

POLITICAL SCIENCE 105-03--SVL
CONTROVERSIES IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICS
SPRING 2016

Mr. Jeff Colbert--308 Curry Building--Office Hours--MWF 8:00-8:50/TR 8:00-9:15

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Texts: Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impacts—11th Edition--Baradat

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues—19th Edition--McKenna and Feingold

This course will deal with a variety of political terms and concepts. It is, in effect, an introduction to "political science" as opposed to an introduction to American government (PSC 100). As do all courses that meet the "Philosophical, Religious, Ethical Perspectives" GEC requirement here at UNCG, this course is more philosophical and conceptual than others. Therefore, we will spend time discussing the basic, underlying concepts of all political systems (power, the state, the individual, politics, etc.) as well as the underlying concepts of specific political systems (Socialism, Marxism, Anarchism, Democracy, etc.)

However, I will attempt, both in the lectures/discussions and through the use of Taking Sides, to draw these concepts and theories into our current experience. There is intrinsic value in knowledge, especially knowledge that underpins our political world. However, I will attempt to make this relevant to you and, frankly, will expect you to do the same, so we will work together to accomplish this. You are expected to read all assigned material prior to class, because reading the material assigned and having a willingness to discuss and ask questions will make the course more interesting and stimulating for you. Therefore, it is required that you come to class prepared and involved. Hopefully, you will feel comfortable discussing issues and opinions. Class discussion and pop quizzes will reveal to me whether or not you have done the readings and will reward those who come to class as well and have done the readings. My goal is to make class time as interesting as possible while adhering to the utmost necessity--that I both present to you and help you discover relevant and accurate information about some of the political philosophies of the past and present and how they relate to your present and future.

In this course, we will also use a third tool to “bring the material home.” As you should know, this is a service-learning course. Some of you are probably wondering what that means. Here is a working definition:

Service learning links community action and academic study so that each strengthens the other.

Students, faculty and community partners collaborate to enable students to address community needs, initiate social change, build effective relationships, enhance academic skills and develop civic literacy.

Service learning encourages critical consideration of the ethical dimensions of community engagement.

A student engaged in service learning will volunteer, in a “hands-on” way, with a nonprofit or government agency that is actively working to improve the lives of people who have needs of some sort. You will work a minimum of 25 hours spread out over the semester. You have four weeks to locate your site and begin your work, so this requirement will be spread out over approximately ten weeks. It is NOT acceptable for your assignment to be accomplished in 2-3 long days. You must have at least 8 work sessions with your program/agency. Part of the experience is for you to have regular contact with individuals working for one of these agencies as well as you having regular contact with those they are attempting to serve. You will have significant choice in picking your service learning site. However, you **MUST** work with an agency or program that works with human individuals with needs, whether they are physical, educational, emotional or financial. And, you MUST work directly with those individuals who have the need. In other words, being a fund-raiser, a file clerk, a stock person, a sales person, etc. for an appropriate agency will NOT count. You may **NOT** work with a for-profit entity.

Hopefully, this course will allow you to develop in three ways. First, as a “Philosophical, Religious, Ethical Perspectives” course, you should learn about some of the basic political philosophies that have impacted our world in the past, impact many decisions and policies today (both in the U. S. and abroad), and will likely lay much of the groundwork for the future. Second, using the Taking Sides text, you will have the opportunity to apply those philosophies to significant issues of our day. Finally, you will work, on a limited basis, side by side with those who are attempting to solve, or at least work on, the issues of our day as well as be exposed to those who live in those issues on a daily basis.

Specifically, by the end of the course you should be able to:

- 1.) Utilize a common set of definitions relating to the political world so as to better understand that world as well as facilitate issue discussions in class;
- 2.) Be able to name and identify the basic principles of a number of significant political philosophies (LG3);
- 3.) Be able to name and understand the background of a number of influential political philosophers (LG3);
- 4.) Read, understand and discuss opposing viewpoints on many of the critical political issues of today (LG1);
- 5.) Understand some of the difficulties faced by those working in an organization which attempts to improve the lives of people (LG5);
- 6.) Understand some of the difficulties faced by the clients of an organization which attempts to improve the lives of people (LG4);
- 7.) Process in verbal and written form items 1-6 (LG1);
- 8.) Successfully complete tests which require discrete knowledge (definitions and/or short answers) as well as discrete knowledge combined with larger thoughts and bodies of material (essays) (LG1, LG4).

GRADE STRUCTURE:

The grade structure of this class will have five components. First, there will be two tests. Each will cover a set of political philosophers and philosophies. These tests will be definition/short answer and essay in nature.

Second, there will be three short papers. There are specific technical instructions for these papers noted later on this syllabus. Deviations will result in significant grade penalties. Papers will be graded on style, punctuation, spelling and grammar as well as substance. The first and second papers’ topic will require you to examine an issue in the Taking Sides text. However, these papers will NOT involve your opinion on the issue. You will have to summarize the views of others and then examine the issue through the eyes of one of an assigned set of philosophers and explain why you believe THEY would hold a particular opinion. The third paper’s topic will be different in nature and will require you to incorporate in some way your service-learning experience. The written assignments should improve your ability to read, analyze, and write, and encourage you to read and think about the issues of the day with more regularity and insight.

The third component will be class preparation/attendance/participation. Periodic pop quizzes will be given in class to assure that you take the reading seriously and are prepared for class. Attendance will be taken regularly because, quite simply, it’s really hard to participate if you aren’t here!! Finally, because some of you are more comfortable with class discussion than others, your participation grade will not simply be a measurement of who talks the most/least. Participation quality will be more important than quantity. However, you will have to regularly participate in class in order to achieve a satisfactory grade in this area. To aid in this, some class discussion sessions will be small group rather than large group.

The fourth component will be a journal, with an entry for each day you work at your service learning site. Each entry should be approximately ½ page to one page in length. Your journal should reflect that day’s activities and your thoughts about those activities. Some of your entries may reply to specific prompts that might be given during the semester. In addition, it is expected that you will relate your activities to our class readings in each journal entry.

Last, but not least, will be your 25 hours of service. Your service will be evaluated. Each supervisor will be asked to complete a brief evaluation of your work. Remember that our goal is to assist agencies and their clients, not be an irritation or a hindrance to their work. The service hours should help you see the depth of problems faced by many people today, allow you to critically analyze those problems, and help you see the need for you to become active and involved in your community while at UNCG and after you leave UNCG.

Grading Percentages/Due Dates:

2 tests—20% each (02-29/04-13)	40%
3 papers—5%, 10%, 15% (02-24, 04-06, 05-04)	30%
Attendance/Participation/Pop Quizzes	10%
Academic Journal (Due 04-27)	10%
Employer Evaluation (Due 04-27)	<u>10%</u>
	100%

The papers must adhere to the following technical rules/restrictions:

- * These are formal papers--no creative writing or questionable language;
- * Minimum length—1 1/2 pages/maximum length--2 full pages in word content length;
- * The pages will be stapled together (no covers/binders/folders);
- * Your name will be on a separate sheet attached to the back of your paper;
- * No title/cover page--simply type your title at the top of page 1;
- * Typewritten, double-spaced, Times New Roman-12 font;
- * Margins will be 1/2 inch on right/left and 1 inch on top/bottom;
- * The paper will be graded on style/spelling/grammar/punctuation/substance.

Violation of these rules will invoke an automatic one letter grade penalty per infraction. Generally, don't bother me with excuses; I've heard most of them. Real, serious and documented excuses may be considered. If you have any questions about any of the above, they are to be asked before your paper is completed. Ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse once you have submitted your paper.

All papers/assignments are due on the day assigned, at the beginning of class. Late work receives a one letter grade per day late penalty. Any assignment not completed and turned in will result in a grade of "0". It is your responsibility to know about and have prepared all assignments.

ELECTRONICS:

Turn off or turn to vibrate ALL cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices other than your laptop computer. If there is an emergency possibility and you need your cell phone to be on, inform me. Otherwise, they ARE NOT to be heard or seen in class. If you cannot follow this instruction, I will give you the choice of giving me your phone or leaving the classroom and being counted absent for that day. If you use a laptop computer in class, you may use it for note-taking only unless otherwise directed or approved. Close, not reduce, all other screens. If you are found using your laptop for other purposes in class, your right to use your laptop in class will be forfeited. All students who use laptops must sit in the first two rows.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Violations include, for example, cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification, and facilitating academic dishonesty. If knowledge is to be gained and properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from dishonesty. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and shall not be tolerated (from UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy). To ensure that you understand the university's policy on academic integrity, review the guidelines and list of violations at <<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>>.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

I have an attendance policy because the taxpayers of North Carolina and others are paying a decent chunk of change for your education. Since this class regularly meets two times a week, you have two cuts. Generally, I do not live in the "excused" and "unexcused" absence world. Whether you have a bug, want to sleep in, have car trouble, or want to come back to campus late after the weekend, you get two and that's all. However, there are three exceptions:

- 1.) If you are ill for a lengthy period (defined as a week or longer), present me with the appropriate documentation and we can discuss it;
- 2.) If you are required to miss class due to a university function, discuss this with me ahead of time and those absences will not count against you;
- 3.) Third, students are, by state law, allowed two excused absences due to religious holidays, which do not count toward your total allowed absences. If you plan to miss class because of a religious observance, you must notify me in advance of your absence.

Two other matters related to attendance. First, if you are later than 5 minutes to class, stay out. You will disrupt the class. If you enter the room, I will count you as absent. If you enter the class later than 5 minutes and choose to stay in the room to gain the content, do NOT sign an attendance roster. That roster is designed to give credit to those who came to class and arrived on time. If you sign it, you will be violating the honor code. So, be in class and be on time. In addition, moving in and out of class is disruptive to other students and disrespectful to me. Do what you have to do so that you don't have to leave during class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with documentation of special needs are allowed certain accommodations in classes. If you believe you could benefit from such accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services on campus before such accommodations can be made. The office is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215, and the office is open 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday. Telephone: 334-5440; e-mail: oars@uncg.edu. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me during the first week of classes. **Any specific accommodations MUST be discussed NO LESS than one week before the accommodation is needed.**

SCHEDULE

01-11	Introduction
01-13	No Class—Instructor--Prior Commitment
01-18	No Class—Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
01-20	Baradat, Chapter 1
01-25	Baradat, Chapter 2
01-27	Baradat, Chapter 3
02-01	Baradat, Chapter 3/Taking Sides, Issue 1.1
02-03	No Class—Instructor--Prior Commitment
02-08	Baradat, Chapter 4
02-10	Baradat, Chapter 4/ <u>Taking Sides</u> , Issue 1.2/ Paper #1 Topic Assigned
02-15	Baradat, Chapter 5
02-17	Baradat, Chapter 5/ <u>Taking Sides</u> , Issue 1.3/ SERVICE LEARNING SITE SECURED
02-22	Baradat, Chapter 6
02-24	Baradat, Chapter 6/ <u>Taking Sides</u> , Issue 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/ Paper #1 Due
02-29	Test 1
03-02	Service Learning Discussion
03-07/09	No Class—Spring Break!!
03-14	Baradat, Chapter 7
03-16	Baradat, Chapter 8
03-21	Baradat, Chapter 8/ Paper #2 Topic Assigned
03-23	<u>Taking Sides</u> , Issues 3.4, 3.6
03-28	Baradat, Chapter 9
03-30	Service Learning Discussion
04-04	Baradat, Chapter 10/ <u>Taking Sides</u> , Issues 4.3
04-06	Baradat, Chapter 11/ Paper #2 Due
04-11	Service Learning Discussion
04-13	Test 2/ Employer Evaluations Distributed
04-18/20	<u>Taking Sides</u> Issues--TBA/ SERVICE LEARNING COMPLETED by 04-25
04-25	Service Learning Discussion-- Paper #3 Topic Assigned
04-27	Reading Day
05-04	Paper #3 Due at my office, no later than noon (You MAY turn your paper in earlier, if you wish to do so)