

SOSC 1300: THE WORLD OF POLITICS

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:50*

**Due to COVID-19, all classes will be conducted on Zoom until further notice.*

Instructor	Teaching Assistant
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Course Description

This course introduces students to two main fields of political studies – political theory and comparative politics. Political theory seeks to evaluate and recommend political arrangements through the study of concepts and ideologies. Comparative politics seeks to understand and explain the similarities and differences in politics through the study of actors, institutions, and their dynamics. Students will benefit with the knowledge, skills, and attitude for analyzing the world of politics in a politicized world.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be better equipped to the following:

- Knowledge:** Describe the key concepts and theories in political theory and comparative politics.
- Skills:** Apply concepts and theories in discussing issues in political theory and comparative politics.
- Attitude:** Exercise independent and critical judgments in the study of politics.

Textbook (Reserved at HKUST Library)

[GFL] Robert Garner, Peter Ferdinand & Stephanie Lawson (2020) *Introduction to Politics* (4th edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Course Schedule

Week/Date	Topic	Reading [GFL]
1 Feb 2 (T) Feb 4 (H)	Sessions 1 & 2: Prologue <i>What is this course about? What is politics? How can politics be studied?</i>	Chapter 1
THEME 1: POLITICAL THEORY		
2 Feb 9 (T) Feb 11 (H)	Sessions 3 & 4: The State <i>What is the state? What ought the state to do?</i>	Chapter 2
3 Feb 16 (T) Feb 18 (H)	Sessions 5 & 6: Political Power <i>What is power? What is authority? How can power be measured?</i>	Chapter 3
4 Feb 23 (T) Feb 25 (H)	Sessions 7 & 8: Democracy <i>What is democracy? Why is democracy special? What are the new directions in democratic thought?</i>	Chapter 4
5 Mar 2 (T) Mar 4 (H)	Sessions 9 & 10: Freedom and Justice <i>What is freedom? Why is freedom desirable? What is justice? What are the major theories of justice?</i>	Chapter 5
6 Mar 9 (T) Mar 11 (H)	Sessions 11 & 12: Political Ideologies <i>What is an ideology? What are the key examples of traditional and contemporary ideologies?</i>	Chapters 6 & 7

7	Mar 16 (T)	Session 13: Interlude <i>What are the key lessons learnt from political theory? How can we handle Take-home Essay 1?</i>	[See Canvas]
	Mar 18 (H)	Session 14: Case Discussions <i>What can we learn from the prescribed cases for Theme 1?</i>	[See Canvas]
THEME 2: COMPARATIVE POLITICS			
8	Mar 23 (T)	Sessions 15 & 16: Law and Constitutions <i>What are constitutions? What is judicial review? Can judges shape politics?</i>	Chapter 10
	Mar 25 (H)		
9	Mar 30 (T)	Session 17: Voting and Elections <i>What are voting and elections?</i>	Chapter 11
	Apr 1 (H)	Mid-term Break – NO CLASS	
	Apr 6 (T)	Public Holiday – NO CLASS	
	Apr 8 (H)	Session 18: Political Parties <i>What are political parties and party systems?</i>	Chapter 12
10	Apr 13 (T)	Sessions 19 & 20: Government Systems <i>What are legislatures, executives, and bureaucracies? How can policy making spread beyond state officials and civil servants?</i>	Chapters 11 & 13
	Apr 15 (H)		
11	Apr 20 (T)	Sessions 21 & 22: Civil Society Actors <i>What is civil society? What are interest groups? How do the media and new communication technologies shape politics?</i>	Chapter 14
	Apr 22 (H)		
12	Apr 27 (T)	Sessions 23 & 24: Political Regimes <i>What are democracies and authoritarian regimes? How do they emerge and persist?</i>	Chapter 15
	Apr 29 (H)		
13	May 4 (T)	Session 25: Epilogue <i>What are the key lessons learnt from comparative politics? How can we handle Take-home Essay 2?</i>	[See Canvas]
	May 6 (H)	Session 26: Case Discussions <i>What can we learn from the prescribed cases for Theme 2?</i>	[See Canvas]

Requirements and Grading

Group-based Assessments		Individual-based Assessments			
Case Discussions		Take-home	Take-home	Multiple-choice	Class Participation
Case Analysis	Review	Essay 1	Essay 2	Quizzes (×3)	(Bonus)
10 points	5 points	35 points	35 points	15 points	5 points maximum

Group-based Assessments

	Case Discussions (Case Analysis)	Case Discussions (Review)
Learning outcomes	#1, #2 & #3	#3
Objectives	To help students consolidate the key concepts and/or theories learnt through case studies.	To help students develop critical thinking skills by reviewing the peers' case analyses.

Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze a prescribed case based on the concepts and/or theories learnt in Theme 1 or Theme 2. Prepare a video description in about 5-10 minutes to illustrate the analysis. Share the video description on Canvas for viewing and comments. Respond to the verbal commentary from a peer group in about 2 minutes during one of the case discussions sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically review a case analysis from a peer group as assigned. Deliver a verbal commentary in about 2 minutes during one of the case discussions sessions. Complete a review form with comments and suggestions.
Evaluation criteria	(i) Content; (ii) organization; (iii) style	Content only
Deadlines	For Theme 1: 23:59, Mar 14 (Sun)	For Theme 1: Mar 18 (in class) for verbal commentary & 23:59, Mar 26 (Fri) for review form
	For Theme 2: 23:59, May 2 (Sun)	For Theme 2: May 6 (in class) for verbal commentary & 23:59, May 14 (Fri) for review form
Penalty for no show or late submissions	Three points deducted per day (including part of a day)	Verbal commentary: Zero point awarded for no show
		Review form: Three points deducted per day (including part of a day)

Individual-based Assessments

	Take-home Essays 1 & 2	Multiple-choice Quizzes (x 3)
Learning outcomes	#1, #2 & #3	#1 & #3
Objectives	To enable students to demonstrate the key lessons learnt from classes and readings.	To help students consolidate the key lessons learnt from classes and readings.
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write an essay response, in 3 days, to one of the prescribed questions in about 800-1,000 words, excluding endnotes and appendices. For Take-home Essay 1, answer a question on a topic in Theme 1. For Take-home Essay 2, answer a question on a topic in Theme 2. Use Harvard citation and referencing style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer ALL 10 MC question in 15 minutes for each quiz. Syllabus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz 1: Sessions 1 to 8 only Quiz 2: Sessions 9-12 & 15-17 only Quiz 3: Sessions 18 to 24 only
Reminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both essays are open-book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All quizzes are open-book

	assessments. • <u>For confirmed cases of plagiarism, severe sanctions – including but not limited to a failure grade – may be imposed.</u>	assessments.
Evaluation criteria	(i) Content; (ii) organization; (iii) style	Accuracy only
Release of questions	Essay 1: Mar 18 (by the end of class)	Quiz 1: Mar 9 (in class)
	Essay 2: May 6 (by the end of class)	Quiz 2: Apr 8 (in class)
		Quiz 3: May 4 (in class)
Submission deadlines	Essay 1: 23:59, Mar 21 (Sun)	Quiz 1: Mar 9 (15 minutes from start)
	Essay 2: 23:59, May 9 (Sun)	Quiz 2: Apr 8 (15 minutes from start)
		Quiz 3: May 4 (15 minutes from start)
Penalty for no show or late submissions	Three points deducted per day (including part of a day)	Zero point awarded for no show or no submission

* Class Participation (Bonus): A maximum of 5 points will be awarded to students who contribute actively to class discussions.

Important Dates

Date		Time	Task
February 2021	19 th (Fri)	23:59	Confirmation of grouping
	25 th (Thu)	In class	Allocation of cases
March 2021	9 th (Tue)	In class	MC Quiz 1
	14 th (Sun)	23:59	Submission of video description (if applicable)
	18 th (Thu)	In class	Case discussions
	18 th (Thu)	End of class	Release of questions for Take-home Essay 1
	21 st (Sun)	23:59	Submission of Take-home Essay 1
	26 th (Fri)	23:59	Submission of review form (if applicable)
April 2021	8 th (Thu)	In class	MC Quiz 2
May 2021	2 nd (Sun)	23:59	Submission of video description (if applicable)
	4 th (Tue)	In class	MC Quiz 3
	6 th (Thu)	In class	Case discussions
	6 th (Thu)	End of class	Release of questions for Take-home Essay 2
	9 th (Sun)	23:59	Submission of Take-home Essay 2
	14 th (Fri)	23:59	Submission of review form (if applicable)

Other Useful Texts

- [AH] Andrew Heywood (2019) *Politics* (5th edition), Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. [NB: The 4th edition (e-book) is also available [here](#)]
- [MJT] Catriona McKinnon, Robert Jubb & Patrick Tomlin (eds) (2019) *Issues in Political Theory* (4th edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [HG] John Hoffman & Paul Graham (2015) *Introduction to Political Theory* (3rd edition), London: Routledge [e-book].
- [JM] John McCormick (2019) *Cases in Comparative Government and Politics*, London: Red Globe Press.
- [HHM] Rod Hague, Martin Harrop & John McCormick (2019) *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction* (11th edition), London: Red Globe Press.

Course Communications

All announcements are made through the course website on Canvas (<https://canvas.ust.hk/>). For e-mail communications, students should allow at least 3 working days for a reply. **All e-mail enquiries regarding any of the assessments above should be made at least 48 hours before their respective due dates.**

Class Rules

Students should show respect to every member in the class. They should NOT annotate, share screens, capture screenshots, record sound, take photos or videos, or play sound or videos without the prior permission of the instructor or TA. **They should NOT share the login details, course materials, lecture recordings, or information of class members with any parties outside the class.**

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating are very serious offences. Students are reminded of the consequences for violating University's regulations governing academic integrity and honesty. For details of the regulations, please visit: <http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/student-1.html>. For advice on avoiding plagiarism and copying, please visit: <http://libguides.ust.hk/writing/style-man>.

Quality Assurance

Students are welcome to offer comments and suggestions on the course. The principal concern of this course is students' learning, and therefore, the instructor may modify the schedule if this will facilitate their learning.

Last revised: January 19, 2021