PSI 243: CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ISSUES  
SPRING 2016  
DOANE LINCOLN  
MEETING WEDNESDAY 6:00-10:30  
With  
DR. DONALD (DON) L. BEAHM

Office Hours: I will be happy to meet with you on the Doane-Lincoln campus at mutually agreed to times upon request.  
Telephone: 402-975-2155  
E-mail: Donald.Beahm@doane.edu


Course Description: This course is primarily an analysis of contemporary political issues and policy. You will read the text and write positions papers on issues of domestic and international concern as they relate to policies that are of central concern in the United States.

Learning Outcomes: Through lectures, reading the texts, writing of reaction papers, and critical discussion, at the end of the class you should:
1. Have a fundamental understanding of contemporary political issues and policies.
2. Have developed better skills in evaluating and analyzing the contours of contemporary political issues and policy.
3. Be able to think and write critically about concepts related to contemporary political issues and policy.

Requirements and Grading: You will be required in this class to read the assignments in the texts and write at least six, two to three page position papers on the readings (worth 60% of your grade), participate in discussions of the position papers in class by listing and asking questions (worth 20% of your grade), and orally present six articles from outside sources in class (worth 20% of your grade).

Position Papers: Once you have read each week’s assignment you are expected to write a two to three page position paper on a topic of one of the readings for that class. When writing your paper do not just regurgitate the text, tell me what you think about what you read in the text. I encourage you to write in first person. It is fine for you to say “I think that…” Again, I don’t want you to just describe what the author thinks; I want you to tell me your view of what the author has said. Don’t just be descriptive, be analytical. Be sure you take a position. You will be presenting your paper in class. You will be required to turn in six papers over the seven weeks that papers will be presented. There is only two weeks where you do not have to turn in a paper. If you turn in seven I will take the six highest grades to use in averaging your final grade. In other words, I will throw out the lowest grade if you write seven papers.

Article Presentation Requirement: You will need to present six articles in class that you have read from an outside source. You do not have to write on them other than notes that may help your presentation. The reading can be on any topic related to contemporary political issues or policy. The source must me a magazine article or a professional journal article. You can take these from online sources but make sure they are legitimate publications. Magazines like Time, The Atlantic, The Nation, National Review, The New Yorker, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, The Weekly
Standard, The Christian Science Monitor, or any other magazine or journal that prints articles that analyze contemporary political issues and policy.

**Participation & Attendance:** Participation is an important part of the class. You will be presenting papers most weeks, if not every week. If you choose not to present a paper or an article you are still expected to be in attendance. Missing class will hurt your participation grade. If you’re not presenting a paper on any one week you still want to show up and participate to help make up for not presenting. Beyond the presentation of your papers you should be prepared to ask questions, comment and discuss papers written by other students. **On the days that you do not present a paper you are expected to write two questions to present to the class for discussion.** It is expected that you will give other students your undivided attention to their presentations. Participation will account for the final 20% of your grade. **Coming to class repeatedly late or leaving the room frequently will adversely affect your participation grade.** Also, leave your electronic devises off during class. Not doing so will hurt your participation grade.

**Late Papers:** Late papers will be docked one letter grade for every class they are late.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty has no place in a learning environment because it betrays the reason for being here. Anyone found cheating will receive a zero (not an F, a zero) for the work they were found to have cheated on. Plagiarism is using the words or thoughts of others as though they were your own. If you use other material you must cite it appropriately. Not doing so is a form of cheating and it will not be tolerated.

**Incompletes:** Incompletes will only be granted if you are medically unable to finish the course, or if there has been a family emergency. Incompletes must be finished within one month of their being granted or they turn into an F.

### SCHEDULE

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>BOOK</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Introduction to the Class</td>
<td>No Assignment</td>
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<td>March 16th</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Units 1.1-1.3</td>
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<td>March 23rd</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Units 1.4-2.2</td>
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<td>March 30th</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Units 2.3-3.1</td>
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<td>April 6th</td>
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<td>April 20th</td>
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<td>April 27th</td>
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