

# INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE, POLS100

## IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE, SPRING, 2020

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**Office Hours:** M/W 8:30-9:30 AM &  
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### COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

Narratives, poems, dramatizations, and myths have always been used through time to express a culture's dominant values, ideals, beliefs, and politics. This course gives students the opportunity to use "popular culture," in the form of films & short stories, as a vehicle for engaging the field of Political Science. Emphasis is placed on the concepts and methodologies used in the study of political institutions, political participation, public opinion, and the international political system. Topics also include a survey of political theory and the history of American political ideology and culture. We will closely examine how these topics are embedded in popular culture in order to understand the underlying logic of politics and the utility of political science. This course is thus intended for students majoring in and/or interested in the field of political science.

#### !!WARNING!!

*Some of the movies we'll watch may have an "R" rating and may depict extreme violence, nudity and sexual intercourse, racist and profane language, drug use, and other content that may disturb and unnerve you. If you are easily offended, I strongly encourage you to consider taking a different course.*

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### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Develop an understanding of the major sub-fields of political science
- Examine the world's major ideologies and political systems
- Develop an understanding of universal Human Rights

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### TEXTS & SUPPLIES

- Van Belle, Douglas A. 2016. *A Novel Approach to Politics: Introducing Political Science through Books, Movies, and Popular Culture*. 5th edition. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1506368658. Hard copies are available for purchase at the IVC bookstore/Amazon or to borrow via the IVC library reserve.
- Any other course readings and/or videos will be posted on Canvas or available via IVC library reserve (see below schedule for details)
- 882E Scantron & pencil for midterm/final exams

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## COURSE GRADING & REQUIREMENTS<sup>1</sup>

Discussion Posts & Participation	(10%)
Politics & Film (P&F) Analytical Writeups	(15%)
Term Paper #1 (3/22)	(15%)
Midterm (4/8)	(15%)
Term Paper #2 (5/3)	(15%)
Term Paper #3 (6/7)	(15%)
Final (6/10)	(15%)

**THREE TERM PAPERS (45%):** There will be three (650-700 word) papers for this course. The paper instructions will be posted on our Canvas homepage. An **electronic copy of your term paper is due via Canvas (Pages, Google Docs. and web links are not acceptable formats)** on the dates specified below. I will go over the details of this assignment in the week's before they are due.

**MIDTERM & FINAL (30%):** You will be given a midterm & final in this course. Each exam may consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, & quote/clause identification. That being said, you should expect exams that ask you to do more than simply memorize content. **The final exam will not be cumulative!**

**DISCUSSION POSTS & PARTICIPATION (10%):** Given that a significant amount of our time will be spent analyzing films, we will continue the conversations we start on Thursday's using Canvas discussion forums. Each discussion board will be unique and is designed to foster a deep analysis of the week's topic, key concepts, and how they pertain that week's film. Discussion forums will open the Monday of each new module—**initial topic replies are due the following Thursday at 11pm and peer replies are due the following Sunday at 11pm.** Strict plagiarism standards will be used for these posts, so please be aware that you will need to show originality of thought. **Discussion posts cannot be made up**, so don't wait until the deadlines! In addition, each week I will take **volunteers to summarize these discussions, due via Canvas Sunday at 11pm that week, and will lead our initial conversation at the beginning on class the following Monday.**

**POLITICS & FILM (P&F) ANALYSIS WRITEUPS (15%):** Each week students will complete an analysis of how the readings/lectures apply to that week's film. Students should be **taking notes, using the provided template on Canvas, during the class film.** Then, polish this analysis and **submit via Canvas no later than the following Saturday at 11pm (Pages, Google Docs. and web links are not acceptable formats)**

<sup>1</sup> Please note I reserve the right to make any necessary changes to the above assignments in order to accommodate class progress and/or scheduling changes. In addition, **this is a 'web enhanced' class**, so **students will need access to internet & Canvas to participate fully.** If you are unable to do so, please contact me immediately so accommodations can be worked out.

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## EXPECTATIONS & IMPORTANT POLICIES<sup>2</sup>

### ATTENDANCE

- Without discussing it with me ahead of time, **if you are more than 5 minutes late or leave more than 5 minutes early, you will not receive reduced credit for any assignments completed in class that day**—please be respectful of **our time**. If you have to take public transportation, work, or any other commitments which do not allow you to come to our class on time, I encourage you to pick another class that better suits your schedule and needs.
- Life happens (cars explode, people pass on, etc.). Rather than adjudicate minor absences, I will provide **two extra credit opportunities that will allow you to make up lost points**. Please consider these pre-excused absences—**no need to email me about minor issues**. For family or medical emergencies, please contact me **ahead of time**, then set up **an office visit with supporting documentation** so we can discuss potential extensions and makeups.

### EMAIL POLICY

- Emails should include your name and **class meeting day/time** (e.g. T/Th, 8 AM)
- Email should be used to schedule meetings, for short questions clarifying class assignments, or specific lecture items (do not use the assignment comment section in Canvas to communicate, I will not respond). **In-depth questions about course readings or an entire day's lecture are not appropriate for e-mail**. Questions which are answered on the syllabus **will likely not receive a response**—for general questions, please consult the **Canvas Q/A forum** or **your peers first**.
- Grades & comments will be posted on Canvas and can be discussed during office hours--**my door is always open!**

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES & CLASS CONDUCT

- Students using phones during lecture for purposes not related to class activities will be asked to leave class and will likely **not receive credit for any assignments completed in class that day**—please step outside if you must use your phone.
- No recording or photography of any kind is permitted without prior authorization.
- In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Therefore, please appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another, **respect each other's opinions** and refrain from personal attacks **of any kind**.

### MISSING ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE CHALLENGES

- You are responsible for any work lost or late due to technical/internet problems.
- Missing assignments and requests to re-grade must be reported/requested **within one week of the assessment being graded**. Grade challenges must be accompanied with detailed explanation & evidence justifying the request.

<sup>2</sup> My lectures & all course materials are protected by copyright and may not be reproduced or distributed without my written consent. Please be advised that this syllabus is “subject to change,” any changes will be announced via Canvas. Violation of any of the below policies may result in being dropped, dismissed and/or an F in the class. See the end of this syllabus for more details on college and course policies.

## ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

WK	DATE	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING/FILM	ASSIGNMENT
1	2/17	<b>**Holiday**</b>		
	2/19	<b>Intro to Course</b>	Syllabus	
2	2/24	<b>Idealism, Ideology, &amp; Political Science: Part I</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define politics &amp; political science, to the best of our ability</li> <li>2. Identify differences &amp; implications of realism &amp; idealism</li> <li>3. Explain how utopias &amp; popular culture are useful tools for exploring &amp; analyzing politics</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 1-22  The Hunger Games (2012, Library Reserve Swank)	Discussion post #1.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	2/26	<b>Idealism, Ideology, &amp; Political Science: Part II</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss key differences between political theories &amp; ideologies</li> <li>2. Examine what's similar/different about classical ideologies</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 22-43  The Hunger Games (2012, Library Reserve Swank)	Discussion post #1.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #1 (Sunday @ 11pm)
3	3/2	<b>Why Government? Part I</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand motivations that lead to the establishment of government</li> <li>2. Describe the relationship of anarchy and power</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 44 – 55  Lord of the Flies (1990, YouTube)	Discussion post #2.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	3/4	<b>Why Government? Part II</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe how alliances work &amp; identify the factors that go into group identity formation</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 55 – 75  Lord of the Flies (1990, YouTube)	Discussion post #2.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #2 (Sunday @ 11pm)

		2. Analyze the role leaders play in building, maintaining, & guiding groups		
4	3/9	<b>Governing Society: Part I</b> 1. Understand leadership benefits & how gov'ts use the panopticon to maintain them 2. Explain factors that go into revolution & how they work together	Van Belle, pp. 76 – 93 V for Vendetta (2005, Swank)	Discussion post #3.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	3/11	<b>Governing Society: Part II</b> 1. Outline alternatives to government use of force to maintain control and establish their legitimacy 2. Discuss the various mechanism of governmental social control	Van Belle, pp. 93 -104. V for Vendetta (2005, Swank)	Discussion post #3.2 ( Sunday @ 11pm) P&F #3 (Sunday @ 11pm)
5	3/16	<b>Government's Role in the Economy: Part I</b> 1. Analyze the tragedy of the commons & explore potential solutions 2. Discuss Karl Marx's critique of capitalism	Van Belle, pp. 105 - 129 The Big Short (2015, Swank)	Discussion post #4.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	3/18	<b>Government's Role in the Economy: Part II</b> 1. Analyze the tragedy of the commons & explore potential solutions 2. Discuss Karl Marx's critique of capitalism	Van Belle, pp. 129 - 139 The Big Short (2015, Swank)	Discussion post #4.2 (Sunday @ 11pm) P&F #4 (Sunday @ 11pm) <b>Term Paper #1 Due Sunday via Canvas by 11 PM</b>
6	3/23	<b>Structures &amp; Institutions: Part I</b>	Van Belle, pp. 140 – 153	Discussion post #5.1 (Thursay @ 11pm)

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinguish the difference between structures &amp; institutions</li> <li>2. Understand the role of human nature in constructing political institution</li> </ol>	Snowpiercer (2013, Library Reserve)	
	3/25	<b>Structures &amp; Institutions: Part II</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the basic structures needed by all modern governments</li> <li>2. Discus building our own civilization!</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 153 - 169  Snowpiercer (2013, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #5.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #5 (Sunday @ 11pm)
<b>7</b>	3/30	<b>The Executive: Part I</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify differences between heads of government &amp; heads of state</li> <li>2. Explain the institutionalization of early executives</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 170 - 185  (Lincoln 2012, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #6.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	4/1	<b>The Executive: Part II</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain democratic constrains &amp; accountability for presidents &amp; prime ministers</li> <li>2. Analyze the tradeoffs between these two executive systems</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 185 - 196  (Lincoln 2012, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #6.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #6 (Sunday @ 11pm)
<b>8</b>	4/6	<b>Jeopardy (Extra Credit!) Review</b>	Review key terms (flashcards available through publisher website)	
	4/8	<b>***Midterm***</b>		<b>***Midterm***</b>
<b>9</b>	4/13	<b>**SPRING BREAK**</b>		
<b>10</b>	4/20	<b>The Legislative Function: Part I</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand social forces that have shaped modern legislatures</li> </ol>	Van Belle, pp. 197 - 214  Charlie Wilson's War (2007, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #7.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)

		2. Discuss key functions of democratic legislators		
	4/22	<b>The Legislative Function: Part II</b> 1. Examine differences of legislature within presidential & parliamentary systems 2. Further distinguish how coalitions work within such systems & their limitations	Van Belle, pp. 214 – 229  Charlie Wilson’s War (2007, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #7.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #7 (Sunday @ 11pm)
11	4/27	<b>What is a Bureaucracy: Part I</b> 1. Explain common perceptions of bureaucracies 2. Describe the ideals and purpose behind creating a functioning bureaucracy	Van Belle, pp. 230 – 240  (Brazil 1985, Swank)	Discussion post #8.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	4/28	<b>What is a Bureaucracy: Part II</b> 1. Identify key flaws of bureaucratic gov’t 2. Examine academic preoccupation with controlling, taming, overseeing, influencing and/or capturing bureaucracies (Frankenstein?)	Van Belle, pp. 241 – 250  (Brazil 1985, Swank)	Discussion post #8.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #8 (Sunday @ 11pm)  <b>Term Paper #2 Due Sunday via Canvas by 11 PM</b>
12	5/4	<b>Courts &amp; Law: Part I</b> 1. Describe the relationship between law and politics 2. Identify the function of court systems and compare different legal systems	Van Belle, pp. 251 – 273  Amistad (1997, Swank)	Discussion post #9.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	5/6	<b>Courts &amp; Law: Part II</b> 1. Understand various philosophies of jurisprudence 2. Distinguish between different types of law	Van Belle, pp. 273 – 284  Amistad (1997, Swank)	Discussion post #9.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #9 (Sunday @ 11pm)

13	5/11	<b>The Democratic Ideal in Modern Politics: Part I</b> 1. Understand and apply Arrow's theorem 2. Explain the concept of democracy and the liberal ideal	Van Belle, pp. 285 – 305  Wag the Dog (1997, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #10.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	5/13	<b>The Democratic Ideal in Modern Politics: Part II</b> 1. Contrast and compare the two most common democratic electoral systems 2. Distinguish between the ideal of democracy and how it operates in reality	Van Belle, pp. 305 – 319  Wag the Dog (1997, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #10.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #10 (Sunday @ 11pm)
14	5/18	<b>International Politics: Part I</b> 1. Understand the causes of war & the key assumptions of realist theories of IR 2. Describe how WWI led to the rise of idealism & its shortcomings	Van Belle, pp. 355 – 372  Arrival (2016, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #11.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	5/20	<b>International Politics: Part II</b> 1. Describe alternative theories to Realism 2. Identify which IR theory may be most correct	Van Belle, pp. 372 – 394  Arrival (2016, Library Reserve)	Discussion post #11.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #11 (Sunday @ 11pm)
15	5/25	<b>**Holiday**</b>	Van Belle, pp. 320 – 330  Good Night, and Good Luck (2005, Swank)	Discussion post #12.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)
	5/20	<b>Media, Politics, &amp; Government: Part I &amp; II</b> 1. Distinguish between experiential, agreement and mediated reality	Van Belle, pp. 330 – 354	Discussion post #12.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)  P&F #12 (11/16) @ 11pm)

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Describe the media's role in shifting perceptions of reality &amp; how cognitive frameworks filter information</li> <li>3. Identify what motivates media coverage</li> <li>4. Understand how distortion in the media occurs</li> </ol>		
16	6/1	<p><b>Political Culture &amp; The Study of Politics</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examine the ways in which culture influences politics</li> <li>2. Outline the different subfields associated with the study of politics</li> </ol>	<p>Van Belle, pp. 397 – 413</p> <p>No (2012, Library Reserve)</p>	<p>Discussion post #13.1 (Thursday @ 11pm)</p>
	6/3	<p><b>Political Culture &amp; The Study of Politics</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examine the ways in which culture influences politics</li> <li>2. Outline the different subfields associated with the study of politics</li> </ol>	<p>Van Belle, pp. 413 – 430</p> <p>No (2012, Library Reserve)</p>	<p>Discussion post #13.2 (Sunday @ 11pm)</p> <p>P&amp;F #13 (Sunday @ 11pm)</p> <p><b>Term Paper #3 Due Sunday via Canvas by 11 PM</b></p>
17	6/8	<p><b>Jeopardy (Extra Credit!) Review</b></p>	<p>Review key terms (flashcards available through publisher website)</p>	
	6/10	<p><b>**Final Exam**</b></p>		<p><b>**Final Exam**</b></p>

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## GENERAL POLICIES

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

**Plagiarism** is to take and present as one's own the writings or ideas of others, without citing the source. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking exams and preparing written materials. If you do not understand how to

correctly 'cite a source', you must ask for help. **Cheating** is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials, or assisting others in using materials, which are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question. Anyone caught cheating or will receive a zero (0) on the exam or assignment, and the instructor may report the incident to the Campus Disciplinary Officer, who may place related documentation in a file. Repeated acts of cheating may result in an F in the course and/or disciplinary action. Please refer to the General School Catalog for more information on academic dishonesty or other misconduct. Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to the following: (a) plagiarism; (b) copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment ;(c) communicating test information with another person during an examination; (d) allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment, (e) use of a commercial term paper service

### **DISABLED STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. The DSP&S office is located in Building 2100, telephone 760-355-6313 if you feel you need to be evaluated for educational accommodations.

### **STUDENT COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICES**

Students have counseling and health services available, provided by the pre-paid Student Health Fee. We now also have a fulltime mental health counselor. For information see <http://www.imperial.edu/students/student-health-center/> . The IVC Student Health Center is located in the Health Science building in Room 2109, telephone 760-355-6310.

### **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students have the right to experience a positive learning environment and due process. For further information regarding student rights and responsibilities please refer to the IVC General Catalog available at [http://www.imperial.edu/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=4516&Itemid=762](http://www.imperial.edu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4516&Itemid=762)

### **INFORMATION LITERACY**

Imperial Valley College is dedicated to help students skillfully discover, evaluate, and use information from all sources. Students can access tutorials at <http://www.imperial.edu/courses-andprograms/divisions/arts-and-letters/library-department/info-lit-tutorials/>