

Classroom Guide and Expectations
POLS 204: Introduction to Comparative Politics
University of Washington
Spring 2012

Section AG	Wednesday and Friday, 11:30 - 12:20	PAA A212
Section AI	Wednesday and Friday, 12:30 – 1:20	PAA A212

Course Instructor: Professor Victor Menaldo
Teaching Assistant: Aaron Erlich
Email: aserlich@uw.edu
Office: Smith 43
Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:30-11:30/1:30-2:30 or by appointment

Course Objectives:

Discussion sections have two main objectives: 1) to clarify reading material, and 2) to provide an opportunity for students to discuss and debate the themes in the material in a way that broadens their understanding of that material. Sections are the ideal time for lively debate about the assigned readings, the themes and issues brought up in the lecture, and your thoughts about the subject of comparative politics.

My Role:

My role as a TA is to serve as a facilitator and moderator. I will not lecture nor will I provide information missed from the lecture or readings. My goal is not to provide you with easy answers to the questions this class will raise, but to provide you with the tools to come up with your own answers to these questions based on a thoughtful examination of the assertions presented by various viewpoints.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Read the assigned texts carefully.
2. Attend all sections. If you cannot be in section one day due to illness, injury, or emergency, you can email me and we will arrange a way for you to make up your lost points. I will offer you a maximum of two make-up opportunities.
3. Participate actively in class discussions. Students are expected to analyze concepts critically through discussion, group activities, debate, and written work. Your level of participation is a key component of your participation grade.
4. Be respectful of others. Some discussion topics in this class may be controversial. I expect each student to engage in thoughtful discussion and respect others' opinions. This will make our discussions more productive and more helpful.

How to Reach Me:

I am available outside of class to help you as much as possible. I encourage you to come to my office hours (listed above) and to contact me by email. If you cannot attend my scheduled office hours, contact me by email to arrange an alternate time. I will generally respond to emails within 24 hours, except during weekends, on holidays, and in the 48 hours immediately prior to an examination.

Grading Policy:

I am responsible for grading all of your assignments. Grades will be based on the following components:

Participation: Participation constitutes 15 percent of your grade. It will be based on the *quality* (not frequency) of your contribution to section activities, which demonstrates your learning and active

engagement with the material.

Paper: One short essay is assigned (length to be determined), which makes 30 percent of your grade. Grades will be based on the *substance, organization, and clarity* of your analysis. Each of the three components is equally vital for a successful paper. **Paper is due on Friday, May 18, in section.** If a paper is submitted late (i.e., after section is over), a penalty will be incurred. I will provide you with detailed instructions later.

Examinations: One midterm and a final make up the remaining 55 percent of your grade. Write as legibly and clearly as possible. You may lose points if portions of your exams are simply illegible. You must purchase and bring your own blue books to all exams. Please note that there will be no makeup exams unless valid documentation (in hard copy) is provided. If you anticipate a scheduling conflict, please let the professor and the TA know *as far ahead of time as possible*.

Grading Appeals:

I will be very happy to explain how I have graded your exams if you have any questions about the criteria. If you wish to reconsider the grade, please prepare a written statement that explains why you believe you merit more points and submit it to me.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. A suspected instance of either may be immediately reported to the course instructor and necessary disciplinary actions may ensue.

For further detail about the University of Washington's academic honesty policy, please refer to: <http://www.washington.edu/uaa/gateway/advising/help/academichonesty.php>.

Respect for Diversity:

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

General Rules:

- Please note that I will use your uw.edu email address should I need to contact you outside of class. Make sure to forward your emails to another account if you do check your UW account regularly. If you desire to send an email to the email address for the entire section (e.g., to set up a study group, ask a question, share a rights-related current event, etc.), you must use your UW email account or it may not work.
- Out of respect for your fellow classmates, please be on time for section.

I wish you all a great quarter!