check their UH email accounts on a regular basis and will be responsible for information sent to that address.

### Paper Writing and the Learning Center

The Learning Center provides excellent resources to help you succeed in this class. They can help you to develop, organize, and clearly compose your papers. Insofar as paper writing accounts for a large percentage of your final grade, it is highly recommended that you take advantage of this resource. I am also available for assistance. My schedule is flexible, so I can arrange a time to meet if you cannot stop by during office hours.

## Disabilities Accommodation Statement

If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, [lemke@hawaii.edu](mailto:lemke@hawaii.edu), or you may stop by Hale 'Akoakoa 213 for more information.

## Some Small Print

### **Statement Regarding Academic Integrity**

Students are required to adhere to accepted standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism, and complicity in academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to be aware of behavior that constitutes academic dishonesty. We take these policies very seriously; so, if we find a student to be in violation of academic integrity, we will notify the department chairperson and the appropriate dean, the result of which may be expulsion from the college.

### **Personal Communication Devices**

Pagers and Cell Phones are not conducive to the educational process in this class. I will assume that any interruption due to a personal communication device will be justifiable based on a real emergency and that the student being summoned will need to leave immediately to deliver a baby, attend to the dying, retrieve an injured child from daycare, or otherwise take immediate action which necessitates leaving. This is especially significant during exams.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Because the University is an academic community with high professional standards, its teaching, research and service purposes are seriously disrupted and subverted by academic dishonesty. Such dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism as defined below. Ignorance of these definitions will not provide an excuse for acts of academic dishonesty.

**Cheating** includes but is not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination; obtaining unauthorized information about an examination before it is given; using inappropriate or unallowable sources of information during an examination; falsifying data in experiments and other research; altering the record of any grade; altering answers after an examination has been submitted; falsifying any official University record; or misrepresenting the facts in order to obtain exemptions from course requirements.

**Plagiarism** includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language or style; or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or grabbing, which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of the course or from previous terms, or fabricating data to fit the desired or expected results.

In cases of suspected or admitted academic dishonesty, the instructor shall attempt to discuss the matter with the student. If appropriate, the instructor may bring it to the attention of the departmental chairperson and the student's advisor. Additionally, an instructor may refer such case of academic dishonesty to the Dean of Student Services for action under this code. In cases where the student admits that an act of academic dishonesty was committed, the instructor may, within the context of the course require the student to redo the assignment, give the student a failing or reduced grade for the assignment, or give a failing or reduced grade for the course. If the student contests his or her liability, the instructor may not take action against the student but must refer to the case to the Dean of Student Services for hearing and disposition under this code. The Dean of Student Services may pursue such matters as disciplinary actions under this code if after a preliminary investigation, it is his/her determination that probable cause exists to establish that acts of academic dishonesty took place.

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refer to <http://www.wcc.hawaii.edu/cat/stsrv/scc.html>  
for more information

## Pols 110 - Fall, 2007 Course Outline

<b>Tuesday, September 4</b>	<b>Introduction</b> “Plato’s Myth of the Cave” (handout) in class: “Where do you get information about the world?”
<b>Thursday, September 6</b>	<b>Reading Well</b> “How to Mark up a Text” (handout) in class: “What does it mean to read well?”
<b>Tuesday, September 11</b>	<b>Language and Hope</b> Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" (handout)
<b>Thursday, September 13</b>	<b>Power and Language</b> Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (available via MyUH Portal - print and bring to class)
<b>Tuesday, September 18</b>	<b>Power and the Information Infrastructure</b> Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i> , complete novel
<b>Thursday, September 20</b>	<b>Technology and Worldview</b> Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , chapter 1
<b>Tuesday, September 25</b>	<b>Gender and the Objects of Vision</b> Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , chapters 2 and 3 in class: analyze one of the pictures
<b>Thursday, September 27</b>	<b>Class and the Objects of Vision</b> Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , chapters 4 and 5 in class: analyze one of the pictures
<b>Tuesday, October 2</b>	<b>Consumerism, Image and Art</b> Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , chapters 6 and 7 in class: analyze one of the pictures
<b>Thursday, October 4</b>	<b>Life, Universe, and Clever Stupidity</b> “Genesis” (available via MyUH Portal - print and bring to class) Quinn, <i>Ishmael</i> , to end of chapter 8
<b>Tuesday, October 9</b>	<b>Master Narratives of Belonging</b> White, "On the Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis" (available via MyUH Portal - print and bring to class)
<b>Thursday, October 11</b>	<b>Life, Universe, and Clever Stupidity (redux)</b> Quinn, <i>Ishmael</i> , chapter 9 to end of book

<b>Tuesday, October 16</b>	<b>Review for Midterm</b> First essay due: the role of happiness in the maintenance of oppressive political systems
<b>Thursday, October 18</b>	<b>Midterm (in class)</b>
<b>Tuesday, October 23</b>	<b>Economics, History, and the Possibilities of Politics</b> Marx, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> , to the end of part II (page 11) (available via MyUH Portal - print and bring to class) in class: Baskin Robbins
<b>Thursday, October 25</b>	<b>Economics, History, and the Possibilities of Politics</b> Marx, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> , to end
<b>Tuesday, October 30</b>	<b>Media, Happiness and Vapid Human Existence</b> Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> , to end of chapter 6
<b>Thursday, November 1</b>	<b>The Tyranny of the Majority</b> Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> , chapters 7 to chapter 10
<b>Tuesday, November 6</b>	<b>Death, Happiness and Vapid Human Existence</b> Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> , chapter 11 to end of book
<b>Thursday, November 8</b>	<b>Smoke Signals</b> Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> , beginning to chapter 2
<b>Tuesday, November 13</b>	<b>Las Vegas and Enlightenment</b> Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> , chapter 3
<b>Thursday, November 15</b>	<b>Typography</b> Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> , chapter 4
<b>Tuesday, November 20</b>	<b>Temporality and Politics</b> Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> , chapter 5
<b>Thursday, November 22</b>	<b>no class - Thanksgiving</b>
<b>Tuesday, November 27</b>	<b>Politics as Show Business</b> Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> , chapters 6, 7 and 8
<b>Thursday, November 29</b>	<b>Show Business and the Impossibility of Politics</b> Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> , chapters 9 and 10
<b>Tuesday, December 4</b>	<b>The End of Education and Democracy</b> Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> , chapter 11 in class: Itchy and Scratchy
<b>Thursday, December 6</b>	<b>Review for Final Exam</b> Second essay due: comparing <i>Ishmael</i> and <i>Brave New World</i> on Human Freedom
<b>Tuesday, December 13</b>	<b>9:30 to 11:20 - Final Exam</b>