Course Description and Objectives:

This course is designed as a broad introduction to Politics and Government. The goal of this course is to get students to think systematically about what goes into political processes, how political decisions are made, and what the outcome of these decisions mean for the people and governments involved, as well as what these things mean to a nation-state’s citizenry in general. Unfortunately, we only have the time to touch briefly upon any one topic, however the subject matter covered here will give you the basic knowledge of how scholars view the political processes of nation-states, and will help to prepare you for upper level courses in Political Science.

We will begin with a general introduction to politics by discussing the terminology and methods scholars use when they examine political systems. We will proceed by examining the inputs to political systems (i.e. regime type, political parties, interest organizations, and political culture), the decision making processes of political systems (i.e. government design, bureaucracies, and courts systems) and the outputs of political systems (i.e. policies, laws, and economic consequences). We will also examine the feedback role that the media, interest groups, and individuals play in the political process, as well as, the influence that the international environment has on individual nation-states’ decisions.

Reading Assignments:

The readings for this course come from the text listed above and are listed below by subject matter that is most closely associated with the day’s lecture. The reading requirements are meant to help you better understand the lectures, and vice versa. You will notice throughout the course that the lecture material may not correlate directly to the reading assignments. Reading topics not covered in the lecture can and will be used on the exams, and likewise the additional suggested readings listed in the schedule can and will be used on the exams. Reliance on just the lectures, or just the text, for test preparation, is a mistake.

Any additional reading assignments will be announced well in advance of the class lecture and will be on reserve at the library, posted on the web, or handouts.
**Class Participation:**

Class participation in the form of questions, comments, and discussion is strongly encouraged, but is not a part of your official grade as there are up to 35 students per section and attempts at an objective scoring of participation could prove to be inaccurate measure with this many students.

**Exams and Writing Assignments:**

There will be three exams, including the final, and each will count for 25% of your final grade. **The final exam will include cumulative material.** Dates for these exams are listed below. The grading scale is the same one common to most university courses. A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = below 60.

*Make up exams:* I am a flexible instructor, and am willing to give allowances for **valid and proven excuses.** Make-ups for the final exam are allowed only in extraordinary circumstances.

**Writing Assignments:**

In an effort to encourage students to learn more about politics, and in an effort to examine their understanding of the course content, throughout this course you are required to write 3 short essays (3 pages each). In these assignments you are to find a news story that relates to the subject we have covered or will cover, give a brief summary of the article, and then most importantly, specifically relate the article's content to the subjects discussed in the lectures or book. This should apply to governmental processes and ancillary activities only. These articles should come from reputable sources of international news, many of which are free via the internet. There are abundant resources available to students for researching current/recent news stories. The library receives several major newspapers and news magazines, and there are many online resources such as Lexis-Nexis (on the library’s website), reuters.com, ap.org, nytimes.com, iht.com, washingtonpost.com, cnn.com, foxnews.com, bbc.co.uk - just to name a few. Typical writing requirements apply here - typed, 12 point font, and correct spelling and grammar are expected. I do not require that you turn in a copy of the article, but only that you list the article title and source, including title, author, date, publication, and URL address if applicable. Each is worth 33 points (100 total), and together are 25% of you final grade.

**Final Course Grade:**

Final course grades will be determined based on the following scale: A = 93-100, - A = 90-92, +B = 87-89, B = 83-86, -B = 80-82, +C = 77-79, C = 73-76, -C = 70-72, +D = 67-69, D = 63-66, -D = 60-62, F = 59 or below.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is required. For every unexcused absence you will lose 1 point from your final course grade. If you know that you will be absent for a class or exam, please let me know in advance and I may be more willing to make allowances. Although I will not take role every day, I will take it often enough for unexcused absences to be consequential.
**Academic Honesty:**

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the university’s policies on academic dishonesty and plagiarism which can be found in the Student Handbook and are associated with the Honor Statement. Cheating in any fashion will not be tolerated and will result in a failure of the assignment or exam in question. Also, any incidences in question will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students with identified and certified learning and/or physical disabilities should inform the instructor well in advance of examinations so that the proper arrangements for testing can be made with the Office of Disability Services. Students must register with the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the semester so that alternative testing arrangements may be made.

**Schedule:**

Wed 8/19 – Syllabus and Introduction
Fri 8/21 – Introduction Ch. 1
Mon 8/24 – Political Thought Ch. 2
Wed 8/26 – Continued
Fri 8/28 – The State Ch. 3
Mon 8/31 – State Authority and Legitimacy Ch. 7

**Inputs**

Wed 9/2 – Regime Type Ch. 8
Fri 9/4 - Continued
***Mon 9/7 – Labor Day Holiday – No Class
Wed 9/9 – Government Design Ch.9
Fri 9/11 - Elections Ch. 10
Mon 9/14 – Political Parties Ch. 11
Wed 9/16 - Continued
Fri 9/18 – Interest Groups Ch. 12
Mon 9/21 – Social Movements Ch. 13
***Wed 9/23 – Wrap Up/ Review – 1st Writing Assignment Due
***Fri 9/25 – Exam One

**Decision Making**

Mon 9/28 – Parliamentary Systems Ch. 14
Wed 9/30 - Continued
Fri 10/2 – Presidential Systems Ch. 15
Mon 10/5 - Continued
Wed 10/7 – Authoritarian Systems
Fri 10/9 – Communist Systems
Mon 10/12 - Bureaucracy Ch.16
Wed 10/14 - Continued
***Friday 10/16 – No Class – Fall Break
Mon 10/19 - Laws and Courts Ch. 17
***Wed 10/21 – Wrap Up/ Review – 2nd Writing Assignment Due
***Fri 10/23 – Exam Two

**Outputs**
Mon 10/26 – Policies of the State – Ch. 4
Wed 10/28 - Continued
Fri 10/30 – Political Economy – Ch. 5
Mon 11/2 - Continued
Wed 11/4 -
Fri 11/6 - Political Choice – Ch. 6
Mon 11/9 – Continued
Wed 11/11 – Feedback Mechanisms
Fri 11/13 – The Role of the Media
Mon 11/16 - The International Environment Ch. 18
Wed 11/18 - Continued
Fri 11/20 – Continued
Mon 11/23 – Foreign Policy Decision Making
Wed 11/25 – Continued

***Fri 11/27 – Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class
***Mon 11/30 – Wrap Up and Exam Review – 3rd Writing Assignment Due

*** Mon 12/7 – Final Exam 2:45-4:45