PSCI 498A: CURRENT ISSUES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
Spring 2017

Instructor: Heather Whiteside

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Contact Policy: Email is the best way to get in touch with the professor outside of scheduled office hours. A few things to remember when emailing:

- Please use your official UW email account.
- Please remember to sign your email with a first and last name.
- Please include in the subject heading the course code concerning the content of your email.
- Please allow 24-48 hours for a response to your email. Please note that I generally do not answer emails after 4:00pm on weekdays or on weekends (4:00pm Friday to 9:00am Monday).
- Email should be used for discussing course material or the assignments. For any other matter that requires extensive discussion please see the professor by making an appointment.

Course Description:
Examine a current issue in political science by attending talks, monitoring the media, and doing independent research. With topics being self-selected and work being self-guided, students in this course will demonstrate independent learning and gain the experience-based skills needed to investigate how a concept/issue in political science plays out in contemporary politics, policy and governance. There is no classroom component to this course, instead participants complete three reflection essays and submit a final project that encapsulates their experience.

Pre-Requisites: For Political Science majors only, upon approval by Experiential Learning Coordinator (Dr. Mariam Mufti: mmufti@uwaterloo.ca).

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Select a broad topic/concept in political science
- Attend talks, conferences, monitor the media and/or do independent research on the chosen topic/concept.
- Complete pre-, mid-, and post- learning reflections using Learn
- Prepare a final project that investigates how the chosen topic/concept plays out in contemporary politics, policy and governance.
Texts:
There are no assigned textbooks for this class; instead it is based on individual experience and independent research (suggested sources for information on relevant political science concepts include: academic literature, public talks/presentations, newspaper articles and magazines, government/official literature). Supplementary materials also available on LEARN include rubrics for assignment evaluation and final project design.

Evaluation:
Reflection #1 10%
Reflection #2 10%
Reflection #3 10%
Final Project 70%

Assignments:
Reflection #1:
Due May 19, 2017 by 4:30pm.
200-300 words, submitted via LEARN
Before you start the research reflect on why you have chosen your particular ‘current issue’ area over other pressing areas?

Reflection #2:
Due June 9, 2017 by 4:30pm.
200-300 words, submitted via LEARN
Address the following question:
What new insights has your current issue research revealed that you did not yet already know? In light of these insights how do you plan to proceed ahead with your project?

Reflection #3:
Due June 30, 2017 by 4:30pm.
200-300 words, submitted via LEARN
Address the following question:
What gaps exist in your knowledge of your current issue and how will you address these in the future?

Final Project:
Due July 21, by 4:30pm.
The final project must be 1,000-1,500 written words, which can be, but is not limited to, a standard written report. Other options, chosen at the student’s discretion, include submitting a blog or daily journal, a timeline, creating a website, a photo essay, a mock newspaper articles or opinion editorials, a poster presentation, a slideshow (PowerPoint), a vlog/documentary/video (with accompanying written abstracts or blurbs), an audio recording of a mock radio interview with written transcript. Submitted via LEARN.
Course Policies

Course Website: The course outline, detailed assignments, class announcements, grades, etc. will be available on the course website on LEARN. If you have questions about when assignments are due, late policies, sickness accommodation, etc., your first source of information is the course outline. Users can login to LEARN via: LEARN http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/. Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password.

Submission of Assignments: The final submission date for assignments is 7 days after the due date (with the imposition of late penalties). The instructor WILL NOT accept the assignment for grading after 7 days have passed regardless of documented extenuating circumstances. If an extenuating circumstance may prevent you from submitting an assignment by its submission date, please contact the professor before the due date and be prepared to provide official documentation concerning your situation.

Assignments have to be submitted by 4:30 pm on the due date in the on Learn in the appropriate drop box folder. The time-stamp given on the uploaded document in Learn dropbox will be used to determine if an assignment is late.

For assignments submitted on Learn, you are responsible for ensuring that files are uncorrupted and submitted as a .pdf document or as a Microsoft Office Word document. All written assignments must be formatted accordingly: Times New Roman, font size 12, 1” margins on all sides and double-spaced.

Late Penalties: All late assignments (that is, assignments submitted after 4:30 pm on their due date) will be penalized at 10% a day (including weekends). The instructor WILL NOT accept the assignment 7 days after the due date (please see submission policy above)

For example, if you submitted your assignment at 7 pm on the due date it will count as a late submission. If you received 16/20, a 5% penalty would mean that you will get 15/20 instead.

A waiver of this penalty will be considered only in the event of an officially documented extenuating circumstance (this does NOT include a note from your mother). Also see “Extension Policy” below.

Extension Policy: All requests for assignment extensions must be directed to the professor. If a situation arises that may prevent you from completing an assignment, contact the professor before the due date. You will be granted an extension only if it is an officially documented extenuating circumstance (that is, serious personal illness, critical personal or family crisis, etc.) by AccessAbility, Counselling Services, or with the Verification of Illness Form. Please note that in the case of illness, I will only accept the UW Verification of Illness Form.

Other extensions and accommodations are granted rarely and are at the discretion of the instructor. Extensions will NOT be granted for computer-related issues. Please also note that if you have not been granted an extension the late policy and submission policy WILL apply without exception.
Policy About Collaborative Work: All written work must be sole authored.

University Policies

Cross-listed course: Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, Student Discipline http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, Student Petitions http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70. In addition, consult Student Grievances http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes for the Faculty of Arts’ grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, Student Appeals http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): Academic Integrity http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): Academic Integrity Office http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the
curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

**Turnitin.com:** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented.

If you chose not to have your assignment screened by Turnitin, the instructor will administer a 15-minute oral examination based on your paper. The oral exam must be scheduled 1 week before the due date of the assignment, but will be held at the instructor’s convenience. If you choose not to use Turnitin, your assignment must be submitted to Dr. Whiteside’s PSCI dropbox by 4:30 pm on the due date. See [Turnitin](http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/integrity-waterloo-faculty/turnitin-waterloo) for more information.