

**PSC 101**  
**Introduction to Political Science ONLINE**  
**Summer Session A**

## **1 Class Information**

- ⇒ **Instructor:** Nicholas P. Nicoletti
- ⇒ **Office:** Caudell Annex, Room 119
- ⇒ **Email:** nicolenp@buffalostate.edu
- ⇒ **Class Time:** ONLINE
- ⇒ **Room:** ONLINE
- ⇒ **Virtual Live Office Hours:** Wednesdays 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

## **2 What You MUST Have Access to / KNOW HOW TO DO**

Below is a list of basic requirements and prerequisites that you must have access to or know how to use in order to take this course:

- Access to a Personal Computer (PC / MAC) WITH *high speed internet access*.
- A backup plan (i.e. computer) in case your primary machine fails.
- A basic understanding of your computer.
- The ability to use the Microsoft Office Suite (2003, 2007, 2010), specifically *PowerPoint* and *Word*.
- The ability to read Adobe PDF documents.
- The ability to use the ANGEL Learning Management Software (LMS) and a Buffalo State email address.
- A *thorough, clear, and rigorous* understanding of how to use the Buffalo State online library research tools (i.e. Library Databases, Online Journals, etc.).
- You will need access to the textbook immediately. The book is available in the bookstore and online. Make sure you have the book before the *the class begins*.
- Keep a readily available copy of this syllabus at all times. *Please do not send me an email with a question that is already answered in this document.*
- A *DESIRE* to learn!

**NOTE:** Technological difficulties will *NEVER* be accepted as a reason for why you turned in an assignment (i.e. quiz, discussion board, etc.) late. Moreover, I am not a technical support agent; *do not* contact me if you have technical problems with ANGEL or your computer. However, you may contact the Buffalo State Computing Help Desk at chd@buffalostate.edu or 716-878-HELP (4357). Hopefully these issues will not be a problem for any of us.

## 3 Course Description

### 3.1 Why is This Course Different?

Welcome to PSC 101 Introduction Political Science ONLINE! My name is instructor Nicholas P. Nicoletti and I will be your guide, navigating you through the exciting world of *Political Science*. Notice that I use the language “Political Science” instead of “Government and Politics”, as it is stated in the Course Catalog. There is no doubt that we will be learning about Government and Politics, you can take that as a given. However, we will be viewing the world of government and politics through the lens of Political Science. *Political Science is a social science, concerned with the theory and practice of politics and political behavior among different political units (individuals, groups, states, international organizations, transactional advocacy networks, and many others)*. Political Scientists have borrowed methodology and theoretical perspectives from a number of social sciences, such as: economics, psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior. However, Political Science has evolved to the point where it has its own methodological standards and theoretical research programmes.

Because we are studying *Political Science*, we will look at *where* each argument comes from and *how* it was derived. The textbook I have chosen is specifically designed to present students with facts about government and politics, but also with theoretical arguments backed by empirical data. Therefore, it is essential that students grasp certain concepts, such as: (1) What is a *theory*? (2) What makes a theory *good*? and (3) How do we *test* theories?

Because this is an ONLINE class I will not be able to lecture on the material as I would in my on-campus classes. You will have to read everything closely in order to do well in this class. Failure to read the material will almost certainly result in failure. Moreover, Summer Session A is *ONLY 4 WEEKS LONG!* This means that you will have to read more pages per week than many other undergraduate classes. Keeping up with the reading is a must, as the discussion boards and quizzes are all predicated on the idea that you have read and understand the course material. Thus, I fully expect that this class will be hard for some students. However, I will make every attempt to be available via email, (online) office hours, and discussion boards.

### 3.2 A Brief Overview of the Course Material

Politics and government decision making affects individual citizens in a variety of ways. As citizens it is important to understand the setting and circumstances surrounding these decisions. This course is designed to introduce students to the core concepts and themes of Political Science. Political Science is often seen as (1) the use of power or (2) the production of public choice. The required text relates the material to these two themes and integrates the implications of each approach. The class will explore the nature and scope of politics; ideological foundations and political philosophy of government; and the modern nation state. We will also discuss government structures and policies; including the struc-

ture of the modern “nation-state”, defense policy, economic policy, democracy, autocracy, constitutions and government design, elections, parties, bureaucracy, international politics and more. A portion of the class is centered on the comparative study of the governments of constitutional, totalitarian, and developing systems. We will also look at some of the challenges to modern nation-states, such as terrorism. Students will be introduced to political analysis and political science theory.

### 3.3 Course Expectations and Assignments

First, this is a **SUMMER ONLINE** class in which **YOU** chose to enroll. Naturally, we will have to cover the same amount of material in this 4-week class as we would in a normal semester. **THIS CLASS IS INTENSE WITH READING!** This means that you will be required to read a considerable amount of material each week; over 150 pages a week. I recommend reading a few Chapters per day and going over each set of lecture slides before taking the quizzes. I expect that you are keeping up with the reading at all times.

Multiple students often have the same question regarding course material or administrative issues. All relevant information about the course should be contained in this syllabus. Thus, students should always consult the syllabus first when they have a general / administrative question. In the event that the answer to your question is not in the syllabus, I have setup a Discussion Forum, under the “Lessons” tab in ANGEL, where students can anonymously post a question about administrative issues or course material. Utilizing this mechanism allows all students to gain access to the answers to frequently asked questions. Hence, always check the discussion forum for the answer to your question (after you have consulted the syllabus). If the answer to your question is not in the discussion forum, create a new post and I will answer your question. Of course, students are free to email me anytime or during my live office hours with any questions; I understand that some questions / issues must be resolved outside of the discussion forum.

#### 3.3.1 Course Introduction

All course documents and assignments are located under the “*Learning Modules*” tab in ANGEL. Within the “CLICK HERE FIRST: Course Information” module in ANGEL there are two assignments which must be completed within the first week of class. The first is a quiz on the syllabus / course information which is worth 5% (5 points) of your final grade. The second is a discussion board which will server as an *Ice Breaker* for the class, it is also worth 5% (5 points) of your final grade. These are very easy assignments and serve as an easy 10 points! Both are *required* assignments.

#### 3.3.2 Quizzes

At the end of each week you will be given several quizzes on the material you have read. **Quizzes are available now but close each week on Sunday at 5:00 pm.** This means that each quiz has a *due* date and will not be available after a certain time. Quiz 1 and 2 must

be taken by June 10, 2012 at 5:00 pm; Quizzes 3 and 4 must be taken by June 17, 2012 at 5:00 pm; and Quizzes 5 and 6 must be taken by June 24, 2012 at 5:00 pm. Although the class ends on June 23, you have until the 24 to take Quizzes 5 and 6. Quizzes will be worth 60% of your grade. There are 6 graded quizzes and each is individually worth **10 points**. *Note:* Some of the quiz question are “fill in the blank”. ANGEL tends to have an issue matching student answers with the correct answer unless they are perfectly identical. In some cases ANGEL will mark your answer wrong, although it is actually correct. When I grade the quiz I will make sure to look at each “fill in the blank” and give students credit for correct answers the computer marks wrong. Please refrain from emailing me about these errors before I have graded the quizzes. If I accidentally fail to give you credit for a “fill in the blank” question you answered correctly, email me after I have graded the quiz and I will correct the error. The quizzes are *hard* and will require you to apply the material in multiple choice, true-false, multiple select, and essay questions.

### 3.3.3 Discussion Boards

A large portion of this class is based on weekly **discussion boards**. For each learning module (each week), students are required to make two (2) *thoughtful* and *substantiated* posts. Each week I will begin the discussion with a question pertaining to the material assigned for the module.

Notice, again, my language. I use the words “thoughtful” and “substantiated”. First, your post must be original, relevant, and appropriate to the material in the module. Second, and most importantly, your post must be accompanied by a *citation* which substantiates your comment. This means that you **MUST** tell me where in the course readings your post was inspired by **AND** if your are making some type of argument you must cite the source of the argument (i.e. New York Times, Scholarly Journal, Documentary, Book, etc.). Posts that are not substantiated by a citation (from the course material or otherwise) will receive almost no points. This means that any post you make has to be substantiated and cited, even if it is simply the course material.

However, good posts will make reference to outside material. Posts should be between 250 and 300 words. Your first post should answer my initial question and make an original contribution to the discussion. Your second post must respond to one of your classmates’ original posts (disagree or agree, as long as your response is substantiated). ***Your first post must be completed by Wednesday at 5:00 pm. Your second post must be completed by Sunday at 5:00 pm.*** Late posts will not be counted.

The discussion boards are in the *post first* format. This means that you will *not* be able to view other students’ posts until you make your own initial post. Some students in past classes have claimed that they dislike this format because they can formulate a better answer to the question after reading what others have to say. While this may be a valid point for some individuals, the fact remains that reading what other people have to say will influence your initial thoughts on the the subject and lead to many posts which are very similar in content. The *post first* format forces you to think critically about the

question without being influenced by others in the class. Moreover, good students will research the question using outside sources before making their first post, which will allow for a deeper understanding of the material without reading other students' posts. After your initial post, all other posts will be revealed; it is at this point that you can read and comment on other students' posts.

I expect that all students will be considerate and follow standard classroom norms when making their posts. Rude responses will **NOT** be tolerated, receiving zero points, and will be deleted swiftly. Moreover, all discussion posts must contain complete sentences, proper grammar, and be free of "mobile phone Texting / Online Instant Messaging / Internet slang". For example, digital slang such as "BTW" (by the way), "IAWTP" (I agree with this post), or "AIUI" (as I understand it) will not be tolerated. Please use full sentences, full words, capitalize the word I, etc. Posts that utilize this type of language or style will receive almost no points. The Discussion Boards will be worth 30% of your final grade. There are 3 graded discussion boards and each is individually worth **10 points**. See the "*Discussion Board Rubric*" found under "Learning Modules" for more detailed grading information.

### **3.4 Communication**

I will communicate to the class via the Course Announcements section in ANGEL. You should always check the Announcements section, as all new information, instructions, and other messages will be posted there. Private communication will take place via email and private comments on the discussion boards.

If you want to contact me directly you can send me an email through ANGEL. This is the preferred way to contact me. Every email sent via ANGEL will go directly to my preferred email account and I check this very often. The next best way to contact me is via my personal email address: nicolenp@buffalostate.edu. I will respond to student emails within 24 hours (usually less); except on the weekends, when I will respond within 48 hours.

#### **3.4.1 Live Online Office Hours**

During my online office hours — Wednesday 3:30 pm — 5:00 pm — I will literally be sitting at a computer with my email open, continually hitting the "refresh" button. I will respond to emails instantly during this period of time. I also have an office on campus but I will **NOT** be holding physical office hours.

### 3.4.2 Proper Email Etiquette

This is the format I expect all emails to be sent in:

To: npn@buffalo.edu  
From: Your Email Here  
Subject: Always Include a Subject Line

Dear Instructor Nicoletti,

Your message should be written here using complete sentences.

Thank you (Or Other Valediction),  
Jane/John Doe Student

### Citations for Discussion Board Substantiation of Postings

All direct quotes, paraphrased text, and ideas must be cited in your *discussion board* postings. As a general rule, if you got an idea from somewhere (even the textbook), you should cite the source with the page number. You may use any of the professional citation styles (APSA, APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.). Instructions on how to use these styles can be found at the University at Buffalo Library web-site at: [http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/tutorials/citing\\_stylemanual.html](http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/tutorials/citing_stylemanual.html) or here at <http://dept.lamar.edu/polisci/DRURY/drury.html>. The Buffalo State Library also has instructions for the APA citation style here: <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/wahlstr1/APA-Style-cornell.htm>.

## 4 Grading

- Course Introduction Activities — 10%
- Quizzes — 60%
- Discussion Boards — 30%

The first quiz on the course information is worth 5 points and the Ice Breaker discussion board is worth 5 points, for a total of 10 points. Each quiz is worth 10 points and there will be 6 of them (a total of 60 points). Each set of discussion board posts are worth 10 points and there will be 3 of them (a total of 30 points). Each point earned in the class is worth 1 full point toward your final grade (i.e. if you earn 90 points you have a 90% in the class, which equates to an A-). There is no extra credit in this class. The total points possible for the class is **100**.

## 5 Grading Distribution

- A = 94 and Above
- A- = 90 — 93
- B+ = 87 — 89
- B = 84 — 86
- B- = 80 — 83
- C+ = 76 — 79
- C = 70 — 75
- D = 60 — 69
- F = 0 — 59

## 6 Required Readings

- Shively, W. Phillips. (2010, 2011, 2012). *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science, Twelfth or Thirteenth Edition* New York, NY: McGraw Hill. ISBN-13: 978-0-07-337903-6 (12<sup>th</sup>) ISBN-13: 978-0-07-352636-2(13<sup>th</sup>).
- **Note:** The entire class is based on the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the text. This includes the detailed feedback for the quizzes, which includes page numbers in some cases. However, the bookstore could only obtain the 13<sup>th</sup> edition. I have looked at the 13<sup>th</sup> edition and it is very similar to the 12<sup>th</sup>; it is actually slightly shorter. Either edition should be fine, but the 12<sup>th</sup> is actually preferable. You can order the 12<sup>th</sup> edition on Amazon for around \$19.00 used and \$80.00 new. The only structural change that I have found, is that material in Chapter 4 of the 12<sup>th</sup> edition regarding Legitimacy and Authority now appears in Chapter 1 in the 13<sup>th</sup> edition. Thus, for the quiz containing Chapter 4, those of you with the 13<sup>th</sup> edition will have to reference Chapter 1. This is the only significant change I have found.
- Each Module will also contain a set of detailed Lecture Slides outlining each chapter (again based on the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the text). These are designed to supplement each chapter.
- I reserve the right to add readings at any point during the semester.

## 7 Academic Honesty

Cheating and plagiarism (using someone else's work or ideas without proper citation) will not be tolerated. The Buffalo State policy and definition for plagiarism is available at: <http://library.buffalostate.edu/research/plagiarism.php>. The Buffalo State policy for Academic Dishonesty can be found at [www.buffalostate.edu/academicaffairs/x607.xml](http://www.buffalostate.edu/academicaffairs/x607.xml). The Buffalo State policy and procedure for Academic Misconduct can be found at [www.buffalostate.edu/studentaffairs/x522.xml](http://www.buffalostate.edu/studentaffairs/x522.xml). Cheating and/or plagiarism is a serious offense and can have severe consequences.

## 8 Special Needs / Disability Services

Any student who requires accommodations to complete the requirements and expectations of this course because of a disability is invited to make his or her needs known to the instructor and to the director of the Disabilities Services Office, 120 South Wing, 878-4500. Students with special needs should bring their requirements to my attention in the first week of classes (via email). I will make every effort to assist students with special needs. More information on students with disabilities can be found at: <http://www.buffalostate.edu/disabilityservices/index.xml>. If you need to utilize these services please email Disability Services at [disabilityserv@buffalostate.edu](mailto:disabilityserv@buffalostate.edu).

## 9 Academic Support Programs

Buffalo State has great academic support programs which are completely free of charge! All services are accessible to all students. The academic support staff teaches, tutors, counsels and advises students in order to help them achieve their fullest academic, intellectual, and professional potential. You can get more information at [www.buffalostate.edu/academicupport](http://www.buffalostate.edu/academicupport).

## 10 Course Schedule

### Course Introductions and Ice-Breakers (May 29 - June 3)

- Take the *Course Information Quiz* and *acknowledge that you received and read the syllabus*.
- Review the *Strategies for Success*, which help you navigate through ANGEL.
- Participate in the *Ice-Breaker Discussion Board* (at least two (2) posts).
- Purchase the book; I am giving you a full week to get the book (at the bookstore or online) before we start the material. The book is cheaper online.

### Module 1 (June 4-10): Foundations, Ideologies, the Modern Nation State, Governmental Policies, Economic Policies, and Justice and Effectiveness

- Shively: The Appendix (422 — 429).
- Shively: Chapter 1 (1 — 22).
- Shively: Chapter 2 (23 — 48).
- Shively: Chapter 3 (49 — 75).
- Shively: Chapter 4 (76 — 95).
- Shively: Chapter 5 (96 — 129).
- Shively: Chapter 6 (131 — 149).
- Discussion Board Posts.
- Take the Quizzes.

## **Module 2 (June 11-17): Democracy and Autocracy, The Individual and the State, Constitutional Design, American Constitutional Design, Elections, and Political Parties**

- Shively: Chapter 7 (151 — 180).
- Shively: Chapter 8 (181 — 203).
- Shively: Chapter 9 (205 — 225).
- ★ Federalist No. 10, James Madison. (1787). “The Federalist No. 10”, pp. 72-82. Essay can be found online at: <http://www.thisnation.com/library/books/federalist/10.html>.†
- ★ James Madison & Alexander Hamilton. (1788). “The Federalist No. 51.” Essay can be found free online at: <http://www.thisnation.com/library/books/federalist/51.html>.†
- ★ CPP, Alexander Hamilton. (1778). “The Federalist No. 78”, pp. 285-290. Essay can be found online at: <http://www.thisnation.com/library/books/federalist/78.html>.†
- Shively: Chapter 10 (227 — 250).
- Shively: Chapter 11 (251 — 273).
- Discussion Board Posts.
- Take the Quizzes.

## **Module 3 (June 18-24): Interest Groups, Social Movements, Parliamentary Government, Presidential, Bureaucracy, Courts, and Global Politics**

- Shively: Chapter 12 (274 — 300).
- Shively: Chapter 13 (301 — 314).
- Shively: Chapter 14 (315 — 337).
- Shively: Chapter 15 (338 — 360).
- Shively: Chapter 16 (361 — 375).
- Shively: Chapter 17 (376 — 392).
- Shively: Chapter 18 (393 — 421).
- Discussion Board Posts.
- Take the Quizzes.
- Course Evaluations will be opened on June 16, 2012 and closed on June 24, 2012. Please fill out this survey; I take your feedback seriously!