

Humboldt State University  
PSCI 185; CRN 41986  
Founders Hall 181  
Tues, Thurs, 9:30-10:50  
Fall Semester 2000

Prof: John Meyer  
Office: 138 Founders Hall  
Hours: Tues, 2-3, Thurs 11-12,  
*or by appointment*

Phone: 826-4497  
jmm7001@axe.humboldt.edu  
www.humboldt.edu/~jmm7001

### **INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR**

The two words in our course title both need to be discussed here.

First of all, this course is an *introduction*. The study of politics is a very diverse field. Politics can be studied both *normatively* (in terms of how things ought to be) and *empirically* (describing and analyzing how things actually are). It can be studied at the local or national level, both in the U.S. and in other countries. We can compare political ideas, behavior, movements, and institutions between different places. Politics can also be studied at the global level, including organizations such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organization.

If we tried to cover this all in one semester, we would learn very little about a lot of things. To avoid that problem, I have been selective in the material that we will cover. The goal is to give you an idea of the topics out there, while allowing us to dig into a few subjects at a more-than-superficial level. You will also learn about some of the campus resources that you should be familiar with as a major in our department.

Secondly, this course is a *seminar*. For our purposes, the seminar's most important feature is that it requires attendance and active participation by all students in order to succeed. While I will usually have a few prepared comments to make, the majority of our time will be spent in discussion on the subject of our reading. Being well-prepared will be especially important in this class. Since this is a three unit course, you should expect to spend an average of six to nine hours per week reading, writing, thinking, and discussing in addition to our seminar time. If you must miss a session, you should be sure to check for any announcements or handouts. A seminar also typically involves the presentation of research or information by all members. You will have the opportunity to do so during the course of the semester.

Very little of this reading can be successfully "crammed." Especially in the first part of the course, you will often need to do the readings more than once to make sense of the ideas. All is worth reading carefully, however, and ought to spark interesting reflections and debates.

### ***Required Books and other readings:***

The following four books are available at the HSU Bookstore. The first three are required; I highly recommend the Writer's Manual.

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*

Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*

John Gray, *False Dawn*

Scott and Garrison, *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual* (recommended)

There are additional required readings that will be available on-line or in the department office (FH 180). Instructions for accessing on-line readings are at the end of this syllabus.

I also encourage you to subscribe to and read the *New York Times*, or another major daily newspaper (the *Eureka Times-Standard* doesn't count!) to keep up-to-date on political events. Forms for inexpensive campus subscriptions will be distributed in class. Most daily papers also maintain web editions (the NY Times' is: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) ).

### ***Course Requirements***

- 1) **Seminar participation (20% of grade)**. Learning in this class depends upon this. You are expected to be up-to-date on reading and attend every class session. This portion of your grade includes required participation in the in-class debate, brief presentations based on your second and third papers, as well as informal participation throughout the semester. One or two absences for the semester will not count against you, but any additional absence will lower participation grade by one grade 'notch'. So, for example, if you otherwise have a 'B' in participation, but miss four classes, that will be lowered two 'notches' to a 'C+'.
- 2) **3 papers (60% of grade -- 20% each)**. One paper assignment corresponds with each of the three main sections of our syllabus. The first will develop an argument on the subject of political obligation and civil disobedience, based upon the assigned readings. The second and third [JMM1] will require outside research as well as a close analysis of the books by Putnam and Gray. In each case, I will pass out paper topics and more specific writing suggestions before the due date. Papers should be 5-6 pages long, word-processed, and free of spelling or grammatical errors.
- 3) **5 Short assignments [JMM2](20% of grade total)**. These assignments are not directly tied to the readings but are designed to familiarize you with resources relevant to you as a political science major. They will be in the form of a worksheet or other assignment that requires you to briefly write up your findings and be prepared to talk about them in class. You should answer the first worksheet on Thursday August 31 (we will not meet as a class on this day). It is due on Tuesday, September 5.
- 4) **Oral Final Discussion:** During the week of final exams, you will be scheduled in small groups to meet with me to discuss what you have learned in the course, your interests as a political science major, and any questions that you may wish to raise or feedback you

wish to offer. While these discussions will not be graded, you must attend in order to complete the course.

**Plagiarism:** Presenting the words or ideas of another as though they are your own is called plagiarism. It is the most serious academic offense. Copying distinctive phrases, sentences, paragraphs, whole pages, or more from the work of another (whether a classmate, newspaper, book, or web-site) without quotation marks *and* proper citation will result in the harshest penalties. Changing a few insignificant words, while still copying the rest, is actually worse (even if you cite it!). **JUST DON'T DO IT.** If you are ever unsure about this, be sure to read the section on "Citing Sources" in the Scott and Garrison book and check with me in advance of turning in a paper.

***Seminar Outline and Reading Schedule:***

**I. Introduction to the Seminar and the Study of Politics <sup>[JMM3]</sup>(August 29-31)**

August 29: W. Phillips Shively, "Politics: Setting the Stage" (handout)

*OR* Scott and Garrison, "Introduction: The Discipline of Political Science" in *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*

August 31: No Class Meeting. Complete Short Assignment #1.

**II. Why -- and When -- Should We Obey the Law? (September 5 - October 12)**

September 5: Plato, "Euthyphro" in *The Last Days of Socrates*;  
**Short Assignment #1 DUE in class**

September 7: Plato, "Apology" in *The Last Days of Socrates*

September 12: Plato, "Crito" in *The Last Days of Socrates*

September 14-19: John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government: Book II, Chapters 2, 5, 8, and 19 (web)*; *Declaration of Independence (web)*

September 21: **meet at HSU Library Rm. L121 - Information Literacy Lab**  
*for overview of social science resources*  
Handout Short Assignment #2

September 26-28: Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience (web)*; Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions" (**ONCORES**); Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (**ONCORES**)  
**Short Assignment #2 DUE Thursday in class**

October 3, **time and location to be announced:** *Gandhi* (movie)

October 5: Holloway Sparks, "Dissident Citizenship"; excerpt from Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (on reserve in Dept. of Government and Politics office: FH 180).

October 10: IN CLASS DEBATE

October 12: **FIRST PAPER DUE; Introduction to Dept. Computer Lab**  
Hand out Short Assignment #3

**III. Politics and Community in the U.S. (October 17-November 14)**

October 19: Putnam, Section I  
**Short Assignment #3 DUE Tuesday in class**

October 24-26: Putnam, Section II

October 31: Putnam, Section III

November 2: Putnam, Section IV<sub>[JMM4]</sub>, V  
Hand out Short Assignment #4

November 7: discussion of student research

November 9: discussion of election outcomes  
**Short Assignment #4 DUE in class**

November 14: **SECOND PAPER DUE; Careers for PSCI majors**  
Hand out Short Assignment #5

**IV. The Global Political Economy (November 16 - December 12)**

November 16: Gray, Chapter 1

**November 21-23: Thanksgiving Break**

November 28-30: Gray, Chapters 2-5.  
**Short Assignment #5 DUE Tuesday in class**

December 5: Gray, Chapters 6-8.

December 7: discussion of student research

December 12: **THIRD PAPER DUE**

**V. Course Conclusion (December 14)**

WEEK OF DECEMBER 18: ORAL FINAL DISCUSSIONS

### Accessing readings on-line:

- 1) John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government: Book II, Chapters 2, 5, 8, 19*:  
available via HSU library web-site ([www.library.humboldt.edu](http://www.library.humboldt.edu))
  - a) select '**Databases**',
  - b) select '**Past Masters**'
  - c) select '**British Philosophy: 1600-1900**'
  - d) select '**John Locke**'
  - e) select '**Two Treatises of Government**'
  - f) select '**Book II**'
  - g) select and read **Chapters 2,5,8,19**
  
- 2) *The Declaration of Independence*:  
([www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/declaration/declaration.html](http://www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/declaration/declaration.html)).
  
- 3) Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (the version of the essay here is divided into two parts, available at the addresses below.):  
([www2.cybernex.net/~rlenat/civil1.html](http://www2.cybernex.net/~rlenat/civil1.html) and  
[www2.cybernex.net/~rlenat/civil2.html](http://www2.cybernex.net/~rlenat/civil2.html))
  
- 4) Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions"  
available via HSU library web-site ([www.library.humboldt.edu](http://www.library.humboldt.edu))
  - a) select 'ONCORES'
  - b) select 'SEARCH'
  - c) username: oncores
  - d) password: arctic
  - e) select Political Science, PSCI 185, Meyer
  
- 5) Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"  
available via HSU library web-site ([www.library.humboldt.edu](http://www.library.humboldt.edu))
  - a) select 'ONCORES'
  - b) select 'SEARCH'
  - c) username: oncores
  - d) password: arctic
  - e) select Political Science, PSCI 185, Meyer