

Political Science 351 (3 credits)
January 2021 interim, M-Th 12-4 PM
Classroom: Sage Hall 4232
Office Hours: after class or by appointment

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Political Film



Charles Chaplin as Adenoid Hynkel in *The Great Dictator* (1940)

“If you have a message, call Western Union.”

-attributed to studio mogul Sam Goldwyn

“Those who spend the most time watching [media] are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most common and recurrent messages of the world of fictional [media].”

-Michael Morgan and James Shanahan

Course Description: Examines, through the study of film, topics in political leadership, party politics, justice, social problems, political theory, comparative government, and international relations.

Course Objectives:

- learn about important political concepts, considering their veracity and implications
- develop a careful, analytical approach to entertainment media
- consider the interactions between politics and mass culture

Department Learning Goals: The Department of Political Science has developed a comprehensive set of learning goals that all of its classes aim to address:

<https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/10/Learning-Goals-2016.pdf>

Several of these will be emphasized here: understanding and applying theoretical frameworks as a means of understanding politics better; understanding and applying history as a lens of inquiry and a source of evidence; analysis and explanation of political behavior, patterns, and events; finally to communicate effectively.

Logistics, Course Schedule, Topics of Study

Class Format: This is a Modified Tutorial Class. We will be meeting in person and you are expected to be in person when the class is meeting that way, barring having chosen to take the class all on line prior to the class, or experiencing illness or exposure to Covid. Our experience this the Fall demonstrates that the classroom is a safe place to be for most people—very little transmission occurs when people are masked and properly distanced. The schedule below is detailed, so please read the schedule carefully every day regarding assignments.

Meeting Times: You may note that our class runs four hours (12-4). This allows us to be in class four days per week rather than five days a week during the first two weeks and three days a week in the third week (with the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday). I expect you to put in that amount of time, plus additional time for your reading homework and out of class assignments. There will be recorded lectures each day, with most of them approximately an hour in length. Please listen to the recorded lecture before we meet. This allows us to meet most days at 1 PM instead of at noon. The exceptions are when we view a film in class—those days we will meet at noon (January 4, 7, 12, 20th). You should plan to be available from 1-4 PM all other class days, with the exception of January 21st, when we will meet at 1 PM.

Here is our **Course Room in Collaborate Ultra** for synchronous meetings and those who signed up to take the course on line:

<https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/36d333d07c354e38ba66d882db9d84aa>

How to Access Films: You are *assigned films* to watch before most of our classes (some films will be seen in class—check the schedule below for details). The films are available for viewing in several different ways. First, some are available through the Course itself on our Canvas page (*Being There*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Election*, *All the President's Men*, and *Persepolis*). Second, others are available through a library subscription service called Kanopy. Kanopy can be accessed through the green database button on the Polk Library homepage. The films available for streaming in Kanopy are *Lord of the Flies*, *I am Not Your Negro*, and *Ikiru*. Finally, one film, *For Sama*, is available for streaming directly via the library through a normal search.

Expectations for Assignments: You are expected to have viewed assigned film and to have read the assigned readings for the day *before class meets* so that we can intelligently both and make some sense of the larger meaning to be gleaned from having an understanding of both.

Location of Readings: Most readings are posted in the Canvas module labeled “syllabus and readings.” All remaining readings are available via weblink given in the schedule below.

How to Access Recorded Lectures: Recorded lectures are posted to Canvas in the module titled “Recorded Lectures.”

- January 4** Course Introduction; Human Nature and Politics
readings: Franklin, “Movies, the Media, and American Tales”
Taylor, ed., “Eisenstein on Eisenstein”
also watch this 8 minute video: <https://vimeo.com/113310012>
recorded lecture: human nature as a concept in political theory
film in class: *Lord of the Flies* (1963), 92 minutes
- January 5** Perception and Public Opinion
readings: Plato’s image of the Cave
Morgan and Shanahan, “The State of Cultivation”
recorded lecture: film regulation in the United States, part 1
film assigned: *Being There* (1979), 130 minutes
- January 6** International Relations
reading: Lindley, “What I Learned since I Stopped Worrying and Studied the Movie”
Acton, “Cyber Warfare and Inadvertent Escalation”
recorded lecture: three basic International Relations theories
film assignment: *Dr. Strangelove*, 94 minutes
- January 7** Violence, War, and Mass Displacement
reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chapters 8-9, 15-19
Project Gutenberg has a free electronic version of this book at:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1232>
Gordon, et al., “Trump Administration’s Middle East Policy”
View this video: Vox’s “Syria’s war: Who is fighting and Why?” here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFpanWNgfQY&fbclid=IwAR16cBcyZalXtzpUDcZVoy5fqjVZd95w0GjKvOdpRhviRHeBQhhV6-bstr1>
recorded lecture: film regulation in the US, part 2
film in class: *For Sama* (2019), 100 minutes
- January 10** **Midterm Essay Questions to be distributed this afternoon
(covers material through January 11th)**
- January 11** Legislative Politics and the US Congress
Reading: Wirls, “The Filibuster”
Franklin, “Why They Don’t Make Them Like They Used To”
Recorded lecture: Congress in American politics and Congressional rules
Film assignment: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939)

- January 12** Democracy, Electoral Politics, and Demagoguery
reading: Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy"
Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Chapter IX
Project Gutenberg has a free electronic version of this book at:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7142>
recorded lecture: observations on democracy from one in trouble
film in class: *Election* (1999), 103 minutes
Midterm due at 11:59 PM on January 12
- January 13** Executive Politics and the US presidency
Reading: Giglio, "Reel Politicians"
Levine, "The Transformed Presidency"
Recorded lecture: the presidency in the US system of government
Film assignment: *All the President's Men* (1976), 138 minutes
- January 14** Bureaucracy and Public Administration
Reading: Meier, "Bureaucracy and Politics"
Meier, "Bureaucracy and the Public's Expectations"
Recorded lecture: Comparative film Regulation
Film Assignment: *Ikiru* (1952), 143 minutes—remember that this film is
available through the library's streaming database Kanopy
- January 19** Freedom, Revolution, and Civil Liberties
Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chapters 2-4, 17-19
Project Gutenberg's copy: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7370>
James Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance" found at:
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0163>
also Timeline "US relations with Iran, 1953-2020" found at:
<https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-relations-iran-1953-2020>
Recorded lecture: civil liberties in the United States
Film Assignment: *Persepolis* (2007), 96 minutes
Final Exam Questions distributed
- January 20** Race, Equity, and Civil Rights
Reading: Vaidyanathan, "Systemic Racial Bias in the Criminal Justice System is not a Myth"
Coates: "The Case for Reparations" found at:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
Recorded lecture: civil rights in the United States
Film in Class: *I am Not Your Negro* (2016), 95 minutes
- January 21** synchronous lecture: course reflections and conclusion
- January 22** **Submit Final Exam to Canvas by noon of January 22**

Assignments and Grading

There are four components to your course grade

10 Daily Exercises	100 points total
Midterm Exam	75 points
Final Exam	75 points
Course Attendance and Participation	<u>100 points</u>
	350 points

I use the typical scale (93-100 is an A, 90-93 is an A-, 88-89 is a B+ etc. etc.)

Daily Exercise: Each day of class you will be directed to an exercise that is worth 10 points. Sometimes these will be quizzes on the reading material and movie assigned (so be sure to be ready for this by doing your reading and viewing before class). Other times there will be an in-class written assignment or a short writing project to be handed in by the next day.

Exams: These are take-home exams. Midterm test questions will be handed out on Sunday January 10th and your answers are due to the Canvas dropbox provided before the end of the day Tuesday January 12th. Questions for the final will be handed out on Tuesday January 19th. Answers to the final are due to Canvas by noon of Friday the 22nd. There will be a variety of assessment mechanisms, but primary emphasis will be placed on essay questions. Tests will cover material that we have gone over in class, including readings, films, and lecture. You may use your notes and your readings for these tests. Questions from daily exercises may be repeated on the final.

Participation and Attendance: Equal portions of this grade will be given to participation and attendance. If you attend the whole of every class, you will receive full credit for the participation portion. You will need to actively participate in order to score well on the participation portion of the grade. There are many ways to accomplish this: ask questions, make comments, show that you are engaged with the course readings, remark how events may relate to our discussions, reference other films or readings that relate to the topics we discuss etc. Unexcused absences expose one to a lowered course grade; with only 11 class periods one missed class is the equivalent of 9% of this portion of the grade. If you are absent from class due to illness, religious holiday, a recognized University event, or another reason that may be considered excused, please let me know. I can excuse you from attendance and it will not harm your grade, but you will be expected to know the material we have covered.

Additional University and Course Policies

Electronics Policy: Given the ample evidence that computer usage in the classroom harms academic performance, both for the user and the students around the user, electronics use *in the classroom* is by permission only. I will have you taking quizzes by electronic device, so bring your phones, though keep them in purse or pocket until needed.

Mask Policy: You are required to wear a mask while in all University buildings at all times, including while in the hallways and in this class.

Office Hours: When we are in class, Office Hours requests are easy...please approach me after the class. For those physically in class this will be easy. For those on line, I will stay on the Collaborate Ultra feature so that you can type a request or talk to me in that venue.

If you wish to schedule a meeting, the Political Science Department uses Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) for holding office hours. This system is available to all UWO students and may be accessed from your Outlook mail by pressing the 3 by 3 set of dots to the left of the UWO banner toward the top of the screen. Generally, you are able to join office hour meetings and talk openly in the forum or use the chat function freely. At times, your instructor may be in a private meeting with a student during office hours, and will mark my availability as “busy” (a red dot). *The main point to remember is that I am available to you and I am here to help.*

Class Quality and Feedback: The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at kruegerj@uwosh.edu. Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

Expectations for Academic Honesty: A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone’s words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team. Two general rules should be kept in mind: all quoted and paraphrased material must be cited and when something is not common knowledge, you should have a citation. Plagiarism is using others’ ideas without giving them credit. Most of it is inadvertent; some is intentional; some covers a small amount of text, others involve a whole paper. More information can be found here: <https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/08/Academic-Honesty.pdf>

Disability Accommodations: It is the policy and practice of UW Oshkosh to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please notify me as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 920-424-3100 or dean1@uwosh.edu. For more information, visit the Services for Students with Disabilities website at <http://www.uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/disability-services>.

Attendance Policy: I do expect you to attend class and I do keep attendance. This interim that means attending in person, generally, or attending on line for those who have made a specific request to attend on line. Let me know if you cannot attend for University-recognized reasons, like illness, family emergency, religious holiday, or University-sanctioned events and I will mark you excused. If you feel ill, you should not be in the classroom, but you will have to let me know if this is the case. For every unexcused absence, I will reduce your participation score by nine percent, roughly the portion of the class that you are missing by being away.

Political Science majors (and prospective majors): You should be taking Political Methodology (PS 245) in your sophomore year (or, if you cannot, in the first semester of your junior year at the latest). PS 245 is a prerequisite for our capstone course Political Analysis (PS 401) and cannot be taken concurrently with PS 245. You should save all your graded work from this class and the others in the major.

Note: If any major changes are made to this schedule and these policies, I will announce them in a timely manner via your UW Oshkosh email account and make a revised syllabus available.

Both tests must be completed to pass the course. If late, they will be docked a full grade (a B becomes a C), so please get these in on time. If you are excused on a day, you are also excused from its 10 point exercise. If unexcused you will not get the chance to make up the assignment. The notes that you use on daily quizzes must be your own.

The following URL contains a description of students’ consumer protection rights required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>