

**Fordham University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**Professor Richard Fleisher**  
**PORU 1100 section 001**  
**Fall 2008**

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**Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:20 &**  
**Thursday 4-5**

## **Introduction to Politics**

### **Course Description and Requirements**

Welcome to PORU 1100 – Introduction to Politics. The primary objective in this course is to provide students with an understanding of politics in a number of different nation-states. In learning how to analyze politics, we will seek to describe the workings of different political systems as well as explain the causes and consequences of specific features of the political system. Our conclusions regarding the workings of actors and institutions in politics should be based on a solid evidentiary base of facts. Finally, based on our informed understanding of politics, we will explore our own values about how the political system should operate.

Your grade in this course will be based on a midterm exam taken during the course of the semester, a paper and a final examination. In calculating your grade for the course, the paper, the midterm and the final will each count for 100 points. In addition to the points earned on the paper and the exams, I will be giving out bonus points based on class participation. You will be able to earn an additional 10 bonus points as a function of what you contribute to class discussions over the course of the semester. The number of bonus points received for class participation is based on my assessment of the quantity and quality of what you contribute. Bonus points will be assigned at the end of the semester. The exams are intended to see how well you have mastered both the required readings and class discussions. The final examination will be cumulative covering the entire semester's work. All exams will consist of essay questions. If your grade on the final exam is better than your grade on the midterm I will weigh the final exam grade twice and ignore the midterm grade. Semester grades will be assigned according to the schedule located on the last page of this syllabus.

For the paper, you are to select one of the nation-states examined in chapters 16 through 23 in Sodaro's book. After reading the chapter and doing additional reading on that country write a paper of approximately 5-7 pages analyzing a major problem that the country faces either as a stable democracy (UK, France, Germany, Japan) or in becoming a stable democracy (Russia, China, Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria or south Africa). The additional sources that you use in this paper need to be current otherwise the conclusions that you reach may be out of date. After reading the chapter in the text, I suggest that you start by doing research in a major newspaper such as the NY Times or the Washington Post. When using sources on the internet you must be careful that the sources that you use are credible. If you have questions I suggest that you speak to me. You may not use Wikipedia, or any other encyclopedia, as a source for your paper.

In writing your paper, develop a clear, coherent argument that you defend based on the research that you have done. Provide empirical evidence that supports your argument. The paper should have an introduction, body and conclusion. The paper will be graded based on the clarity and originality of the paper's argument, quality of the research reflected in the paper including how well you use evidence to defend your points, and the presentation of the argument (i.e. organization, grammar, spelling, etc.). Keep the paper focused - do not try to cover more than you reasonably can in the space that you have been allotted. Since this paper requires you to do outside research, I expect that you will support all conclusions by citing and discussing the documentary evidence that supports your thesis. Be sure to cite what ever sources you use. Do

not plagiarize. All sources used must be cited using either a parenthetical citation format or a traditional footnote citation format. Check one of the style guides if you do not know how to properly cite sources. Cases of plagiarism will be dealt with harshly according to the University's policy regarding academic dishonesty. Plagiarism consists of copying or paraphrasing from a source without citing that source. It does not matter if the source is a book, article, or web page. You should be aware that the University has software that allows faculty to check student papers for plagiarism. I will check a random number of papers using this software and I reserve the right to check any paper that I suspect using this software. By remaining in the course you acknowledge that your paper may be checked for plagiarism. The paper is due on December 4<sup>th</sup>. In addition to handing in a paper copy of your paper, you must also email me a copy of your paper. I strongly urge you to turn the paper in on the assigned date. Papers turned in after the due date may or may not (the discretion is entirely mine) be penalized. The maximum penalty for late papers will be a reduction of 5 points per day for each day the paper is late. Papers not turned in at all will receive a grade of 0. If you cannot complete the paper by the assigned due date, you must speak to me prior to the day the paper is due. All papers are to be typed, double-space.

Finally, some general ground rules. I expect that you will come to class on a regular basis. You are responsible for organizing the other aspects of your life in such a way that they do not interfere with your commitment to this course. I fully understand that at times it may be necessary to miss class. That is why you are permitted four absences. Absences will not be excused except for significant medical situations and official University activities. Excessive absences (i.e. more than four) will result in your grade being lowered. The last page of this syllabus lists the penalty for missing more than four classes. If, for any reason, attending class becomes a problem, I strongly urge you to contact me to discuss the problem.

I expect that you will keep up with the readings and be prepared to engage in class discussions. Class discussions may be based on the assigned readings. We will not, however, have time to discuss each individual reading assignment during a class period. Whether or not we discuss an assigned reading, you are still responsible for its content. Feel free to raise questions about any of the readings at the beginning of class.

My office hours, phone number and e-mail address are listed at the top of this syllabus. I encourage you to take advantage of my hours even if you just want to come by to discuss some aspect of politics or some other subject. If you are not available during the times posted for my office hours then contact me after class or by email to arrange a time that we can meet. Alternatively, you can stop by my office and if I am available I will try to make time to meet with you.

The following are the scheduled dates for exams in this course:

**Midterm Examination – Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Paper – December 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Examination - Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, @ 1:30 pm**

### **Required Readings**

The following books are available for you to purchase at the bookstore:

Shively, W. Phillips. 2008. *Power & Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*, 11th Edition. McGraw Hill.

Sodaro, Michael J. 2007. *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. McGraw Hill.

## **Reading Assignments**

The due dates are listed for each of the readings. The dates do not necessarily mean that is the day that we will discuss that material in class. Predicting in advance dates that we will discuss specific material is difficult because I do not know in advance exactly when we will get to a specific topic. The reading assignments are posted in the order we will cover them in class. Keep up and complete the readings by the dates posted. We will not discuss all of the material in each of the books. You are still responsible for the material in the books. Feel free to ask questions about the readings even if we do not discuss a specific reading in class.

### **Politics and Government – September 8<sup>th</sup>**

Sodaro, chs 1,2,4  
Shively, ch. 1

### **States and Nations – September 15<sup>th</sup>**

Sodaro, chs 5,6,12,14  
Shively, chs. 3,4,5,8

### **Democracies and Non-Democracies – October 20<sup>th</sup>**

Sodaro, chs 7,9  
Shively, ch. 7

### **Political Ideologies – November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Sodaro, ch. 13  
Shively, ch. 2

### **Democratic Governance: State Governing Institutions – November 10<sup>th</sup>**

Sodaro, ch. 8 (p. 194-205)  
Shively, chs. 9,14,15

### **Democratic Governance: Parties and Elections – November 17<sup>th</sup>**

Sodaro, ch. 8 (205-220)  
Shively, chs. 10,11

### **Democratic Governance: Mass Political Participation – December 1<sup>st</sup>**

Sodaro, ch 11

### **Democratic Governance: Interest Groups – December 8<sup>th</sup>**

Shively, chs. 12,13

**Points lost for missed classes:**

5 absences	6 points
6 absences	8 points
7 absences	10 points
8 absences	15 points
9 absences	20 points
10 absences	30 points
11 absences	40 points
12 absences	55 points
13 absences	70 points
14 absences	85 points
15 absences	100 points

**Semester Grading Scale**

A =	285	C+=	230
A- =	275	C =	210
B+ =	260	C- =	200
B =	250	D =	180
B- =	240	F =	< 180