

POSC 201
POLITICS: PARTICIPATION AND POWER
FALL 2013
(Syllabus as of August 6)

MWF 9:30 – 10:20 a.m.
Sears 354
Office Hours 1-2:30 MW

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course presents an introduction to the core aspects of politics: participation and power. **The first question of politics is who is acting on or with whom; the second is what they are able to do to each other, how.**

Government is distinctive, if effective, for the power it can exercise through coercing individuals, and the power it can exercise to pursue social tasks. Systems of government are defined by who participates on what terms. In this course we will study politics as an aspect of human society from the time of the Bible and ancient Greece to our current era. We will read and discuss a variety of texts that provide perspectives on this most human (if often inhumane) endeavor.

The “learning objectives” of this course could be framed as:

1. Students should obtain a background that will be useful in any further study of political phenomena.
2. Students should emerge with a heightened sense of the moral dilemmas that are inherent in political life – the “problem of dirty hands.”
3. Students should develop their own understandings of how views of our current political world can depend on both what one thinks it is reasonable to expect from political action in general, and your understanding of the social conditions of our time.

In the study of politics there are no natural laws. There are general patterns, more like probability statements, which can be applied to partially understand particular cases. So the main task of a course is to give students the understanding that they can use to try to make sense of the situations they will encounter in the course of their lives. We will be reading classic works that can be useful and interesting in many ways. You might consider, however, looking in the readings for two things. First: can you identify *propositions* in each reading about how participation and power work? Second: does the reading provide *evidence* about the application of propositions from other reading?

COURSE MATERIAL

This course is an experiment. I think the topic is important; I think the political science department at Case Western Reserve University should teach a course on this topic; and I'm the department chair so I assigned myself to try it out. Part of my goal is to introduce students to a wide range of material that would not be gathered in any normal subject-matter course in political science. I have ideas about the sub-topics within the course, but to some extent we will be making sense of the texts together.

I have essentially assembled a reader and put it on the course blackboard site. But I am assigning two books that are both classics and reasonably short. They are:

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

As you might guess, having been first published in 1852, this book is out of copyright. It also is rather famous, even if the author's name is used as a bogey-man in the United States. Therefore it can be found in many, many editions, of which many are inexpensive. The immediate topic of this work is how the French revolution of 1848 led to rule by the first Napoleon's nephew, Louis – who had essentially none of his uncle's merits. In spite of his many failings, however, he did re-make Paris into the city we know today. The *Brumaire* is read today for many reasons. First, it is a much more sophisticated analysis of the political role of social classes than people who haven't read Marx associate with his work. Second, it is a brilliant study of one particularly chaotic set of political events. Third, the outcome – the French Second Empire – to many people seemed to anticipate the rise of nationalist fascism in the 20th century.

The second book is very different, though it certainly is in the context of the contest between communism and fascism.

George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (I suggest the Mariner Books edition, 1980)

Originally published in 1938, this book is based on Orwell's experiences as a volunteer soldier on the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War. An elected government with strong socialist leanings was challenged by a military revolt led by General Francisco Franco. Franco was supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy; the government was supported by Soviet Russia; and the capitalist democracies such as France and England and the United States didn't like either side so sat it out (which in practice favored Franco). It is an intensely human document, of an idealist trying to honestly come to terms with the betrayals and squalor and occasional nobility he encounters while trying to serve his ideals. His experience in Spain (and with the press coverage of the conflict around the world) helped motivate Orwell's later satires of the kind of political doublespeak that is often called "Orwellian," as in *1984* and *Animal Farm*. The book raises in the context of personal experience some of the issues of this course, such as why men fight in combat, the difference between participating as a soldier and a general, the

relationships between national and international politics, the relative influence of ideas and military force, and more.

Readings other than the books will be posted on the course Blackboard site.
With one exception – I have provided a link to Lincoln's Second Inaugural, as he drafted it in his own handwriting

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to write **three short essays** during the class, of no less than 1200 words each, and do a **final exam**. The essays will be administered like a take-home exam: the question or choice of questions will be given out at the end of one class, and the essay will be due at the beginning of the next class.

Each student will also be required to write **one “response paper”** to a day’s reading. That paper should be 600 -800 words long. In this paper, the student should identify the main themes of the reading, raise any questions she may have about the analysis, and comment on how it fits with the rest of the course. The student who writes a response paper about a day’s reading may be asked to pose questions to the class, that day, about the reading. The papers will be due at the beginning of that day’s class, though of course I’d greatly appreciate receiving them earlier so that I could figure out how to fit the likely questions with my plans for class discussion.

We will determine in class whether the final exam should be taken in class or done as a take-home. In either event, students will be required to write two essays. If the exam is in-class, a study guide will include five possible essay topics, and the exam will give a choice among three of those topics. If the exam is take-home, there will be a choice among three questions.

All reading should be done in time for each class. The purpose of other assignments is to encourage thinking about the course material and course questions.

COURSE PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

A smallish discussion course requires full participation from all of us. That means I need to respond quickly to any questions you may have. It also means that students are expected to complete each day’s reading before the class begins. Each student will be asked to pose a question or two to the class from the readings.

You must document all outside sources that you use in writing your papers according to an accepted style guide. A good standard approach is in the Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), but any standard format will be fine for this class. When you refer to assigned readings, however, you can simply use the author’s name and page number – presumably I will know what the source is. The one exception is when there are multiple readings by the same author (e.g. Max Weber), in which case you should provide more description (e.g. “Weber, Three Types”).

Plagiarism of any form will be punished by referral to the appropriate university judicial proceedings, as well as by a failing grade for the assignment on which the plagiarism occurs. Plagiarism includes, according to the MLA Handbook (New York: MLA, 1988), two related activities: repeating “as your own someone else’s sentences, more or less verbatim,” and “paraphrasing another person’s argument as your own, and presenting another’s line of thinking as though it were your own.” Proper citation of sources will allow you to incorporate others’ analyses without committing plagiarism.

GRADING

Grades will be calculated as follows:

16 % for each essay
12% for the response paper
30% for the final exam
10% for class participation.

The participation portion of the grade is meant to reward contributions to discussion and encourage class attendance. “Contributions” can easily include good questions, not just answers. Nor are students expected to hit the mark in everything they say – that’s my job, and I’m not perfect either. In the first class I will more fully explain how I grade participation.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Aug 26 Introduction to the Class

Perspectives

To some politics is an inferior, foul form of human activity. The word itself can be an accusation: “that’s just politics.” Yet others have viewed politics as the highest of human activities. So we begin with the ideal notion of democratic participation, and its paradoxical implications.

Aug 28 Theodore Roosevelt, “Citizenship in a Republic”
Robert A. Caro, “The Presence of Fire,” pp. ix – xxiv of *Master of the Senate* (2002)

Aug 30 No Class – Professor White will be at American Political Science Association Conference

Sept 2 No Class – Labor Day

- Sept 4 Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book 1, Chapters 1-4 (5 pp.)
 Excerpts by Norton E. Long, “The City and Its Citizens,” and Hannah
 Arendt, “The Pleasures of Politics,” from Henry S. Kariel ed., *The Political Order* (Basic
 Books, NY, 1970) (7 pp.)
 Thucydides, Pericles’ Funeral Oration
 Douglass Adair, “Fame and the Founding Fathers,” pp. 3-26 of Trevor
 Colbourn ed., *Fame and the Founding Fathers: Essays by Douglass Adair* (1974).
- Sept 6 *The Bible*, Book of Judges, Chapters 17-21
 John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, “Conclusion” from *Congress
 as Public Enemy*, Cambridge University Press, 1995. (18 pp.)

Power

What do we mean by power in politics? Of what does it consist? In the simplest definition, power is the ability to get other people to do what you want. But that surely depends on many things: on you and on them, for a start. What about both sides of the relationship is important?

- Sept 9 Hans Morgenthau, “Political Power,” Chapter 2 of *Politics Among Nations*
 3rd. ed. (pp. 27-37).
 Max Weber, “The Three Types of Legitimate Domination,” from *Essays
 in Economic Sociology*, ed. Richard Swedberg, Princeton 1999 (pp. 99-108).
- Sept 11 Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz. “Two Faces of Power” *American
 Political Science Review* (56:4) 1962 (pp. 947-952). “Decisions and Nondecisions: An
 Analytical Framework.” *American Political Science Review* (57:3) 1963 (pp. 632-642).
- Sept 13 Robert A. Caro, “The Nothing Job,” pp. 383-419 of *Master of the Senate*.
- Sept 16 Herbert Simon, “Fact and Value in Decision-Making,” and “The Role of
 Authority,” Chapters 3 & 7 in *Administrative Behavior* 4th ed. 1999 (pp. 55-71, 177-207).
- Sept 18 Max Weber, “Charismatic Authority,” and “The Routinization of
 Charisma,” from *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Trans. A. M.
 Henderson and Talcott Parsons, Free Press 1947 (pp. 358-386).
- Sept 20 Hans Morgenthau, “The Essence of National Power” and, “Elements of
 National Power,” Chapters 8-9 of *Politics Among Nations* (pp. 101-48).

Sept 23 First Essay Assignment

Something about whether power comes from above or below – or what other questions
 about power may seem more important

Power In and Outside Government

Over the centuries, numerous political theorists have argued that the power of government was created in order to protect people against power as exercised if there were no government. Yet the sources of power outside government can be brought to bear within the political system as well.

Sept 25 Excerpts from John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*: Chapters 1, 2, 8, 9.

Sept 27 R.H. Tawney, "The Conditions of Economic Freedom," From Chapter 6 in *Equality*, 1929 ed. (209-236).

Sept 30 James Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia." *The American Political Science Review* 66(1) 1972 (91-113)

Oct 2 Marc Bloch, "Vassal Homage," Chapter 11 in *Feudal Society*, University of Chicago Press 1961 (in French 1939), 145-162.

Politics, Economics, Exit, Voice

Although the dream of the ideal Polis may emphasize politics as an arena in which individuals deliberate to create something wiser and greater than they, even the pursuit of good for all can turn into conflict. Thus politics quickly becomes about taking sides. But how are the sides created? Who defines what the fight is about? Why do people participate, and why do they participate in some conflicts, or decisions, and not in others? One way to think about these questions is to compare politics, as normally understood, to markets, as normally understood. Do people participate in politics like consumers? Like investors? Like entrepreneurs?

Oct 4 E. E. Schattschneider, "The Displacement of Conflicts," Chapter 4 in *The Semi-Sovereign People* (62-77).

Oct 7 E. E. Schattschneider, "The Contagiousness of Conflict," and "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System," Chapters 1-2 in *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's Guide to Democracy in America* 1960 (1-43).

Oct 9 James Q. Wilson, "Rationality and Self-Interest" and "Organizational Maintenance and Incentives," Chapters 1-2 of *Political Organizations* Basic Books 1971 (pp. 19-55).

Oct 11 Robert Gilpin, "The Nature of Political Economy." Chapter 1 in *U.S. Power and the Multinational Corporation*, Basic Books 1975 (pp. 20-43).

Oct 14 Albert O. Hirschmann, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Excerpts (64 pp.)

Oct 16 William E. Browne, "Exchange Theory and the Institutional Impetus for Interest Group Formation" (17 pp.)

Oct 18 Second Essay Assignment

Something about incentives to organize politically

Oct 21 No Class, Fall Break

War

When I first imagined this course, I was thinking of politics as the governance of a given political system, and participation as participation in that governance. But one doesn't have to go far in logical sources to realize that participation in politics at some basic level includes participation in war. War is the ultimate "dirty hands" problem. Charismatic leaders can re-build societies through violence. In the words of Mao Zedong (the current approved spelling), "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." But you may have noticed that for Pericles, fighting (even dying) for one's city was the highest form of political participation. Social groups still view exclusion from the military as exclusion from the heart of society. Just think of issues about women in modern western militaries, or Arabs in Israel. At the same time, one of the basic requirements for exercising power through war is getting enough warriors to fight. In this section we will move from military theory, through the perspective of soldiers, to fighting for a cause when the cause might not be quite what you hope it is.

Oct 23 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Excerpts: Book 1 Chapter 1, Book 1 Chapter 7, Book 6 Chapter 26 (28 pp.)

Oct 25 Mao Tse Tung (old spelling), "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," Chapters 1, 3, 5 sections 1-4, 7-9 (179-91, 194-200, 205-225, 239-54). From *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Peking (old spelling), Foreign Languages Press, 1967.

Oct 28 Excerpts from John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, particularly on the Battle of the Somme, July 1, 1916. Penguin, 1976. (pp. 207-230, 241-268, 274-289, 320-31).

Oct 30 *Homage to Catalonia*, Chapters 1-4 (3-45 in my copy)

Nov 1 *Homage to Catalonia*, Chapters 5-8 (46-107).

Nov 4 *Homage to Catalonia*, Chapters 9 – 14 (108-232)

Nov 6 Third Essay Assignment:

Something about whether being a non-combatant is really not participating.
Class movie event 7 p.m. *Land and Freedom* (based on *Homage to Catalonia*)

Ideologies and Intellectuals

In order to pursue your interests, you need to figure out what they are. This is not so obvious – what, exactly, was Orwell’s interest in Catalonia? When, then, do ideas motivate participation, and why? How can ideas be used to manipulate other people? In any given system, who gets to manipulate ideas, and how does that work? Are some people more “expert” and, therefore, should they participate in some decisions more than “laypersons”? When is “expertise” powerful, and when not? Are ideas most important when people are least aware of their influence? And do ideas exist in isolation, or in tandem with contrary ideas – theses and antitheses?

Nov 8 Excerpts from *The Power of Public Ideas*, Robert Reich ed., 1988: Pages 1-10 (Reich); 13-29 (Gary Orren); 55-83 (Mark Moore)

Nov 11 Joseph White, “The Politics of Ideas and the Politics of Representation: Elites, Expertise, Public Opinion and Health Policy” 2010 (typescript)

Nov 13 Hans Morgenthau, “The Ideological Element in International Politics,” Chapter 7 in *Politics Among Nations* (pp. 86-97 in 3rd edition).
James Morone, Introduction to *The Democratic Wish: Popular Participation and the Limits of American Government* Revised 1998, pp. 1-15.

Nov 15 Antonio Gramsci, “The Intellectuals” from *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, downloaded from <http://www.walkingbutterfly.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/gramsci-prison-notebooks-vol1.pdf> pp. 131-161 (includes editors’ commentary)

Putting It Together? Tragedy, Choice, and History

“Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please.” With this statement, from the second paragraph of the *Brumaire*, Karl Marx in some ways encapsulated the dilemmas of leaders, voters, and anyone in any way involved in politics. But that does not make it much different from the rest of life. Perhaps the difference is more visible only because it is played out on a public stage, with many promises that do not come true. Marx’s point, however, is that politics exists in concrete circumstances. Political analysis must understand the conditions as well as the actors. Marxism as a social theory directs attention to how groups of people are placed within the processes of economic production. More broadly, what are the “hegemonic” ideas of the time, what are the organized groupings, how do they conceive their interests, how are they lined up, who hasn’t chosen sides and so can be switched, and what are the stakes? Is a political era one in which social forces are relatively stable, or one that is generating great conflict and instability? We look at two case studies – France in 1848 and the United States during the Great Depression. And we end with perhaps the greatest statement of the tragic responsibilities of politics – a speech delivered after a horrendous breakdown of a period of great hope and confidence, pre-1914 Europe, and in a situation that would not turn out any better – the beginning of the German Weimar Republic.

I have to wonder if this will encourage the members of this class to participate in politics. But it should leave nobody in doubt about why politics matter.

Nov 18 *The 18th Brumaire*, Chapters 1-4

Nov 20 *The 18th Brumaire*, Chapters 5-7

Nov 22 *The 18th Brumaire*, further discussion. And Antonio Gramsci, “Caesarism.”

Nov 25 Ira Katznelson, “Triumph and Sorrow,” Introduction to *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time*, 2013 (3-25)
Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address. At
<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal3/436/4361300/malpage.db&recNum=0>

Nov 27 Optional Class
So Optional Reading: Fyodor Dostoyevsky, “The Grand Inquisitor,” from *The Brothers Karamazov* (includes Book of Luke temptation of Jesus)

Nov 29 **No Class, Thanksgiving Break**

Dec 2 Ira Katznelson, “Jim Crow Congress,” Chapter 5 in *Fear Itself* (156-194).

Dec 4 Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”

Dec 6 **Last Day of Class**

Dec 16: Scheduled Date for Final Exam, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Note: If Final Exam is a Take-Home, it will be due at 9:00 a.m. Dec 16 unless the class prefers an earlier date and time.