

POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND IDEAS
PSC 1020-Section 016
Department of Political Science
Metropolitan State College Denver Co.
Spring 2010

Dr. Tahira S. Khan
Class Time: Tue, Thu, 2:30-3:45 pm
Office Hours: Tue, Thu, 12:00-2:30 pm
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Course Description

“Teacher, if he or she is indeed wise, does not teach you to enter the house of wisdom but leads you to the threshold of your own mind.”
(Khalil Gibran: poet, painter and thinker)

Do you ever think that we all live in a certain kind of political system, “good” or “bad,” and we all talk about politics directly or indirectly every day? Do you ever question that why do we believe in certain kind of political ideas and reject others? Further, why do you wonder that many countries across the world have different political systems and institutions?

This course will attempt to answer these and many more questions related to various political ideologies which have given birth to different/opposing political systems. It further examines the nature of institutions and processes of different political systems and their relationship with certain political ideologies. The study of philosophical and historical origins of ideologies (i.e. democracy, authoritarianism, communism, nationalism and feminism etc.) will help us to understand changing patterns of contemporary political systems in the world. The central assumption of the course is that a broad understanding of contemporary national and international politics requires study of historical origin and socio-economic contexts of contending political ideologies.

Course Requirements

- Class attendance and participation
- Completion of weekly reading assignments
- One Mid-term exam (Take Home)
- Final exam (In-class)

Grading and Evaluation

- Attendance : 15%
- Participation: 15%
- Mid-term exam: 30%
- Final exam: 50%

Text books

Thomas M. Magstadt, *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions, and Issues* (Belmont: Cengage Learning) 2009, 2006

Leon P. Baradat, *Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impact* (3rd edi) (New Jersey: Pearson, Prentice Hall) 2009

Important Notes

- *Course syllabus* contains all the information which you require throughout the semester. Please consider this document as your semester guide. If you have any question or need any information, read the syllabus and then contact me. Do not waste your time by asking questions such as, where is my office? What are my office hours or email address?
- *Class attendance* is mandatory and I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. More than 10 minutes late arrival will mark absence. More than 3 unexcused absence will take your attendance grade down.
- *Class participation* grade will be determined on the basis of your questions and comments related to the topic of the day. You are free to express your political views but in respectful and unbiased manner.
(Frequent absences and lack of participation throughout the semester will affect your overall grade. Every student is not expected to participate in every. The instructor do reserve the right to ask questions/comments related to assigned readings randomly.)
- *Make-up exams* are not allowed in this class. In the case of illness/emergency, the student has to provide some kind of proof and communicate with the instructor in her office. Exam should be taken within one week after the missed date.
- *Communication with Instructor* can be done by email. I do check my email multiple times a day. Please do check your Metro email daily as I will be communicating with the class if any change in readings or class schedule is made.
- *Office Hours* time can be utilized to discuss or share your academic problems or personal limitation for this course. If you cannot come to me during the office hours, please make an appointment by email. You will be given the first available time.
- *Final grade* calculation will be done in letter grade. The standard formulation of the letter grade is; A (90% and above) B (80 to 89%) C (70 to 79%) D (60 to 69%) and below 60% is an F.

Weekly Reading Assignments

Week one

January 19

Introduction

January 21

Why do we study politics?

Magstadt Ch. 1

Week two

January 26

Key concepts in politics

Magstadt Ch. 1

January 28

Defining ideologies

Baradat Ch. 1

Week three

February 2

Varieties of ideologies

Magstadt Ch. 2

February 4

Varieties of political attitudes

Baradat Ch. 2

Week four

February 9

Search for ideal political world

Magstadt Ch. 3

February 11

Kinds of democratic ideas

Baradat Ch. 5

Week five

February 16

Democracy and capitalism

Baradat Ch. 5

February 18

Democratic political processes

Baradat Ch. 6

Week six

February 23

Socialist theories

Baradat Ch. 8

February 25

Fascism and nationalism

Baradat Ch. 10

Week seven

March 2

Feminism and environmentalism

Baradat Ch. 12

March 4

Developing World systems

Baradat Ch. 11

Week eight

March 9

Revision for exam

March 11

Mid terms exam

Week nine

March 16

Parliamentary democracies

Magstadt Ch. 7

March 18

Parliamentary democracies

Magstadt Ch. 7

Spring Break !!! March 22-26

Week ten

March 30

Authoritarian models

Magstadt Ch. 5

April 1

Totalitarian model

Magstadt Ch. 6

Week eleven

April 6

Socialist systems

Baradat Ch. 9

April 8

Socialist systems

Baradat Ch. 9

Week twelve

April 13

Socialist systems after the USSR
Magstadt Ch. 8

April 15

Socialist systems after the USSR
Magstadt Ch. 8

Week thirteen

April 20

Political systems in the developing world
Magstadt Ch. 9

April 22

Political actors in the systems: Citizens
Magstadt Ch. 10

Week fourteen

April 27

Political actors in the systems: Leaders and elite
Magstadt Ch. 12

April 29

Processes of political participations: Elections
Magstadt Ch. 11

Week fifteen

May 4

Political events
Magstadt Ch. 13

May 6

Revision !!!!