

# SOSC1300 - The World of Politics

Fall 2019

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-11:20, Room 2620

**Instructor:** Prof. Franziska KELLER ([fbkeller@ust.hk](mailto:fbkeller@ust.hk))

**Office:** Academic Building, Room 3356 (Ext. 7820)

**Office Hours:** Thursday, 10:30-12:00

**TAs:** Creamy WONG ([wyukha@ust.hk](mailto:wyukha@ust.hk)) (office hours: TBA)

## Course Description:

The course introduces you to the discipline of Political Science. You will get to know its main subfields (political theory, comparative politics and international relations) and basic concepts and theories that will help you better understand political phenomena.

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

## Intended Learning Outcomes / Course Objectives:

After taking this course, you should be better equipped to do the following:

- Separate normative and empirical claims with regards to politics
- Explain key ideas and issues in Political Science
- Analyze political events and political ideologies using appropriate terminology
- Explain how countries differ in their political structure
- Exercise independent and critical judgements in politics, as well as communicate claims and arguments more effectively

## Teaching and Learning Activities:

Lectures, in-class discussions, group presentations, group memo

## Textbook:

There will be no textbook used for this class, but some of the material is based on the following textbook. We will post relevant chapters on CANVAS, but they are not required reading and will not be covered in the exam.

Robert Garner, Peter Ferdinand and Stephanie Lawson (2016): Introduction to Politics (3rd edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press. [JA71 .G376 2016]

There will be short texts written by famous Political (or Social) Scientists posted on CANVAS. You only need to read the pages indicated in this syllabus. These texts may not always be easy to understand, but do read them before coming to class. We will discuss them in class as well, and they will be covered in the exam.

## Assessment:

**Mid-term exam: 25%:** The midterm will take place on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Questions will be multiple choice or short answers and can be on any material covered until October 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Final exam: 40%:** Date to be announced. Questions will be multiple choice or short answers and can be on any material covered in the course, but with a focus on the material discussed after October 10<sup>th</sup>.

**In-class questions with clicker / attendance - 10%:** You can miss up to three classes without having to provide documentation. If you have to miss more classes for a legitimate reason (e.g. extended illness), please provide the necessary documentation (e.g. doctor's notice). For many sessions, you will be expected to have read a short text posted on CANVAS. For those readings, I will pose several (multiple choice / fill the blank) questions during class, which you will answer using a clicker or Personal Response System (PRS). In order to get your own "clicker" you can either use your cellphone and download the HKUST iLearn App, or check out your own ID-encoded PRS handset at the ITSC Service Desk at Rm 2021 (Lift 2). I will also post occasional opinion quizzes on CANVAS – answering those also counts towards this 10% of the grade.

**Bonus points (+5%):** The main purpose of the PRS quizzes is to check attendance. Incorrect answers therefore do not incur any penalty, but correct answers grant bonus points of up to 5% of the final grade. We will not post the PRS questions and answers on CANVAS – they are supposed to help you understand the readings and determine what is important, not as something to learn by heart for the exam. So make sure you take notes! There are no make-up quizzes. Another way of earn bonus points is to ask questions during class. Make sure you state your name before you ask the question, so that the TAs can keep record.

**Relating concepts to events in one country of your choice – 5%:** Starting with week 3, you will be expected to select a country for which you will become specialist (for the purpose of our course, both Hong Kong and Taiwan can be chosen as separate countries). You should follow political events in this country by reading the news. Every week, you should post on CANVAS links to two news stories that you find interesting and indicate at least one concept discussed in class that is relevant to each story. Possible sources could be the online versions of newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *South China Morning Post*, *The Financial Times*, *The Washington Post*, or *The Economist*, or local newspapers (preferably in English or Chinese).

**Presentation on one country of your choice (group project) - 20%:** You will form a group with 5-6 people who have selected the same country as experts. The group will give a presentation of 10 minutes and submit a one-page summary of the presentation. Topic: What the biggest problem facing the country that you have selected? Using what you've learned in class, how would you analyze/solve the problem?

## **Course Schedule**

*Note that this is preliminary and may change depending on the final enrolment in class and on how interested students are in participating in in-class debates*

### **1. September 3<sup>rd</sup> : Introduction, course logistics**

Assignments: none

## **Part 1: Political Theory**

### **2. September 5<sup>th</sup> : Definitions: What is politics? What is the state?**

Assignments: (1) make sure you have your clicker ready (either as separate device or as app on your cellphone); (2) sign up on CANVAS; (3) answer opinion questions on CANVAS until tonight!

Readings:

1. Max Weber: "Politics as vocation", Chapter 7 from Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society, ed. By Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters. Palgrave Macmillan (2015), pages 8-11, pages 79-85, 94-99
2. Garner et al (2016): "Introduction"

### 3. **September 10<sup>th</sup> : Power, Legitimacy, Authority**

Assignments: fill out opinion questions (quiz) about democracy on CANVAS until Friday evening (September 12<sup>th</sup>). Please do so before starting the readings for next week.

Readings:

1. Max Weber: "Politics as vocation", Chapter 7 from Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society, ed. By Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters. Palgrave Macmillan. (2015), pages 12-13
2. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 2, pages 48-62 (top few lines)

### 4. **September 12<sup>th</sup> : Normative political theory: What should the state do?**

Readings:

1. Daniel McDermott: "Analytical Political Philosophy", in David Leopold & Marc Stears (eds.), Political Theory: Methods and Approaches. Oxford University Press (2008), pages 11-15 (third paragraph), pages 18-21, pages 24-27.
2. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 1, pages 27– 42 (middle)

### 5. **September 17<sup>th</sup> : Democracy and political obligation**

Assignments: decide which country you would like to become an expert on (submit three choices on CANVAS)

Readings:

1. Adam Przeworski: 'Minimalist conception of democracy: a defense', in Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordon (eds), Democracy's Value. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1999), pages 23-27 and 43-50 (In defense of minimalism)
2. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 3, pages 68-83.

### 6. **September 19<sup>th</sup> : (Liberal) democracy and its discontent**

Assignments: from now on until end of April, you will be expected to post two news links on the country you've selected every week.

Readings:

1. **Optional!** Franziska Keller: "Appropriating" Democracy: a Comparison between Argumentative Strategies for Confucian and Islamic Democracy [working paper]

### 7. **September 24<sup>th</sup> : (Liberal) democracy and its discontent, continued**

Assignments: answer opinion questions on state on CANVAS

Readings:

1. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 4

## **9. September 26<sup>th</sup> : Freedom and Justice**

Readings:

1. Mill, J. S. [1859] (2001). On liberty. Batoche Books, Kitchener, pages 18-23 (first paragraph), 34-36, 49-53.

**October 1<sup>st</sup>: no class, National Day**

## ***Part 2: Comparative Politics***

### **9. October 3<sup>rd</sup> : Institutions and State**

Readings:

1. Benedict Anderson (1991). Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. Verso Books, pages 5-7, 9-15, 19-21, 32-36
2. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 7

### **10. October 8<sup>th</sup> : The Judiciary: Laws, constitutions and federalism**

Readings:

1. Charles De Montesquieu: The Spirit of the Laws. Cambridge University Press, 1989, pages 156-161
2. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 8, pages 185-191 (top two lines), 194-199.

### **11. October 10<sup>th</sup> : The Legislature: legislatures and legislators**

Readings:

1. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 9

### **12. October 15<sup>th</sup> : The Legislature: Votes and elections**

Readings:

1. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 9

**October 17<sup>th</sup>: mid-term exam**

### **13. October 22<sup>nd</sup> : The Executive: The head of state**

Readings:

1. Stan Hok-Wui Wong: Gerrymandering in Electoral Autocracies: Evidence from Hong Kong, forthcoming in the British Journal of Political Science, page 1-20
2. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 11, pages 249-256.

### **14. October 24<sup>th</sup> : The Executive: The bureaucracy, policy studies and governance**

Readings:

1. Jose Cheibub: Systems of Government: Parliamentarism and Presidentialism  
[https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/stm103%20articles/Cheibub\\_Pres\\_Parlt.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/stm103%20articles/Cheibub_Pres_Parlt.pdf)
2. Michael Lipsky (1983). Street-Level Bureaucracy: The Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service. Russell Sage Foundation, pages xi-xvi, 4-12.

**15. October 29<sup>th</sup> : Discussing midterm exam**

**16. October 31<sup>st</sup> : Political parties**

Readings:

1. Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan: “Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: and introduction” in Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (eds): Party Systems and Voter Alignments: cross-national perspectives. New York: Free Press, 1967, pages 1-5, 14, 50.
2. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 10, pages 228-241.

**17. November 5<sup>th</sup> : Political parties (and other “democratic” institutions) in authoritarian regimes**

Readings:

1. Beatriz Magaloni and Ruth Kricheli. 2010. ‘Political Order and One-Party Rule’. Annual Review of Political Science 13: 123-130.

**18. November 7<sup>th</sup> : Civil society: social movements and revolutions**

Readings:

1. Joshua Tucker (2007). Enough! Electoral fraud, collective action problems, and post-communist colored revolutions. Perspectives on Politics, 5(03), 535-543.

**19. November 12<sup>th</sup> : Civil society, interest groups and the media**

Readings:

1. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 12, pages 273-283.

***Part 3: International Relations***

**20. November 14<sup>th</sup> : Security and insecurity**

Readings:

1. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 17, pages 380-388, 392-396

**21. November 19<sup>th</sup> : International organizations in global politics**

Readings:

1. Garner et al (2016): Chapter 19

**22. November 21<sup>st</sup> : Student presentations**

**23. November 26<sup>th</sup> : Student presentations**

**24. November 28<sup>th</sup> : Student presentations / questions regarding the final exam and repetition of important concepts**