



Lakehead University
Introduction to Political Science (2023-2024)
POLI-1100-YA
Mon/Wed 4:00-5:30PM – RB 1022

Fall/Winter 2023/24

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Maiangwa

Office: RB 2041

Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays after class or by appointment/email

Email: bmaiangw@lakeheadu.ca

Course Description

This course introduces the scope, concepts, and methods of political science through an intersectional/interdisciplinary lens. The course animates debates and conversations on political theory, the notion and practice of power, the (il)legitimacy of the state, the role of ideas, institutions, identity politics, intersectionality, coloniality, and decoloniality in the making of the political community. The course will approach these themes through marginalized/contextual perspectives by drawing on insights from scholars representing multiple ways of knowing and approaching the study of political science. It is hoped that students can relate to the ideas and views discussed in class and find their own voice to make sense of and contribute meaningfully to the political affairs of the society they live in.

Learning Objectives:

After the successful completion of this course, students should:

- Develop a broad critical understanding and appreciation of power, state, and politics.
- Develop and be familiar with the different levels of analysis, methods and concepts that frame analysis of political life.
- Appreciate the role of ideas, institutions, and values in politics; the institutional contexts within which governments function, and the challenges and uncertainties they face within the context of an ever-changing world, and the constraints on their actions.

- Identify marginalized voices and new paradigms of thinking through political realities regarding the relationship between the citizens and the state.
- Be able to place political events in their proper historical and analytical contexts and understand the power/knowledge regimes that shape discourses of power and politics.
- Appreciate the contested nature of politics and ideas of belonging and social relations in the contemporary world.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

The method of instruction will mainly be lectures, class discussions and student-led presentations. Attendance and participation are crucial for the success of the course. Students are required to regularly attend classes, do the assigned readings before coming to class and take part in class discussions. They are also required to complete one presentation, two essays, and take two exams.

The final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Attendance & Participation: 5%

Presentation: 15%

Mid-term exam: 20%

Winter Term Paper: 20%

End of year Exam: 40%

Attendance & Presentation: (5% of the final grade)

Attendance and participation are crucial for the success of the course. All students are required to regularly attend classes, do the assigned readings before coming to class and take part in class discussions. A record of attendance will be kept throughout the duration of the course. Participation will also entail weekly news briefing that will be conducted in a group of three students based on political news reports gleaned from Aljazeera, BBC, CBC, CNN, and other news channels that the students may find informative.

(a) The **presentation** (worth 15% of the final grade) will be conducted in class from Week 5 to Week 12 (Winter term). Each group is expected to collaboratively choose and present one key concept related to the topic of the week. For example, if the topic of an assigned day's lecture is "Environment and Politics", a group may choose to discuss the concept of *sustainable development* and address its origin, theoretical framework, key aspects, as well as its practical application, including major successes, challenges and the prospects for the future. The reading materials for this assignment will be entirely sourced by the students and should be different from those assigned for the course.

(b) **Mid-term exam** (15%) will be conducted in class on Wednesday Feb 28, 2023. The exam will be an hour and half long (i.e., the duration of the class) and will be based on the materials covered in the course up to that time. It will be a closed book exam consisting of a mixed bag of multiple choice and short answer questions.

(c) **Winter term paper** (worth 20% of the final grade) to be submitted through MyCourseLink on or before Friday, March 25. The major essay for this term will be an independent argumentative essay with an original research component. You will be asked to choose from a set of 7 essay questions in Assignment (Winter Term Paper) on MyCourseLink. The questions on these topics will be formulated in an open-ended way that requires you to: apply concepts and approaches in political science, most of which will be from our lectures and readings; conduct additional independent and original research using academic journals and books (up to 7 sources); and compose an original argument in response to the question prompt. It should be 7 (double-spaced) pages long.

(d) **The final exam** (worth 40% of final grade) will be a three-hour test conducted at the end of the winter term. It will test students on the topics covered in the course.

The exam will consist of multiple choice, short answers, and essay type questions.

Please Note:

- Essay questions will be provided by the instructor. However, students are also free to come up with their own topics based on their interests. Such topics should first be cleared with the instructor.
- All essays should have a title page indicating the title of the essay, the name of the student, the course number, the name of the instructor, and the department.
- In terms of formatting, all essays should be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point fonts, 1 inch margin and should be handed in on or before the due date in class.
- Barring any extenuating circumstance, all written assignments must be submitted on time, otherwise a 2 per cent penalty will apply each day the essay is late.
- For citation and referencing, please use the APA referencing style 6th edition for all written work. You may also choose a different style and be consistent with it.
- The essays will be evaluated based on grasp of the topic, quality of argument, depth of analysis, originality of approach, familiarity with the issues and literature, as well as structure, organisation, grammar, referencing and formatting.

Developing a Thesis Statement for Political Science

Developing a strong thesis statement involves having a good question such as the following:

What is the political problem you are interested in? Who does it matter to?
Why does it matter?

Your thesis statement should be clear, focused, concise, and arguable. It should investigate a debatable political issue, local, national or global. The thesis sentence is usually the one sentence in the paper with the potential to assert, control, and structure the entire argument.

The thesis statement should make a claim (rather than a descriptive observation). It should define the scope of your argument and shape your argument.

For example:

The attempt to industrialize in the Global South has meant that countries have gotten into more debt than they can pay off.

This thesis statement is too general – it doesn't specify which countries, or over what time period. A better thesis statement is more specific and shapes the argument to come:

While the 1980s debt crisis in the Global South was set off by a multitude of causes (rising interest rates, an oil embargo), 'irresponsible' lending from the Global North should also be considered a significant factor.

This thesis statement acknowledges the complexity of the issue, but clearly focuses in on one key factor to be addressed in the paper.

The thesis statement could also be stated in a question format; the essay should then aim at answering the question.

Example:

Does the presence of nuclear weapons undermine the global efforts for peace?

For further information on this please see the following link:

<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/writingresources/wp-content/uploads/sites/3360/2018/03/Writing-for-Political-Science-.pdf>

Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs may request accommodations in accordance with the Senate Policy on Students with Disabilities. Such students should at the earliest opportunity advise the Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Learning Assistance Centre) and the instructor of such needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate their needs. Those who encounter extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course should, as soon as possible, discuss these circumstances with the instructor and the Student Accessibility Services.

Lakehead Policy on Academic Dishonesty

As academic integrity is crucial to the pursuit of university education, students are expected to uphold the academic honour code at all times and are advised to familiarise themselves with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, especially in relation, but not limited, to plagiarism, cheating, impersonation etc. In order to make sure that a degree awarded by Lakehead University is a reflection of the honest efforts and individual academic achievement of each student, Lakehead University treats cases of academic dishonesty very seriously and severely penalises those caught in violation of the university's policy on academic honesty.

Policy on Electronic Devices

Cell phones are distracting and therefore should be turned off and kept out of sight during lectures. A visible phone will be assumed to be used. In such a scenario, the instructor may ask the offending student to leave the class. Except where prior permission is sought from the instructor and given, no audio or video recording of lectures is allowed. Where permission is sought and granted, such recordings should be only be for the student's private use.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Required Texts

Atchison, A. L (ed). 2021. *Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science*. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press

Machiavelli, Niccolò, 1469-1527. *The Prince*. Harmondsworth, Eng; New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 1981

i. (RE)THINKING POLITICS AND POWER

Week 1 (Jan 8 & 10):

Reading

Machiavelli on Power Politics, *The Prince*, chapters 15-18, 22-23

Is Politics really just about Power? Is the advice given by Machiavelli useful or Dangerous (or both)?

Week 2 (Jan 15 & 17): Political Theory and the Intersectional Quest for the Good Life

Reading

Atchison, A. L. 2021. Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press (Chapter two by Keisha Lindsay)

Week 3 (Jan 22 & 24): Civil Society and Social Movements

Reading

Atchison, A. L. 2021. Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press (Chapter four by Erica Townsend-Bell)

Week 4 (Jan 29 & 31): International Relations

Reading

Atchison, A. L. 2021. Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press (Chapter 12 by Brooke Ackerly and Anna Carella)

Week 5 (Feb 5 & 7): Security and Conflict

Reading

Atchison, A. L. 2021. Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press (Chapter 14 by Jon Whooley and Laura Sjoberg)

Group 1 Presentation

Week 6 (Feb 12 & 14): International Law and Human Rights

Reading

Atchison, A. L. 2021. Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press (Chapter 15 by Malliga Och and Susanne Zwingel)

Group 2 Presentation

Week 7 (Reading Week)

Week 8 (Feb 26 & 28): International Political Economy

Reading

Atchison, A. L. 2021. Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press (Chapter 13 by James Brassett., Juanita Elias., Lena Rethel., & Ben Richardson).

Group 3 Presentation

Mid-term Feb 28

Week 9 (March 4 & 6): International Organizations

Reading

Atchison, A. L. 2021. Political Science is for Everybody: An Introduction to Political Science. Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press (Chapter 16 by Jillienne Haglund).

Group 4 Presentation

Week 10 (March 11 & 13): The Politics of Origin/Identity Politics

Reading

Geschiere, P. (2009). The Perils of belonging: Autochthony, citizenship, and exclusion in Africa and Europe. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press (Chapters 1 & 7).

Group 5 Presentation

Week 11 (March 18 & 20): The Environment and Politics (Guest Lecture by Yumna Vaid)

Readings

Brundtland Report (1987). Report of the World Commission On Environment And Development: Our Common Future.

<https://Sustainabledevelopment.Un.Org/Content/Documents/5987our-Common-Future.Pdf>

[Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

Term paper due Wednesday March 20

Group 6 Presentation

Week 12 (March 25 & 27) Post-Cold War Order: Clash of Civilization?

Readings

Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72:3 (Summer, 1993)

Said, "The Clash of Ignorance," *The Nation*, October 1, 2001

What does Huntington mean by "Clash of Civilizations"? How effectively does Said dismantle his argument?

Group 7 Presentation

Week 13 (April 1 & 3): Presentation of Essay Topics/Taking Stock

[Note: There will be a final exam for this course. It is the responsibility of students to check with the Registrar's office for the exact examination date for this course]

LAKEHEAD RESOURCES

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties in your student life, don't hesitate to ask for help! If it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your academic advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus, including:

The Student Success Centre has many programs and support services in place to help you achieve your academic and personal goals while studying at Lakehead University. They provide academic support through tutoring services, career exploration, co-operative opportunities and leadership development. More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre>.

The Lakehead Library provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person with more details available here <https://library.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Public Computer Labs are available on campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For more details go to <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/helpdesk/computer-labs>.

Student Life and Services offers health and wellness resources both on and off campus, as well as opportunities for involvement in health and wellness activities. More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/or>.

Office of Human Rights and Equity. You have the right to an education that is free from any form of discrimination. A wide variety of resources are available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/human-rights-and-equity/resources>.