

**Syllabus: POLS 4381, Politics and Film
Spring 2018 (3 Credit Hours)**

Office: Sam Center & CHSS 477; Phone (936) 294-1456	Professor: Mike Yawn
Office Hours: MW: 9-10; M 11-12	Email: mike.yawn@shsu.edu

Required Text: There are no required texts, but you will need access to the films listed on the syllabus. The key to this class is time management, and scheduling time to do the reading and watch movies at regular intervals. You will need to be able to access films on demand, through Amazon, Youtube, Google, or some other outlet.

Course Overview: This course examines politics and film, with a focus on (1) philosophical foundations of politics and law, (2) criminal procedures, (3) corruption, and (4) the nature of truth. Politics will be addressed broadly (focusing on philosophical concepts) and narrowly (focusing on specific policies, cases and procedures). Moreover, other disciplines such as the Legal System, Criminology, Sociology, Literature, History, and Cinema will be addressed. *Although this course does not meet “in class,” it is an equivalent workload of an in-class course. In other words, you should expect that your film watching and reading (and other work) will take up the equivalent of 3 hours per week of class time, plus the out-of-class studying that an in-person class would require.*

Note: The films may include objectionable material—sometimes sexist, racist, nudity, offensive language, etc. This class does not endorse these beliefs, but simply presents them to illustrate political principles, academic concepts, or film-making techniques.

Course Objectives: This course was designed with the following objectives in mind: (1) to introduce you to a series of important topics and theories in Political Science, Criminology, Law, Sociology, and History, (2) familiarize you with the art of film making and enhancing your motion picture literacy, and (3) improve your perceptual and critical thinking skills.

Grading: Quizzes 90%; Discussion Board 10%. You can find your quiz average by dividing the points you have earned on quizzes by the total number of points from all quizzes.

Films, Video Clips, & Readings: Films, video clips, and readings constitute the course background material. You should complete all readings and watch all video clips (with possible additional online research) prior to viewing the films. These readings, video clips, and films are broken into discrete sections and posted on blackboard. You have 17 required films this semester.

Quizzes: Your quizzes are online and will cover the readings and the films assigned. The quizzes over the films will address specific plot points, characters, and actors, so you will need to watch films closely and without distraction. You have about 3-6 minutes for most quizzes.

Discussion Board: I strongly encourage you to provide positive, constructive thoughts on the films in the discussion board. Some of the discussion board prompts are embedded in the readings, but you should also offer productive constructive comments on your own initiative. You will be evaluated on the quality, quantity, and timeliness of your posts. Your posts should be constructive, regular (don't post seven in one day to try to get the number of your

posts up; instead, post some well-constructed thoughts after each film or so), and insightful, demonstrating critical thinking abilities.

Office Hours: I will be online and in my office during the following times: MW: 9-10; M 11-12. Other times I will endeavor to respond to your emails (concerning class) within 24 hours.

Late Work: Due dates are posted on the syllabus and on blackboard. It is possible to work ahead, but students are required to take the quizzes in order. Taking the quizzes out of order results in a 20% percent penalty on the out-of-order quiz (or quizzes). Late quizzes are penalized at 10 percent a day. Three days after the due date, quizzes are removed and students can no longer take the quiz.

Course Requirements & Expectations: You need technology sufficient to complete all online quizzes. Ensure that you are taking your quizzes from a strong internet connection. If you do not have a reliable internet connection at home, you may want to rethink this online class. It is your responsibility to plan for each assignment, to complete the readings, to access/obtain the films and watch them, and to complete the online quiz by the due date and time.

Cheating & Plagiarism: Plagiarism in any of its manifestations (including the Discussion Board) will be penalized with the grade of a zero or referral to the Dean. Plagiarism is any use of work that is not your own, which includes use of another's language or research without proper citation (see student handbook for more information on plagiarism). Students should not work together on the quizzes. See the student handbook if you have additional questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

Classroom Rules of Conduct: The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. Section 5.2.22 defines classroom disturbances.

Q-Drops: A Q-drop is a drop made after the last date for tuition refunds (12th class day for fall/spring; 4th class day for summer) but before the date for which a drop would result in the grade of 'F' as published in the Academic Calendar. Students will be allowed no more than five Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes that are dropped prior to the Q-drop date will not count toward the limit. Students who have used their limit of five Q-drops will need to petition their respective dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses to grant permission to drop a class, a student will be required to remain in the class. Feb 1 is the last day to drop the course without a Q; April 6 is the last day to drop with a Q.

DISABLED STUDENT POLICY: <http://www.shsu.edu/schedule/>

SERVICES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS: <http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html>

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAY POLICY:

<http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/scholasticrequirements.html#holyday>

Course Schedule*

Please keep the following tips in mind as you complete this course:

- You have 3-6 minutes for most quizzes, sufficient time to complete the quiz if you've read, taken notes, and studied beforehand. If you go into the quiz with the idea of reading each question and looking up the answers, you'll probably run out of time. Read, take notes, study, take quiz.
- Go through each assignment on blackboard to assess the workloads and due dates. This will help you plan ahead.
- Ensure you have the appropriate technology and a backup plan (access to a friend's computer or public library) to submit the assignments on time. Tech issues will not serve as an excuse for missing an assignment.
- The films should be viewed after doing the readings and in the order they are offered.

Section One: Philosophical Bases of Politics

- **Assignment 1: Due: Sunday, 1-21-2018:**
 - Readings: Syllabus; BB
 - Film Clips on Film Grammar—Visual Design, Lighting & Color
- **Assignment 2: Due: Sunday, 1-28-2018**
 - Readings: Hobbes State of Nature; Capitalism & Socialism; Political Ads; Treasure of the Sierra Madre
 - Film 1: Treasure of the Sierra Madre (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 3: Due: Thursday, 2-1-2018**
 - Readings: State of Nature; Social Contract; Lord of the Flies
 - Film 2: Lord of the Flies (1990—Available on Youtube)
- **Assignment 4: Due: Sunday, 2-4-2018**
 - Readings: Film Noir; Film Noir (PPT); Anomie; Double Indemnity
 - Film 3: Double Indemnity (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 5: Due: Thursday, 2-8-2018**
 - Readings: Nietzsche; Leopold-Loeb Case; Film Clips; Clarence Darrow
 - Film Clips: Camera position, movement, viewpoint
- **Assignment 6: Due: Sunday, 2-11-2018**
 - Readings: Rope
 - Film 4: Rope (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 7: Due, Sunday, 2-18, 2018**
 - Readings: Compulsion; Orson Welles
 - Film 5: Compulsion (Amazon Rent)

Section Two: Branches of Government

- **Assignment 8: Due, Thursday, 2-22, 2018**
 - Readings: Montesquieu; Madison
- **Assignment 9: Due, Sunday, 2-25-2018**
 - Readings: TBD
 - Film 6: Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 10: Due, Thursday, 3-1-2018**
 - Readings: TBD
 - Film 7: The American President (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 11: Due, Sunday, 3-4-2018**
 - Readings: 12 Angry Men; Justice Sotomayor; three-act structure
 - Film 8: 12 Angry Men (Amazon Rent; Netflix, (as of 1-17-2018))

Section Two: Criminal Procedures

- **Assignment 12: Due, Thursday, 3-22-2018:**
 - Readings: Amendments 4, 5, 6, 8; Mapp v. OH; Gideon v. Wainwright; Escobedo v. Illinois; Miranda v. OH; Fong Foo v. US; Benton v. Maryland; Williams v. Florida
 - Film Clips: Composition
- **Assignment 13: Due, Sunday, 3-25-2018**
 - Readings: TBD; Dirty Harry
 - Film 9: Dirty Harry (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 14: Due, Thursday, 3-29-2018**
 - Readings: TBD; Death Wish
 - Film 10: Death Wish (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 15: Due, Thursday, 4-5-2018**
 - Readings: Title IX; TBD
 - Film 11: MFA (Amazon Rent)

Part Three: The Nature of Truth & Deception

- **Assignment 16: Due, Sunday, 4-8-2018**
 - Readings: Milgram Studies; Authoritarian Personality; Zimbardo; & Compliance
 - Film 12: Compliance (Amazon Rent)

Part Four: Corruption:

- **Assignment 17: Due, Thursday, 4-12-2018**
 - Readings: Political Subcultures; Frontier thesis; Broken Windows
 - Film Clips on Editing
- **Assignment 18: Due, Sunday, 4-15, 2018**
 - Readings: LA Confidential
 - Film 13: LA Confidential (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 19: Due, Thursday, 4-19-2018**
 - Reading: Elite Theory; Chinatown; Screenplays
 - Film 14: Chinatown (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 20: Due, Sunday, 4-22-2018**
 - Reading: Elite Model; Jim Crow Laws; In the Heat of the Night
 - Film Clips: Sound; Hitchcock Zoom
 - Film 15: In the Heat of the Night (Amazon Rent)

Part Five: The Future

- **Assignment 21: Due, Thursday, 4-26-2018**
 - Readings: TBD
 - Film 16: Gattaca (Amazon Rent)
- **Assignment 22: Due, Sunday, 4-29-2018**
 - Readings: TBD
 - Film 17: The Truman Show (Amazon Rent; Netflix (as of 1-17-2018))

***I reserve the right to change the syllabus throughout the semester.**