

Introduction to Politics  
POSC-1100-L03  
Fordham University, Fall 2022  
Wednesday & Friday, 8:30 am- 9:45 am  
LL-521

Professor Benjamin McClelland  
BMcClelland@fordham.edu  
Office Hours by Appointment

### **Course Description and Goals**

This course is intended to provide a broad overview of the scientific study of politics. It serves as a cursory introduction to the major subfields of the discipline, including American politics, comparative politics, international relations, political theory, and methodology. Each week will be organized thematically around a different substantive issue of political science. In this first part of the class, we will look broadly at how the state came to be the dominant form of political organization in the modern world, and why some states are democratic and others are authoritarian. In the second part of the class, we will examine how political institutions function in different regimes, looking at political processes in the United States and in other democracies around the world. In the final part of the class, we focus on how citizens interact with the state. The course is intended not only to introduce students to the questions and topics studied by contemporary political scientists, but also the qualitative and quantitative methods employed to do so. No prior university-level study of social science is required.

### **Course Materials**

There will be one textbook required for this course: *Power & Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*, by W. Phillips Shively (15th Edition, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018). You are welcome to use recent prior editions, used copies, or digital eBook versions of the text for this course. Other articles and readings will be made available online on Blackboard.

### **Course Requirements**

Your grade will be composed of five separate elements:

- Response paper #1 (25%)
- Response paper #2 (25%)
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Final Exam (20%)
- Participation (10%)

#### **Two (2) Response Papers (25% each)**

You will write two response papers over the course of the semester, each between 1,000- 1,500 words (roughly 3-5 pages in double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-pt. font with 1-inch margins).

For these papers, you will be provided with a prompt in the form of a claim or a statement to evaluate, relying on the methods, arguments, and ideas covered in the reading and classroom discussions. You will have five opportunities to write these papers over the course of the semester. If you write more than two papers total, your two highest scores will be used in calculating your final grade. You must write at least two papers over the course of the semester, but you may write three, four, or all five if you wish. You will have one week from the day the prompt is assigned to turn it in. No late assignments will be accepted. We will discuss in class how to write an excellent response paper before the first prompt is assigned.

Response Paper due dates are as follows:

	Prompt Posted	Due Date
Response Paper #1	September 23	September 30
Response Paper #2	October 7	October 14
Response Paper #3	October 28	November 4
Response Paper #4	November 11	November 18
Response Paper #5	December 2	December 9

**Midterm Exam (20%)**

An in-person, timed, closed-book exam.

**Final Exam (20%)**

A timed, take-home, open-book exam.

**Class Participation (10%)**

The subject matter for this course is extremely broad, and our class discussions will be greatly enriched by each student’s contribution from their own lived experience, interests, and perspectives on the world. Class participation is therefore an important part of this course, and your grade will partially reflect the degree to which you contribute. There are several ways that students can participate in the intellectual life of this course:

- Coming to lecture regularly, having adequately prepared by doing all the readings.
- Participating in classroom discussion.
- Asking questions, or highlighting confusing or difficult ideas in the reading.
- Raising questions in the instructor’s office hours that show engagement with the readings and lecture topics.
- Submitting topics, questions, or specific cases to examine in the last week of class in lecture, office hours, or by email (see below).

It is not necessary to understand perfectly all the readings or the material in order to participate in class. What is important is to demonstrate a good faith attempt to engage with the reading and the materials, and to contribute the discussion by raising observations, questions, or concerns.

## Week 15

Our course is fifteen weeks long, and in the world of 2022, a lot can happen in fifteen weeks. It is impossible to predict what the most pressing political issues in the world may be fifteen weeks from now. As such, our final class has no readings or lecture topics listed on the syllabus. These readings and topics will be announced towards the end of the semester, based entirely on current events and student interest. If you think the course is ignoring an important topic, or want to dive much deeper into a topic we've already covered, you are encouraged to suggest a topic for this final week of course by speaking directly with the instructor.

## Covid-19 Safety Compliance

While Covid-19 is no longer the overwhelming threat it once was, it remains an unavoidable fact of life that must be addressed in order to ensure a safe classroom environment. Our class will be meeting in a densely packed urban environment, and as such we all have a strong ethical and practical obligation to do everything we can to keep ourselves, our colleagues, and our community safe.

Compliance with all university and governmental health mandates will be strictly enforced. In accordance with university policies, the instructor reserves the right to require additional masking or social distance requirements if he deems it necessary. If you feel that your personal situation warrants additional safety considerations (e.g., you are immunocompromised, at high risk of contracting or spreading Covid-19, or live with someone especially vulnerable), please raise these concerns with the instructor.

Note that your participation grade is NOT contingent on perfect attendance. If you are exposed to Covid-19 or required to quarantine for safety reasons, it is still entirely possible to do well in the class. If you are impacted by Covid-19, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor to discuss the possibility of special arrangements.

## Office Hours

Unfortunately, because of space constraints on campus, and the challenges imposed by Covid-19 protocols, I am unable to hold regularly scheduled office hours at a fixed location. However, office hours will be held by appointment, both in person and over Zoom. If you would like to meet with me, please send me an email or see me after class to make an appointment. While I will be available each week of the semester to meet with students, please note that it may take several days between making the appointment and actually meeting. While it may take a bit more planning and flexibility than regularly scheduled office hours, you are nevertheless strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss the material.

## Course Schedule

### **Week 1 and Week 2 (8/31, 9/2, & 9/9): Introduction and Politics as Science**

- Shively. Chapter 1. "Politics: Setting the Stage"
- Rosenwasser, David & Jill Stephen, Writing Analytically. Chapter 4.
- California State University, Chico. "Evaluating Information – Applying the CRAAP Test"

**Week 3 (9/14 & 9/16): The State**

- Shively. Chapter 3. “The Modern State”
- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Chapter 4. “The Origins of the Modern State”
- Tilly, Charles. 1985. “State Making as Organized Crime’.” In *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 169–91.

**Week 4 (9/21 & 9/23): Politics between States**

- Shively. Chapter 18. “Global Politics: Politics among States (and Others)”
- Lawson, George. 2020. *The Globalization of World Politics*. Chapter 2. “The Rise of Modern International Order”
- Nye, Joseph S. 2017. “Will the Liberal Order Survive? The History of an Idea.” *Foreign Affairs* 96(1): 10–16.

*Response Paper #1 Distributed*

**Week 5 (9/28 & 9/30): Dictatorship and Democracy**

- Shively. Chapter 7. “Democracies and Authoritarian Systems.”
- Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. 2007. “Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats.” *Comparative Political Studies* 40(11): 1279–1301.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1971. “Chapter 1.” In *Polyarchy; Participation and Opposition*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

**Week 6 (10/5 & 10/7): Political Institutions: Executives and Legislatures**

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Chapter 12 “Parliaments, Presidents, Semi-Presidents.” p. 593-645 & 667-669.

*Response Paper #2 Distributed*

**Week 7 (10/12 & 10/14): Separation of Powers**

- Linz, Juan J. (Juan José). 1990. “The Perils of Presidentialism.” *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51–69.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 2017. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Chapter 3. “Federalism and the Separation of Powers”

**Week 8**

10/19 Review & Catch-up

10/21 Midterm Exam

**Week 9 (10/26 & 10/28): Electoral Laws, Parties, Coalitions**

- Shively Chapter 10: “Elections.” (“Electoral System,” “Proportional Representation Elections in Israel”, and “Elections in Nigeria” sections only.)
- Shively. Chapter 11. “Parties: A Linking and Leading Mechanism in Politics”

*Response Paper #3 Distributed*

**Week 10 (11/2 & 11/4): Political Ideology**

- Shively. Chapter 2. “Modern Ideologies and Political Philosophy”
- Pew Research Center. 2014. “Political Polarization in the American Public”. p. 1-31

**Week 11 (11/9 & 11/11): Populism**

- Canovan, Margaret. 1999. “Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy.” *Political Studies* 47(1): 2–16.
- Mudde, Cas. 2004. “The Populist Zeitgeist.” *Government and Opposition* 39(4): 541–63.
- Bonikowski, Bart, and Noam Gidron. 2016. “The Populist Style in American Politics: Presidential Campaign Discourse, 1952–1996.” *Social Forces* 94(4): 1593–1621.

*Response Paper #4 Distributed*

**Week 12 (11/16 & 11/18): Culture, Diversity, and Representation**

- Shively. Chapter 8. “Political Culture and Political Socialization”
- Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Carol Stokes, eds. 1999. “Chapter 1.” In *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*.

**Week 13 (11/23 & 11/25): Thanksgiving Recess**

No class.

**Week 14 (11/30 & 12/2): Political Behavior**

- Shively. Chapter 10: “Elections.” (All sections remaining after Week 9.)
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S., Helmut Norpoth, William Jacoby, and Herbert F. Weisberg, eds. 2008. “Economic Antecedents of Political Behavior.” In *The American Voter Revisited*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Green, Gerber & Larimer 2008. “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment.”

*Response Paper #5 Distributed*

**Week 15 (12/7 & 12/9): Student Selected Topics**

- Readings to be announced

Final Exam: December 20, 9:30 am