

Political Science 4984-01W: Senior Seminar in Political Science

T-Th 11:00 to 12:15

Pafford 111

Dr. Heather A. D. Mbaye

Office hours: T-Th 9:30am to 11:00am; Tuesday 2:00pm to 3:30pm

Wednesday 1:00pm to 3:00pm

The Senior Seminar in Political Science is designed as a capstone course that provides a broad overview of the major fields of political science: Comparative Politics, American Politics, International Relations, Political Thought, and Methods.

This course is part of the Writing Across the Curriculum requirement for all students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Thus, it will emphasize writing assignments. Writing is a valuable learning method (“writing to learn”) as well as a tool for communication (“writing to communicate”). Some writing assignments will help students learn course content, while others will help students learn to communicate that content.

Outcomes and Goals:

On essay examinations, in the term paper, homework, and in oral presentations, students will demonstrate:

- the ability to map out the major topics in each field of political science
- advanced analyses of a topic to be chosen in concert with the Professor
- mastery of the reading material through the written summaries due weekly

Grading:

A total of between 600 and 700 points will be available.

- A reading summary project worth 100 points will be discussed in class. **You will fail this class if you fail to turn in a satisfactory project.** This is a writing to learn assignment. Each week, you will turn in summaries of the reading material, summaries that are to include critical thinking questions.

- Two hundred points will be distributed through the completion of the term research project (discussed below). The research paper is a writing to communicate assignment.

- Two exams, a midterm and a comprehensive final, will be worth one hundred points each. Exams are writing to communicate exercises.

- One hundred points will be distributed through a participation score – including **your session as discussion leader.**

- Additional points may be distributed at the discretion of the Professor. Generally speaking, this means pop-quizzes, in class writing responses (writing to learn activities), and homework assignments.

Term research project:

Students will be required to write a 15 to 20 page term paper, which will account for 100 points (this is a formal writing assignment and fulfills the writing to communicate component of the WAC course). The oral presentation on the paper will be worth 50 points, and an annotated bibliography prior to the paper will be worth 50 points (this is a formal assignment as well). This

paper will be in an area in which the student has a deficiency. The topic will be defined in concert with the Professor, during individual meetings with students, in the first three weeks of the course. The paper is to be a formal research paper: thesis driven, with citations and a bibliography. I have extremely high expectations on the quality of the paper and each of you should understand that grammatical and spelling errors, as well as poor organization, incorrect information, insufficient or poor sources, and unsupported theses will result in a reduced grade. All papers should be *carefully* edited.

The oral presentation will occur during the last several weeks of class. Any student reading directly from the research paper will earn a low grade.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is compulsory. Let me repeat: **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY**. If you cannot make the section, drop this class and take another. ONE unexcused absence is allowed. Beyond that, *each subsequent absence will result in a one half letter grade reduction in your grade. A failing grade will result if you miss enough classes, even if you do "A" work. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.*

Remember that you must complete this course with at least a C, or you will not graduate.

Excused absences are possible *only when you speak with me prior to a necessary absence*. If you are ill and unexpectedly must miss class (or you have a flat tire or the like), you must leave a message on my office phone or send an email as soon as possible **and provide proof**. Only a doctor's note or a note from the health center will be considered proof of illness; if you are ill enough to miss class you need a medical professional.

Participation is absolutely necessary. However, participation must be prefaced with knowledge of the material. To that end: do your reading prior to arriving in our classroom. I would like to avoid pop quizzes if at all possible; however, if I suspect that students are arriving unprepared, I will give quizzes. Pop quizzes and in-class assignments will be given particularly when attendance is poor.

Students who are tardy to class without good excuse three times will record an unexcused absence in my grade book. Tardies will be determined by whether you are in class when I call your name from the roll.

Note about Seminars:

A seminar is different from other, more typical college courses in several ways.

1. First, my role is different: instead of presenting material and leading the class sessions, the role of the instructor is more nearly limited to choosing the topics, arranging the readings, and evaluating the work of the students.
2. Second, your role is different: students in a seminar take the *active role in leading the meetings* of the seminar, during which they participate in exploring the topic through discussions of the readings.
3. Third, unlike a typical college course, in which students can get behind in the readings, miss some classes, and catch up through intensive studying prior to exams, a seminar

depends completely on its members *showing up each session having already done the readings*. A seminar simply fails if its members do not make, and keep, a serious commitment to it.

This seminar is the **Senior Seminar** in Political Science, and as such it is meant to be a capstone experience – meaning it is part gateway to the world outside the university, and part exit interview prior to your departure. The senior seminar serves these multiple purposes: (1) to acquaint you with some topics that the seminar leader thinks you should become familiar with before we confer a degree on you; (2) to allow you to flex the intellectual muscles you've been strengthening through four (or more) years of undergraduate education; and (3) to encourage you to reflect upon and evaluate your undergraduate political science major.

With these descriptions in mind, you should be aware that this seminar requires you to do **all** of the reading, attend **all** of the seminar meetings, and participate **actively** in our discussions, puzzles, and disagreements as we explore these readings and the issues that they raise. Your participation grade will be based on my evaluation of your contribution to the seminar, measured in two components -- first, the regularity and the quality of your participation at seminar meetings (50%); second, your performance in leading the seminar one week (50%).

Plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating:

It is university policy that plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating are not allowed. Cheating is using information obtained in forbidden ways during an examination, including furnishing that information to another student. Cheating will result in a zero on the examination. Fabrication is intentionally falsifying facts to support your conclusions. Fabrication will result in a failing grade on the assignment. Finally, plagiarism is “the purchase and use of ghost-written papers and reports, or incorporating into a report, term theme, research paper, or project, ideas and information obtained from another person without giving credit to the person from whom such information was obtained. Further, inclusion of the published or unpublished writings of another person without duly noting these sources according to normal scholarly procedures shall be considered plagiarism. The above definition of academic misconduct applies equally to improper use of electronic sources of information and opinion” (Faculty Handbook, State University of West Georgia, August 2004, page 75).

If you plagiarize even a single sentence from another person, you will fail this course.

Other expectations:

1. You are expected to check your **UWG email** and **WebCT several times per week**. “I didn’t see the email / announcement / assignment” is not a valid excuse.
2. You should do each assignment on time, and be on time to class. “I couldn’t find a parking place close to Pafford” is not a valid excuse.)
3. You **will read the assigned reading** prior to arriving in class on the day listed in the syllabus.
4. ALL cell phones must be turned OFF – not on vibrate, OFF – when class begins. NO CELL PHONES should EVER be out in class. Anyone who has a cell phone out during class when there is a quiz or test will fail that quiz or test. Anyone who has a cell phone out once during a regular class period will lose TEN POINTS off your grade on their presentation. The second infraction will result in a ZERO on your presentation.

Required texts:

1. Carr, Edward Hallett 1939. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*. Harper and Row, New York.
2. Jentleson, Bruce. 1997. *With Friends Like These: Reagan, Bush, and Saddam*. Norton, 0393967123
3. Barber, Benjamin. 1996. *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*. 1996, ISBN: 345-38304-4, Random House
4. Foer, Franklin. *How Soccer Explains the World*. New York: Harper.
5. *Readings from Grover and Pecheck. Voices of Dissent*. Seventh Edition. Pearson Longman.

Schedule of class activities

August 13, Week of August 18-20	Introduction Lecture: Creating a research project - Mbaye
Week of August 25-27	Carr: Science of International Politics Read: Ch 1-2 – Mbaye * Carr: International Crisis Read: Ch 3-4
Week of September 1-3	Carr: International Crisis Read: Ch 5-6 * Carr: Politics, Power, and Morality Read: Ch 7-9
Week of September 8-10	Carr: Law and Change Read: Ch 10-13 * Carr: Conclusion; Jentleson: Introduction - Mbaye
Week of September 15-17	Career Services * TERM PROJECT SELECTION DUE February 12 Jentleson, Part I Read: Ch 1-2
Week of September 22-24	Jentleson, Part I Read: Ch 3-4 * Jentleson, Part II Read: Ch 5-6
Week of September 29- October 1	Pells, chapters 1-4 * October 1: Midterm Exam
Week of October 6-8	Pells, chapters 5-8 * Pells, chapters 9-12

Week of October 13-15	How Soccer Explains the World * <i>Fall Break</i>
Week of October 20-22	How Soccer Explains the World * Readings from Voices of Dissent
Week of October 27-29	Readings from Voices of Dissent * Readings from Voices of Dissent
Week of November 3-5	Readings from Voices of Dissent Annotated Bibliography due November 3 * Readings from Voices of Dissent
Week of November 10-12	Readings from Voices of Dissent * No class – Dr. Mbaye at Conference
Week of November 17-19	Paper due November 17 * Student Presentations
Week of November 24-26	Student Presentations * Thanksgiving
December 1	Student Presentations
Tuesday, December 8	Final exam (11am-1pm)