

PS 1 – Introduction to American Politics (Fall 2011)

Discussion Section Information Sheet

Sections:

Section 111: 2:00 – 4:00 PM 242 Dwinelle
Section 112: 4:00 – 6:00 PM 242 Dwinelle

GSI:

Ben Krupicka

Graduate Student in Political Science

btkrupicka@berkeley.edu

Political Science Main Office: Barrows 210 (GSI mailboxes located here)

Office Hours:

Tuesday, 1:30 – 3:30 PM
715 Barrows

You should all plan on visiting me in office hours at least once within the first three weeks of the semester. If necessary, I can also be available by appointment.

Technical and administrative questions about the course can be asked via email, but I would prefer to discuss substantive questions about course content in person during office hours. I do check my email regularly but will not be responding to student emails after 5pm or on Saturdays and Sundays (except under extraordinary circumstances or with prior notification).

Discussion Section Objectives:

- Further student understanding of major concepts and issues in the course readings and lectures.
- Encourage intellectual engagement with the course material and with other members of the class by promoting critical thought and discussion.
- Help develop your analytical skills by focusing on close and careful reading of the course materials, effective note-taking strategies, and sharpening your ability to construct and critique theoretical arguments.

I see my role primarily as a facilitator of discussion. You do not come to section to hear me talk about issues that are of particular interest to me. This is your time and it is your opportunity to ask questions and more closely examine the readings and lectures. My job is to ever so gently guide our discussions or structure activities so that we adequately cover the course material and allow every opportunity for you the student to pursue your interests in the class.

In order to achieve these goals, a positive learning environment must be maintained. To this end let me make it perfectly clear that racist, sexist or otherwise inappropriate language or expressions will not be tolerated. Not only does this behavior disrupt the learning environment but it also reflects incredibly poorly upon the student(s) involved.

Grading:

Section attendance and participation: **15%** of your total course grade

Attendance, participation in section and the completion of all assignments are the main determinants of your section grade. Your section grade is broken into three equally-weighted parts:

Attendance/Participation	5%*
Reading Quizzes	5%
Politics Live! Assignment	5%

*(representing percentages of total course grade)

All assignments will be graded fairly following the rubric and/or guidelines set forth by the professor and the other GSIs. As we near the first assignment, we will discuss these issues in greater detail so that the students will be well aware what is being expected of them and how their assignments will be graded. Lackluster participation throughout the semester and the failure to complete assignments on time will, obviously, negatively affect your section grade.

I am more than happy to discuss your assignment grades with you in office hours, but not within the first 48 hours after you receive your graded assignment. If you wish to dispute an assignment grade, you must document and explain in writing each aspect of your assignment that you feel was graded incorrectly or unfairly. Be aware that a re-grade may lower rather than raise your assignment score.

Attendance:

You are expected to attend all lectures and discussion sections. Any more than 2 unexcused absences from section will negatively impact your grade. Contact me in advance if, for some appropriate reason, you must miss a section so we can discuss any assignments due and/or the possibility of attending a make-up section.

Academic Honesty:

Any assignments submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not been submitted for credit in another class (unless you have obtained permission from the instructor to submit an assignment from another course).

In your essays and other assignments you are encouraged to work with and use the words and/or ideas of other individuals or publications, but only with proper attribution (e.g. citing sources). If you are unclear on what constitutes proper attribution, see me or seek clarification from campus resources like the Office of Student Conduct's "Understanding Plagiarism."¹ The Student Learning Center and the Library can also provide information and advice on how to avoid plagiarism. It is always best to ask questions as opposed to face the consequences of academic dishonesty. Make no mistake, the consequences – ranging from the creation of a formal disciplinary file to denial of future employment or admission to graduate or professional education – are severe.

As a member of the Berkeley campus community you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits without bias. Be proud of your academic accomplishments and protect and promote academic integrity on campus.

Campus Resources

Students with Disabilities:

If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, if you have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please inform me immediately in private, after class or during my office hours. For more information on services available to student with disabilities please visit the website or office of the Disabled Students' Program: <http://dsp.berkeley.edu/>.

Student Learning Center:

Cesar Chavez Student Center, Lower Sproul Plaza

<http://slc.berkeley.edu/general/index.htm>

The Student Learning Center provides a variety of services for students to assist them with their coursework and assignments. Study groups, writing consultations and a variety of workshops are all available.

Counseling and Psychological Services:

Tang Center, 2222 Bancroft Way

<http://uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/cps.shtml>

The Tang Center provides counseling and psychological services for students struggling with any number of concerns: adjusting to school, deciding on a career or major, dealing with family or relationship issues, coping with personal crises. If you're struggling, they're here to help.

¹ http://students.berkeley.edu/files/osl/Student_Judicial_Affairs/Understanding%20Plagiarism.pdf