

Political Science 5810
 SENIOR SEMINAR
 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH LITERATURE
 Autumn 2005

REMEMBER TO REGISTER TO VOTE.

Instructor
 Lauren Holland
 302 OSH, x 1-4910

Office Hours: T. 12-1, Th. 3-4 p.m.
 & by appointment.
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This class seeks to expand our understanding of American government and politics through the reading and interrogation of works of fiction. The tomes and classic texts generally used in political science courses focus exclusively on informing through historical fact, event analysis and thematic repetition. Novels allow us to experience how political actors lived and felt about the events of their historical period, and to share in the authors' subjective perspectives of the American political system. Novels invite us to question the appropriateness of past governmental actions and speculate on the future consequences of current political events.

The course is designed to fulfill the requirements of the senior seminar for political science majors. These requirements include becoming competent in the use and application of appropriate writing skills, demonstrating critical thinking, engaging in academic research, and delivering presentations orally. The initial weeks of the course focus on developing students' written and analytical skills in anticipation of the writing of a major research paper during the final weeks of the semester. In advance of the final project, weekly written assignments are required to encourage students to hone their writing and analytical skills. The seminar designation of this course mandates active student involvement in weekly class meetings. Students are required to come to class having read and being prepared to discuss the readings.

Each novel will be discussed during two class meetings. During the first meeting we will situate the novel in the appropriate historical context by recreating the events of the time when the novel took place. Relevant periods, events and/or institutional arrangements include the political status of the American colonies and the events culminating in the Declaration of Independence during the 18th century, the institution of slavery in the 19th century, the nature of "democracy" during the Gilded Age, due process and justice for African Americans during the 20th century, Native American policies and practices, the Vietnam War, and the status and effectiveness of social welfare policies during the 20th and 21st centuries. At the same time, details about the authors will be considered as a way to understand what motivated the writers to produce their works. During the second class meeting the book will be discussed.

Required Texts*

Jeff Shaara, *Rise to Rebellion*
 Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
 Henry Adams, *Democracy: An American Novel*
 Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
 Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
 Sapphire, *Push*
 Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*
 Any American Government or American History textbook**

All of the novels and the Harvey book are available in the University of Utah bookstore. I have tried to locate the least expensive editions. The books also may be purchased through the internet or at any reputable bookstore in new or used form. **If you do not have an American Government or American History textbook, I will loan you one.

*Additional readings have been placed on reserve in Marriott Library. These also are available as Electronic Reserve.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Written Assignments: 28%. Writing assignments are required on a regular basis and are due in class. Specific questions relevant to the novel and designed to develop your writing and research skills will be distributed in advance. Students are expected to write in accordance with the syntax and mechanics of edited American English. Assignments will be graded for both writing (spelling, grammar, sentence structure and organization) and content. Late assignments will be marked down one grade per day.

Class Participation: 22%. Each student is expected to attend class regularly. The ONLY valid reason for not attending class is a medical or family EMERGENCY. Regular family or work commitments, including weddings, family vacations or job interviews out of town, are NOT valid excuses. If this course conflicts with your work schedule or family responsibilities, then drop the class.

Research Paper: 50%. Each student will select a "political" novel other than one discussed in class as a basis for a major research paper. The novels must be approved in advance by the instructor. The paper will require that you use the novel to interrogate the conventional wisdom on the events and/or historical/ political period/ topic that is the subject of your book. You are required to meet with the instructor on October 13th to discuss possible topics and books. A preliminary statement is due during the time of your second individual appointment with the instructor on October 27th. Three weeks have been set aside to provide for independent research. During these three weeks you will prepare a draft copy of the paper. During the last weeks of the semester, students will present their research findings orally to the class. A final version of the paper will be due on staggered dates depending upon the date of your oral presentation. The preliminary statement (5 points), first draft (10 points), oral presentation (10 points) and final draft of the paper (25 points) will be graded *independently*.

TH August 25th. Overview of the course, and getting acquainted. Begin reading *Rise to Rebellion*. **Class meets in ARC 227.**

T August 30th. What is a "political" novel? The nuts and bolts of college writing. **Class meets in ARC 227.**

Readings:

Irving Howe, *Politics and the Novel*, Introduction* (Xerox)
 Sharon M. Harris, *Redefining the Political Novel*, Introduction* (Xerox)
 Harvey, *Nuts & Bolts*, Introduction and Chapter 1

TH September 1st. The origins of a new nation. Trade & taxation. First steps toward independence. Roots of Government. The 1st & 2nd Continental Congresses. The Declaration of Independence. Who is Jeff Shaara? **Class meets in ARC 227.**

Reading: *Rise to Rebellion*
 Harvey, chapter 2. *Nuts & Bolts* (clarity).
 Textbook, chapter on the American Revolution.

T September 6th. Discussion of *Rise to Rebellion*. Begin reading *Beloved*. Assignment #1 due in class. **Class meets in OSH 208.**

TH September 8th. The institution of slavery. Who is Toni Morrison? **Class meets in ARC 227.**

Reading: *Beloved*.
 Harvey, chapter 3 (flow).
 Textbook, chapter on slavery.

T September 13th. Discussion of *Beloved*. Begin reading *Democracy: An American Novel*. Assignment #2 due in class. **Class meets in ARC 227.**

TH September 15th. NO CLASS. CATCH UP ON READINGS.

T September 20th. Politics during the Gilded Age. Who was Henry Adams? **Class meets in OSH 208.**

Reading: *Democracy: An American Novel*.
 Harvey, *Nuts & Bolts*, chapter 4 (punctuation).
 Textbook, chapter on political parties and politics during the Gilded Age.

TH September 22nd. Library Orientation. **Class meets in the Library.**

T September 27th. Discussion of *Democracy: An American Novel*. Begin reading *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Assignment #3 due in class. **Class meets in OSH 208.**

TH September 29th. What is justice? Procedural versus substantive due process. Who is Harper Lee? **Class meets in ARC 227.**

Reading: *To Kill A Mockingbird*.
 Harvey, Chapter 5 (gracefulness).
 Textbook, chapters on civil rights and civil liberties (rights of criminal defendants).

T October 4th. Discussion of *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Begin reading *Ceremony*. Assignment #4 due in class. **Class meets in OSH 208.**

TH October 6th. NO CLASS. FALL BREAK.

T October 11th. Native American culture and politics. Who is Leslie Silko? **Class meets in OSH 208.**

Reading: *Ceremony*.
Harvey, chapter 6 (using sources).
Textbook, check index for any information on Native Americans, past and present.

TH October 13th. **No Class.** Individual meetings with instructor to discuss research topics. MANDATORY.

T October 18th. Discussion of *Ceremony*. Begin reading *The Things They Carried*. Assignment #5 due in class. **Class meets in OSH 208.**

TH October 20th. The Vietnam War. Who is Tim O'Brien? **Class meets in ARC 227.**

Reading: *The Things They Carried*.
Harvey, chapter 7 (paragraphs).
Textbook, chapter on foreign policy.

T October 25th. Discussion of *The Things They Carried*. Begin reading *Push*. Assignment #6 due in class. **Class meets in OSH 208.**

TH October 27th. **No Class.** Individual meetings with instructor to discuss research topics. MANDATORY. Preliminary statement due.

T November 1st. Election Day. Social welfare policies. Who is Sapphire? **Class meets in OSH 208.**

Reading: *Push*.
Harvey, Chapter 8 (beginnings and endings).
Textbook, chapter on social welfare policy.

TH November 3rd. Discussion of *Push*. Assignment #7 due in class. **Class meets in ARC 227.**

T November 8th. Researching and writing the final paper. Tips and guidelines. **Class meets in OSH 208.**

Reading: Harvey, review all. Also, Appendix: Documentation and Citation Formats.

TH November 10th -W December 1st. Independent research. Individual consultations with the instructor. **No class** on November 10th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 24th or 29th.

TH December 1st. Class resumes. Student presentations. **Class meets in ARC 227.**

T December 6th. Student presentations. **Class meets in OSH 208.**

TH December 8th. Student presentations. **Class meets in ARC 227.**

NOTE: ANY STUDENT FOUND GUILTY OF CHEATING ON THE ASSIGNMENTS OR PLAGIARISM ON THE FINAL PAPER WILL RECEIVE A FAILING GRADE FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE.

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 Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations to meet the expectations of this course are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. Written documentation of the disability should be submitted during the first full week of the semester along with the request for special accommodations. Please contact the Center for Disabled Student Service, 160 Union Building, 581-5020.

You can drop classes by phone or web through Friday, September 2nd, and the classes will not appear on your transcripts. You can add classes up to Tuesday, September 7th. You can withdraw from classes by phone or web, but will be held responsible for tuition, through Friday, October 21st. A *W* will appear on your transcript for these courses. If you fail to pay tuition by September 6th, you automatically will be dropped from your classes