

790:315 Politics and Culture
Fall 2020: Asynchronous Course using Canvas

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Office Hours: Online

Beliefs, values, customs, symbols, rituals, as well as a host of other cultural practices and artefacts play an enormous role in our daily lives. Often, ideas about what make for a common culture – whether rightly or wrongly – influences how we treat our fellow citizens. Yet, we often overlook the role culture plays in shaping politics as well as how politics shapes culture. This course provides an introduction to methodological approaches to the analysis of culture in politics as well as a diverse set of readings that demonstrate the advantages of applying a cultural analysis. In examining studies that utilize cultural approaches to fundamental political issues, students should begin to reflect more critically on the way culture shapes their own political perspectives in ways that can both enhance and constrain their political outlook and engagement.

On Teaching and Learning During a Pandemic: The global pandemic affects us all. The most important thing we can do to make sure this semester a success is be in regular communication. The course may be asynchronous, but **please** stay in touch with me. **Do not disappear! STAY IN CONTACT!** The only way I know you are both engaged and ok is if you are completing your assignments and maintaining an ongoing virtual dialogue with me and your classmates.

There are four events to keep in mind on a weekly basis:

Monday: You post your blog entry for the week (see details below).

Tuesday: Instructor posts the powerpoint lecture with accompanying audio narration.

Thursday: You post one question regarding the materials on the discussion board (details below).

Friday: Instructor will host a Zoom meeting for all students able to attend. Participation for every week is optional. However, you **should** plan to participate in, at least, five meetings. This is really the best guarantee of a high grade. Please let me know **ASAP** if any special arrangements need to be made to address problems that might prevent you from participating in, **at least**, five zoom discussion groups over the course of the semester.

The assigned texts are all available on Canvas.

Grading:

Three Papers: 20% each

You will have three (8-10 pages) papers based on readings. You must use double-spaced, Times New Roman font, size 12, and one-inch margins. You must use sources and cite them in accordance with Chicago Style. For more information:

http://www.chicomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

- Papers that fail to comply with any of these requirements will receive no grade higher than a D.

For each day the paper is late, your grade will drop one full letter grade.
Papers will be submitted on CANVAS by 11pm on the due date.

Weekly Blog: 20% (Begin on Week 2)

Every Monday, students must post a short blog entry on the week's assigned readings. Two missed blog entries will be excused. Missing more than two will negatively affect your final grade. The entries are ungraded and many readings are hard. This is your chance to show me that you are doing the readings. You are aren't expected to get it completely right. I just want to see that you are making some effort to understand and are doing the readings. The weekly blog entry should do two things: 1) in your own words, summarize the core arguments of each of the assigned readings; 2) identify one more specific thing you found particularly interesting or problematic about the piece and explain why. Blog entries submitted after midnight on Mondays will count as missed.

Weekly Question: 10% (Begin on Week2)

Every Thursday, students must post one question on the discussion board that relates to the lecture. Students are encouraged to also attempt to answer questions posed by classmates. Two missed weekly questions will be excuse. Missing more than two will negatively affect your final grade. Questions must be posted on the discussion board before midnight on Thursday or will be counted as missed. This shows me you have watched the powerpoint lecture.

Participation: 10%

The asynchronous nature of this course makes showing participation a bit more difficult than an in-person course. The best ways to show participation are by engaging in discussions on the discussion board, reaching out to the instructor, and, the best way to guarantee a great grade, participating in no less than five of the weekly Zoom meetings and as many beyond the five as possible.

Grading rubric for all written work submitted in this course

	A	B	C	D/F
Argument/Analysis	Makes clear and compelling argument. Solid reasoning. Offers insightful analysis	Makes clear argument, based on plausible readings. Some effort to sustain argument throughout the analysis.	Attempts to offer a cogent argument and analysis, but argument and analysis are based on faulty reasoning.	Failure to make a cogent argument or to offer sound analysis.
Writing/Grammar	Well-written. Appropriate word choices. Free of grammar and	Well-written, but may include a handful of grammar,	Multiple errors, but still clearly intelligible.	Multiple errors that interfere substantially with comprehension.

	spelling mistakes.	spelling, or word choice mistakes.		
Organization/Structure	Clear, easy to follow organization with intro, body, conclusion. Provides reader with a “road map” of essay.	Clear organization with some road map for reader.	Some effort to structure the paper, but organization is problematic or difficult to follow.	Disorganized and difficult or impossible to follow.
Use/mastery of readings	Uses multiple readings and demonstrates mastery of facts and arguments made in readings.	References multiple readings and demonstrates a good degree of understanding.	Minimal use of readings and/or failure to demonstrate adequate mastery of readings.	Failure to use readings

Course policies and information

- Participation is **mandatory**.
- **Respectful and polite** dialogue with your classmates and instructor online is expected of all students.
- **Completion of all assignments is required to pass the course.**
- Please note the University’s policy on disability accommodations. I will gladly make accommodations for any student who needs them, though students must work with the Office of Disability Services (dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu). Their website is at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>
- Please note the University’s policy on academic integrity and plagiarism: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>
I especially recommend the resources under “For Students” in the upper right corner of the page. I encourage you to discuss the course readings and the issues that they raise with your classmates. But all work turned in with your name on it must be entirely your own. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with, and abiding by, the University’s academic integrity policy. (See also <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-tutorial/>.) Violations of academic integrity will be handled personally by the professor and prosecuted through the Office of Student Conduct. **Plagiarism of any assignment will lead to a failing grade in this course.**

- Please note the University's religious observance policy (<https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/religious-holiday-policy>)
You should consider yourself excused when class falls on a religious holiday that you observe. You should inform your instructor in advance, and you must make up any class notes or assignments that you miss.
- Please note the University's policy on gender-based and sex-based harassment
Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to [Policy 10.3.12](#)) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University Policy 10.3.12. For more information about your options at Rutgers, please visit endsexualviolence.rutgers.edu
- Announcements and course information will be posted to the course Canvas site and at times sent via email, through Canvas, to the class email list. The system automatically sends email to your official Rutgers address. If you don't know this email address, please find out and be sure to check it regularly.

Schedule of readings, lectures, and assignments

NB: Instructor reserves the right to make changes and will give the students adequate notice

Date Reading

Fundamentals of Culture in Political Analysis

- Week 1 Introduction to course: What is a cultural approach to the study of politics?
Terry Eagleton, “Culture and Civilization”

Jan Kubik, “Cultural Change”

Lisa Wedeen, “Conceptualizing Culture”

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

- Week 2 Max Weber, excerpts from *Economy and Society* and *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Pierre Bourdieu, excerpts from *Outline of a Theory of Practice* – Language and Symbolic violence
- Week 3 Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”

Antonio Gramsci, excerpts from *The Prison Notebook*

The Political Shaping of Culture/The Cultural Shaping of Politics

- Week 4 Eric Hobsbawm, “The Invention of Tradition”

Barbara Fields, excerpts from *Racecraft*

Benedict Anderson, excerpts from *Imagined Communities*
- Week 5 Lynn Hunt, excerpts from *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*;

Jan Kubik, excerpts from *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power*

Eric Davis, excerpts from *Memories of State*
- Week 6 Andrew Apter, excerpts from *The Pan-African Nation*

Clifford Geertz, excerpts from *Negara*

Rudolph and Rudolph, excerpts from *The Modernity of Tradition*

Week 7 Lisa Wedeen, excerpts from *Ambiguities of Domination*

Daniel C. Mattingly, excerpts from *The Art of Political Control in China*

James Scott, excerpts from *Seeing Like a State*

FIRST PAPER DUE by 11pm

Culture and Political Engagement

Week 8 Alexis de Tocqueville, excerpts from *Democracy in America*

Robert Putnam, excerpts from *Bowling Alone*

Robert Putnam, excerpts from *Making Democracy Work*

Week 9 Daniel Jordan Smith, excerpts from *A Culture of Corruption*

Richard Franklin Bensel, excerpts from *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*

Lisa Wedeen, excerpts from *Peripheral Visions*

Cultural Conflict/Cultural Reconciliation

Week 10 Donald Horowitz, excerpts from *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*

Daniel Posner, excerpts from *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*

Week 11 David Laitin, excerpts from *Hegemony and Culture*

Raul Madrid, excerpts from *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America*

Prerna Singh, excerpts from *How Solidarity Works for Welfare*

Week 12 Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?"

K. Anthony Appiah, excerpts from *Cosmopolitanism*

Martha Nussbaum, excerpts from *The Cosmopolitan Tradition*

SECOND PAPER DUE by 11pm

Cultures of Reaction

Week 13 Mabel Berezin, excerpts from *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times*
Cynthia Miller-Idriss, excerpts of *Blood and Culture*
Arlie Russell Hochschild, excerpts from *Strangers in their own Land*

Week 14 Ronald Inglehardt and Pippa Norris, excerpts from *Cultural Backlash*
Angela Nagle, excerpts from *Kill All Normies*
Elizabeth Corredor, “Unpacking ‘Gender Ideology’ and the Global Right’s Anti-Gender Countermovement”

FINAL PAPER DUE: TBD