

The University of Georgia
Department of International Affairs
INTL 4660 Politics, Film and Literature, Fall 2022
Caldwell Hall 107
Thursday, 2:20 p.m. to 5:10 p.m.
Contact hours: W: 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. and by e-mail/zoom appointment
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Politics is not just what happens in campaigns, elections and in assemblies. It runs much deeper and affects every aspect of an individual's life. We encounter it in popular culture, "high culture", in boardrooms, bedrooms, around kitchen tables, playgrounds, nursing homes, and many other places. The impact of the fictional world of the arts on how people absorb "politics" or political commentary cannot be overstated. "Political" films, books or even songs have a power to mobilize people more than any dry fact in a newspaper or fancy econometric model in a prestigious academic journal. The purpose of this class is to sharpen the student's perception of political messages produced in the arts, connect them to the world of "political science", and relate them to contemporary political events.

Course outcomes:

In this seminar-style class we examine seven political themes as they appear in films and novels. This class takes a new approach to exploring political themes: we investigate how timeless political topics, such as the "authoritarian impulse", the "tyranny of the majority", or "revolution" has been dealt with in fictional form, as manifested in the forms of novels and films. Students will

- Appreciate the power of fiction in mobilizing people for political action.
- Understand how individual political action can affect other individuals, and groups, and even the fate of nations.
- Make students more discerning consumers of information as distributed via the mass and social media.
- By identifying with the protagonists in the various movies and central figures in the novels, students develop a more visceral sense of the ambiguous nature of individual political decisions, often making them to choose sides and unearthing their own hidden prejudices and biases.
- Based on the power of the fictional narrative students become emotionally engaged and develop a deeper understanding of concepts such as democracy, war, race, or authoritarianism, among others.
- Students thus experience international affairs and seemingly distant global issues in an immediate, visceral way.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Teaching, learning, and staying safe in times of the coronavirus:

1. If you are unsure about this coronavirus thing, and need to find out more about it (such as the policy on face coverings, the dawg check, what to do if you have been exposed or have symptoms, how do you get a test, and what to do if you test positive) please visit this site: <https://coronavirus.uga.edu/>
2. Although this course has been designated an on-line course, face to face interaction with students is made possible with Pedro Goulart, our TA who meets each class in person and who will conduct discussion sections and personally interact with students.
3. All lectures will be held synchronously, i.e. at the same time, “live” as the class is scheduled to take place. The on-line lecture will be recorded in order for students who can’t sign in at the scheduled time, are not in class due to social distancing requirements or are unavailable for any other reasons. The recording will be uploaded to eLC soon after the lectures are completed.
4. This course covers seven themes: the authoritarian personality; tyranny of the majority and the culture of dissent; social engineering and its limits; immigration, integration, and identity; political activism and revolution; between conformism and anomie, and environmental thought and action. Typically, there will be a “movie week” when most of the class time will be used to watch a full feature movie, followed by a break and a general discussion with the TA about the themes covered in that movie. The next week I will provide the political context for the themes covered in the movies and literature. We will examine historical examples, provide theoretical explanations as well as connecting the fictional accounts with the political science literature that also informs each week’s themes.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- *If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.*
- *UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).*
- *If you need help managing stress, anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.*
- *Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.*

Course requirements:

This seminar requires some serious reading, writing and **active participation** on the part of the students. The class requirements are as follows:

- 1) **Participation in discussion forum in eLC:** shortly after showing the films I will post a series of questions about the films and the readings in the “discussion” area of the eLC. It is absolutely crucial you participate in this electronic forum in a robust and informed manner. What I’m looking for is that not just a response from the students but a “conversation” among the course participants about their interpretations of the events, themes, etc. they have seen/read. I’m not looking for “right” or “wrong” answers – what I’m looking for is an informed, reflective, and honest conversation amongst you. To participate at a quality level means that you will have to have **read and digested** the book and have seen the film that goes with each theme and the accompanying articles. While the movie and the book are “fictional” the articles are NOT. They are designed to help you understand the themes in more concrete political terms. **Participation is measured in the frequency and quality of students’ comments in the “discussion” section of the eLC.** This form of participation counts for 10% of the overall grade.
- 2) **In-class participation:** this again will be measured by **both the frequency and quality** of students’ comments and will count for 5% of the overall grade.
- 3) **One page summary of the scholarly readings (there are two for each theme)** – they are indicated in **red**. Those will be graded 0, 60, or 100. This will count for 14% of the overall grade (seven themes, seven one page summaries each counting for 2%). The grade will depend on 3 elements: 1. appropriate and exhaustive summary of the article/exercise/video link, 2. the connection to the lectures presented in class, and 3. on correct grammar and spelling. This will be done in the Assignment portal of the elc.
- 4) **Four quizzes:** These will be timed, open book quizzes on eLC and will cover the readings for each theme either via multiple choice questions, true/false answers, short essays, fill in the blanks, etc. Each quiz will count for 5 % of the final grade for a total of 20 %. These will ask simple factual questions about the novels and the other readings and represent a check on whether students are up to date on the reading assignments.
- 5) **Mid-term paper:** each student must produce a typed paper between 8-10 pages in length (conventional fonts and margins) on the following topic:

Does Democracy require dissent or obedience?

The first three themes deal with related topics, that is, the desire of people or groups of people (or animals in the second case) to control society. Please identify and articulate what you believe are the most compelling reasons why you take the position that you do. **Convince me with logic, reason, data, and other kind of evidence that you have the strongest possible justification for your position. You must use a minimum of 5 sources (quoted, not cited) to make your case.** Feel free to make references to contemporary or historical events but **support your assertions with evidence.**

This paper will count for 25 % of the final grade. The mid-term paper is due on October 6, 2022 at the end of business day (5:00 p.m.). We will use the Assignment Portal in the elc to submit those papers.

The mid-term paper grade will be based on the following categories:

1. The strength of your theoretical argument in answering the question
 2. The strength of your empirical support and connection to your theoretical argument.
 3. The number and appropriateness of the sources you indicate to support your claim
 4. [The correct quoting/citing of your sources](#) (click here to go to APSA manual of style, start reading from p. 37).
 5. Correct spelling and grammar
- 6) **Final paper:** the final paper will have to be 12-14 pages in length (with conventional fonts and margins). For this paper, at least 8 NEW sources will have to be quoted (not cited) in order to support your argument. The final paper will count for 25 percent of the final grade.

The grade for the final paper will be based on the following categories:

1. Strength of explanation as to why you chose the two (or more) countries to compare and contrast?
2. Appropriateness of the theme to the countries chosen for comparison
3. Strength of empirical support (data, evidence) for your theoretical argument
4. Appropriateness and number of sources used
5. [Correct citing and quoting](#) (click here to go to APSA manual of style).
6. Correct grammar and spelling

Here are a few hints in writing this paper: make sure there is a good fit between the themes and the actual political events in the country of your choice. Be as empirical as possible, i.e. demonstrate empirically how the various elements covered in the themes manifest themselves in your country of choice. What are the challenges this country faces? Provide examples of policies that correspond or not, with the theme covered. At what cost are these policies enacted? Who are the major players (such as parties, interest groups, individuals, other political actors). Are the actions of the government legitimate, i.e. supported by a majority of the people?

Take any of the themes we have covered in this class and apply it to at least two countries, one of which can be the United States. Compare and contrast the two cases. the current politics of the countries of your choice and explore to what degree the themes covered reflect the actual policies and events in those countries.

Choose one from the following questions: (each question is connected to the seven themes)

1. If people perceive laws to be unjust, do you think they should follow them?
2. How can erstwhile democracies slide back into authoritarianism?

3. The RAND corporation describes the times we live in as one of “truth decay”. Is this dangerous for democracy, and if yes, what could be done about it?
4. Does immigration threaten or enrich (culturally, economically) the receiving societies?
5. Why is it so hard to agree on global environmental regulation and what would be required to stave off further environmental degradation?
6. Rising economic inequality has been made responsible for increasing political polarization. Do you agree/disagree with this statement and is it advisable to reduce economic inequality? If yes, how could that be done?
7. Does work and life in consumerist and capitalist society (where, according to several scholars, everything is marketized and where relationships become purely instrumental and contingent) corrode character?

Your paper should provide a clear answer to the questions posed, based on empirical evidence, logic, or theory. The final paper is due on December 5, 2022 in the Assignment portal of the etc.

Required readings:

George Orwell. *Animal Farm* (1946).
Sinclair Lewis. *It can't happen here* (1935).
B. F. Skinner. *Walden Two* (1951).
Jhumpa Lahiri. *The Namesake* (2003).
Ernest Callenbach. *Ecotopia* (1977).
Upton Sinclair. *The Jungle* (1906).
Sinclair Lewis: *Babbitt* (1922).

In addition, there are various articles required also. For your convenience, they are all linked and can be downloaded directly at no cost. Make sure you log in via your institution. If this still does not work, just google the title and find the article this way.

Some ground rules:

1. This is not a lecture-style class. I will encourage as much participation as possible. How much you will get out of this class will depend on your own willingness to participate!
2. Late papers are not acceptable. They are a burden for me and are unfair to your colleagues who do their work on time. Therefore, I will deduct a FULL letter grade for each day a paper is late. Extensions may be given but only if they are requested well in advance of the deadline, and if there is a compelling reason.
3. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student turning in a written assignment which is not your own work will receive a failing grade for the course, and may have further implications. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

4. The use of sources is essential. On the midterm paper and on the final paper, you must make reference to the sources from which you drew your information. For information on how to cite correctly go to the APSA manual of style: <https://connect.apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2020/07/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-July-2020-Revision.pdf>
5. I do not expect that your views and perceptions of these controversial themes are identical with mine or your classmates', either now or at the completion of the course. The Politics, Film and Literature course is a place for the free and perhaps even heated exchange of ideas. **Thus I expect you to challenge viewpoints that differ from your own, but I also expect you to substantiate your arguments from the readings, lectures and discussions.**
6. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices that will disturb either your classmates – or your professor– during class.
7. If you need to use outside reference works, please consult Joel Krieger, et. al., *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, Oxford University Press, 2001 as a place to start for political terms or concepts – DO NOT USE WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY to define terms such as DEMOCRACY.
8. If you believe that you deserve a better grade, please provide an explanation to me *in writing within a week* of receiving the grade. I will then grade your exam/paper again and I will issue a “new” grade which will be either the same, a higher, or a lower grade.

Grading structure:	≥93	A
	90-92	A-
	87-89	B+
	83-86	B
	80-82	B-
	77-79	C+
	73-76	C
	70-72	C-
	60-69	D
	<60	F

Reading assignments and dates: Each theme consists of two classes. The first class of each segment is the “movie class”, the second is the discussion and presentation class for each theme. **Make sure that you have read and digested the readings before the discussion and presentation meeting which means you should start reading the materials the week we start watching the movies.**

August 18: Introduction of the class, explanation of themes, and expectations.

August 25: **The authoritarian personality – the authoritarianism from within (Theme 1)**

Movie: **Die Welle (2003)**

Readings (Book) Sinclair Lewis (1935) It can't happen here. (entire).

Dick Geary (1998) "Who voted for the Nazis?"

Stephen J. Whitfield (1981) Hannah Arendt and the Banality of Evil. The History Teacher. 14:469-477

(one page summary of these two articles are due on Sept. 8).

September 1: Lecture on Theme 1

September 8: Authoritarianism from without, tyranny of majority, and the culture of dissent (Theme 2)

Movie: Good Night and Good Luck

Reading (book). George Orwell (1945) Animal Farm.

Karen Stenner and Jessica Stern (2021). How to Live with Authoritarians. FP.

Omer Aziz (2019), "America through Nazi Eyes" in : Dissent, Winter 2019.

(one page summary of these two articles is due Sept. 22).

September 15: Lecture on Theme 2

September 22: Social engineering and its limits (Theme 3)

Movie: Skin (2008)

Readings: Book: B.F. Skinner: Walden Two.

Hermann Gilliomee, The Making of the Apartheid Plan 1929-1948

Visit this site: <http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/>

(one page summary of these two items is due Oct. 6)

September 29: Lecture on Theme 3

October Oct. 6: Immigration, Integration, and identity (Theme 4)

Movie: **East is East.**

Readings: Book: *The Namesake* (Jhumpa Lahiri)

Daniel T. Griswold (2012). *Immigration and the Welfare State*. *Cato Journal*, 32: 159-174. Can be found here:

To become French, abandon who you are. Reuters, 2015

(one page summary of these two articles is due on Oct. 20).

October 13: Lecture on Theme 4

October 20: Political activism and revolution (Theme 5)

Movie: **The Motorcycle Diaries**

Readings: Book: *Upton Sinclair (The Jungle)*.

Gizachew Tiruneh (2014) *Social Revolutions: their causes, patterns and phases*. Sage Open Publications.

Why Do People Choose to Rebel? OEF Research (2018).

(one page summary of these two articles is due on Oct. 27)

October 27: Lecture on Theme 5

November 3: Between conformism and anomie (Theme 6)

Movie: **American Beauty**

Readings: Book: *Babbitt* (Sinclair Lewis)

Eva Bertram and Kenneth Sharpe (2000). *Capitalism, Work, and Character*. *American Prospect*. Vol: 11 (20)

Scott London (1999). *On Fraternity, Social Capital and the American Community*. Can be found here:

(one page summary of these two articles is due on Nov. 17).

November 10: Lecture on Theme 6
November 17: Environmental thought and action (Theme 7)

Movie: **Princess Mononoke**
Readings: Book: Ecotopia (Ernest Callenbach)

Do the ecological footprint quiz. You can find information on it and do your own calculation (i.e. to find out what would happen if everybody else lived like you) here: <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/>

Garrett Hardin (1968) “The Tragedy of the Commons”. *Science*. 162, (3859) 1243-1248. Can be found here: <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/reprint/162/3859/1243.pdf>

(one page summary of these two items is due on Dec. 1).

Dec. 1 Lecture on Theme 7

The final paper is due on December 5, 2022 in the Assignment portal of the elc.