UNIVERISTY OF HAWAII @MANOA
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Course Syllabus

POL 110: Introduction to Political Science

Spring 2008

Instructor: Ponipate Rokolekutu
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Class Schedule: MWF 12.30-1.20pm
Building: KUY 310
Office Hours: Fri 11.00am-12.00pm

Course Description:
Politics is often ill understood. It is too often perceived as cynical and subsidiary from the normative interaction of society. But what is politics? What is the role of politics in society? What is the relationship between politics and government? To what extent does politics influence human relations and the ways in which government and its institutions function? These are some of the questions that will be critically examined in the course.

The course is designed to achieve three major goals. Firstly it seeks to ignite the political consciousness of students and enhance their understanding and appreciation of the role of politics in human society. Secondly the course introduces and critically examines concepts such as power, ethnicity, ideology, state, globalization, governance, sovereignty, legitimacy, etc with a particular focus on the Pacific Island Countries (PIC’s). It examines the concept of democracy; the various features that entail democracy and explores the multifacet nature of democracy. Students will examine the ways in which PIC’s have synthesized democracy with indigenous forms of governance and the complexity that emerge from such synthesis. Thirdly the course is designed to instill critical thinking and enable students formulate intelligible opinions about contemporary political issues and also to place the Pacific Islands region within the political cartography of international politics.

Texts
The readings are drawn from a variety of sources and will be sent to you in advance through emails.

Internet Resources on Pacific Islands Issues:

**Assessment**

**Attendance and Participation in class 20%**: You are expected to attend every class and to participate and engage actively in class discussion. You are also expected to make notes and learn from your colleagues in class. Your contribution in weekly discussions will be reflective of how much you engage yourself with the assigned readings. You will be assigned to a group that will make presentation and lead the class discussion during the class. Presentations should include little on summary and more on your reflections and views on issues highlighted in the readings. Presentations can be in the form of formal presentation, debate, power point, role play, video, skit etc. You are also required to present your research paper during the final week.

**Weekly Journals 50%**: Weekly journals should be 2-3 pages long and must include a brief summary of the weekly readings as well as thoughtful and critical reflections on the issues raised in the readings. Journals must be typed, double spaced and turned in (in the form of hard copy) during the last class of the week. You must submit 14 journals out of the sixteen weeks of the semester. Journals will be graded and returned to the student on every following Monday.

**Research Paper 15%**: The research paper will reflect students’ knowledge of issues presented in the course and one’s ability to critically and analytically present his/her views coherently on a given political issue or event. Essay must be typed double spaced and should be between 5-7 pages long. You must choose a topic of interest to you, but it must be based on the readings of the course as well as the discussions and issues raised in class. **You are to discuss your topic with me first before you proceed with your research.**

**Book Review 10%**: You will be required to write a book review. The text for review will be decided later in the semester. The review should be 3-5 pages long.

**Research Paper Outline**: 5%: An outline of your research paper is due on week 9. Outline should be 1-2 pages and should include a research topic, research rationale (why you are interested in the research topic) methodology and an abstract.

**Ground Rules**
1. We will discuss important, interesting, difficult and sensitive topics. Respectful disagreement and debate are welcome. Personal attacks, however, will not be tolerated.

2. Be on time. Our class time is limited. If you are late on the first five minutes then do not come at all, because you will be missing 20% of the things you need to know in the class.

3. Late journals will NOT be accepted

4. Three unexcused absences will mean a failed grade

5. Please see me if you have a problem or issues that you feel will affect your final grade in this course.

6. Cell phones MUST be turned off during every class

7. Be respectful of others and be quiet while waiting for the class to begin

Part One: Introduction: Politics, the Nation State, Political Philosophy and Ideologies
Week 1: Introduction
Questions:
What is Politics? What is the role of politics in society? Are people inherently political? What makes an act political? Is politics isolated from the normative interaction of society? What is political science and what is the role of political scientists?
Readings:
• Leftwich A, “Introduction On the Politics of Politics”, What is Politics Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited 1984

Week 2: Nation State
Questions:
What is the major difference between nation and state? What are the characteristics of the nation state? What are the politics of the nation state? What is the sovereignty of the nation state?
Readings:
• http://www.answers.com/topic/nation-state
• http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-nation-state.htm
• http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation_state

Week 3: Politics and Power, Understanding Karl Marx and Michelle Foucault’s Conceptions of Power
Questions:
How does Karl Marx define power? How different is Karl Marx’s conception of power from that of Michelle Foucault? How does Karl Marx theorize the state and what does he mean with the “withering away of the state”? Is politics essentially about the study of power?
Readings:
• Mandel, E. “The State in the Age of Late Capitalism”. Late Capitalism, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972.
• Michel Foucault. The Subject and Power (1982), Excerpt From "The Subject and Power" in: "Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics" University of Chicago, (p. 208), 1982.
Week 4: Political Philosophy and Ideologies
Questions:
What are the major assumptions that underscore the political philosophies of the Aristotle, The Stoics, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Karl Marx? What are their points of concurrence and in what ways do they differ? How do their political philosophies reflected (or not reflected) in modern forms of governance?

Readings:

Part Two: Colonial and Post Colonial Politics in the Pacific Islands

Week 5: Locating and Placing the Pacific Islands within International Political Cartography
Identify all the countries and territories of the Pacific Island region (map exercise). Name some of the major political events that have occurred in each of these Islands. Which of these Pacific Island Countries are independent and which ones are not?
Readings:
Video: TBA

Week 6: Re-conceptualizing the Pacific Islands
Questions:
How does the Pacific Islands feature in international politics? How is the Pacific Islands or Oceania, as a region, perceived by significant actors in the international political scene? What are the prevailing notions of Oceania? How has Epeli Hau’ofa’s re-conceptualization of the Oceania influenced the ways in which Pacific Islands are viewed in contemporary political discourse?
Readings:
• Hau’ofa, E. “The Ocean in Us”, (ed. in), We the Ocean: Selected Works, University of Hawaii Press, 2008.

**Week 7: Colonialism in the Pacific Islands**
Questions:
Who are colonial powers in the Pacific Islands, What are the implications of labeling and categorizing Pacific Islands into Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia? Readings:
Moore, C. Inventing Melanesia, History Department, University of Queensland, 12th Pacific History Association Conference, 22-26 June 1998.

Video: TBA

**Week 8: American, British and French Colonialism in the Pacific**
Questions:
What are the fundamental differences between American, British and French Colonialism? What are the fundamental effects of colonialism on Pacific Island people and their culture?

Readings:

**Week 9: Decolonization in the Pacific Islands**
Questions:
What are the forces behind decolonization? Does political independence mean economic prosperity for Pacific Islanders? What is neo-colonialism? What are some of the colonial legacies that have shaped post colonial politics in the Pacific Islands?
Readings:

Video: Freedom 2000 striving towards a nuclear free and independent Pacific

**Week 10: US Militarization in Micronesia**
Questions:
What is militarization? What are the reasons for the continued U.S. presence in Micronesia? What has Micronesia to gain from such presence? What are the socio
economic, cultural and environmental impacts of US militarization in Micronesia?

Readings:


Week 11: The politics of ethnicity and land; and military coups in Fiji

Questions:
What are the causes of ethnic tension in Fiji? How do Fijians conceptualize land? To what extent have indigenous Fijian elites politicize such conception to maintain power? What are the causes of the military coups in Fiji? How do you define the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests?

Readings:

Video: Race Over Rights

Week 12: Democratization in Tonga

Questions:
What is a constitutional monarchy? What is the nature of Tonga’s representative government? How much power does the King have? What are the major causes of discontentment among ordinary Tongans? What aspect of democracy are absent in Tonga? In what ways have the Tongans articulated their desires for change?
Readings:

Video: *Tonga democracy*

**Part Three: Globalization and the Pacific Islands**

**Week 13: Globalization**
Questions:
What is globalization? What are the forces that facilitated globalization in the Pacific Islands? What are the major issues, events and trends associated with globalization in the Pacific Islands? What are some of the major issues raised by Lockwood and Firth?

Readings:

Video:
- Life and Debt

**Week 14: Impacts of Globalization**
Questions:
What are the impacts of globalization on Pacific Island Societies? What are the main issues discussed in the readings.

Readings:

**Week 15: Project Presentations begins**

**Week 16: Project Presentations Con’t**
Course Evaluation
Research Paper Due
The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes. The students will be fully informed about the changes in due time.