The Science of Politics
Political Science 1, Winter 2016
Monday, Wednesday 1030am -1145 am
Lathrop Library, 282
Way of Thinking: Social Inquiry

Instructor: Justin Grimmer, Political Science Department
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Instructor: Ken Schultz, Political Science Department
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Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3 pm.

Teaching Assistant: Ramya Parthasarathy, Mashail Malik, Scott Williamson, and Lachlan McNamee

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<td>Wednesday 2-330 pm</td>
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Learning Objectives: This course is an introduction to the systematic study of politics and an introduction to how political scientists make sense of the political world. We will identify pressing social problems in the world, analyze potential solutions, and learn how to apply the analysis to your daily life. In service of this ultimate goal, we will pursue four more proximate goals.

1) We will change the way you view politics. Rather than viewing the world of politics as idiosyncratic events, we will demonstrate that politics is a system. We will teach you how to study the system and make you a more thoughtful participant in it.

2) We will introduce you to big questions in the study of political science, how political scientists have answered those questions, and why political scientists answer matters for how we solve the most vexing problems facing society today.

3) We will teach you how political scientists answer core questions, students will learn about the fundamental concepts that form the foundation of the more advanced theories of politics introduced in later courses.

4) Students will also receive an introduction into the origin of political science concepts. Students will encounter methods that political scientists use to build theories, generate hypotheses, and then empirically test those hypotheses.
Prerequisites  There are no prerequisites

Evaluation
There are four components to your final grade.

1) 30% : Writing assignments.
Over the quarter you will complete four short (3-4 pages) writing assignments. Each writing assignment will give you the opportunity to practice a different style of writing. Practicing different styles of writing will be useful for completing both your academic work and later in your career after college.
The essays will cover the following four subject areas:

Assignment 1: Evaluating and arbitrating a dispute between competing arguments
   - Essay Topic Distributed: 1/11/2016
   - Essay Due: 1/27/2016

Assignment 2: Explaining a “puzzle” in political decision making
   - Essay Topic Distributed: 1/27/2016
   - Essay Due: 2/10/2016

Assignment 3: Evaluating an argument using original data analysis
   - Essay Topic Distributed: 2/10/2016
   - Essay Due: 2/29/2016

Assignment 4: Provide a policy brief with recommendations on how to address a major problem
   - Essay Due: 3/9/2016

We will provide you with specifics on the topic and length of the papers in class. Format your paper as a Microsoft Word document and send it as an attachment named after yourself, using your last name, followed by your first name, followed by the response paper number, e.g. SchultzKenPaper1.docx for your first response paper and SchultzKen2.docx for your second response paper. Paste the text of the paper into the body of the email, as well, as insurance in case the attachment does not go through. Late response papers will not be accepted.

- 25%: Midterm Exam
- 35%: Final Exam. Thursday, March 17, 1215-315.
- 10%: Section Participation.
   Our class integrates active learning within the course. In class we will use examples, simulations, and interactive scenarios to provide insights into the major problems we address in
the course. The only way to completely learn the material is to attend class. Students who regularly attend and participate will receive the highest participation grades.

If you miss a section, you will receive credit as if you participated in that section if and only if: (1) you missed the section for reasons beyond your control, i.e. illness, scheduled athletic event, or family emergency; (2) you notify your TA prior to the scheduled section or demonstrate why advance notification was impossible; and (3) you write a one-page commentary on the readings for that section and submit it electronically to your TA by 11:00 a.m. on the Monday following the section you missed. The one-page commentary will count as your participation for the week.

Students with Disabilities
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oe).

Required Readings
There is no required text for the course. We will assign articles for each course meeting.

Class Outline

Unit 1: How Do We Govern Ourselves?

1/4, Introduction: The Science of Politics and the Purpose of Government
- Silver, Nate. “Nov. 5. Late Poll Gains for Obama Leave Romney with Longer Odds”.  http://nyti.ms/1PscqK3

1/6, The Power of the Median?

1/11, How We Choose Representatives and Why it Matters
  http://wapo.st/1davdLp


1/13, **Holding Elected Officials Accountable**


1/18. **No meeting, MLK Day**

1/20, **The Corrupting Power of Money?**


1/25, **Autocracy: Representation and Accountability without Elections**


**Unit 2: The Environment**

1/27, **Public Opinion and Environmental Policy**


2/1, The Role of Corporations and NGOs

2/3, International Cooperation on the Environment

2/8: Midterm
Unit 3: War

2/10, The Puzzle of War

2/15, No Class, President’s Day

2/17, The Role of International Organizations

2/22, Is Interstate war becoming obsolete?
2/24, Civil War
- Marc Lynch, ed. 2013. The Political Science of Syrias Civil War. Project on Middle East Political Science, chapters by James Fearon, David Cunningham, Barbara Walter, and Thomas Hegghammer, and any others that interest you.

2/29 Terrorism

Unit 4: Poverty, Inequality, and the Problem of Redistribution

3/2, Why Are Some Countries Rich and Other Countries Poor? (Part 1: Bad Luck)

3/7, Why Are Some Countries Rich and Other Countries Poor? (Part 2: Bad Policy)
3/9, Why are there poor people in rich countries?
