

The Personal is Political: Citizenship, Self, and Society

PSC 390—Senior Capstone—Spring 2016

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Welcome to this senior capstone seminar! According to the goals of DePaul's Liberal Studies Program, this course is designed for you to reflect on what you've learned as a PSC major in the broader context of the LA&S curriculum. It thus has the following outcome goals:

- ⇒ You will apply one or more theories/concepts from your major to assess current political issues.
- ⇒ You will identify methods or ideas from outside of your major and apply them in the context of your political science major.
- ⇒ You will assess how your overall curriculum has contributed to your intellectual and civic Development, and to your future plans.

Put another way, this capstone course is intended for you to make the connections between the variety of your academic experiences at DePaul and/or elsewhere by applying the theories and values you've learned from other disciplines to those you've learned in political science.

As the course title indicates, we will accomplish the above goals by exploring individual *and* collective aspects of politics, and how the concept of privacy has changed over time.

- ⇒ Where and how does one draw the line between the personal and the political, i.e. between our personal and our private life?
- ⇒ When do personal, individual concerns become public or collective issues?
- ⇒ What are the ramifications of bringing personal issues into the political arena?

As we consider these and other questions, we will also reconsider the meaning of core American concepts such as democracy, liberty, equality, dissent, authority, and citizenship.

The primary method of explorations will be the novel (okay, *LOTS* of novels!) Reading about a wide range of imagined political stories and characters is intended to promote more holistic and creative thinking about your political significance in your own community, your country, and your world.

- ☞ Per Political Science Departmental regulations you must earn a "C-" or better in this course in order for it to satisfy your Capstone and graduation requirements.
 - ☞ In order to avoid procedural or other misunderstandings, take the time now to read this syllabus carefully. This syllabus is subject to change at any time during the quarter.
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Required Readings

The Hanisch, Thoreau and Mill readings are posted on D2L, under "Course Documents". All novels are available at DePaul's bookstore. For the sake of page consistency, ISBNs are provided below if you obtain them elsewhere. If doing so, be sure to get the specific editions of those novels noted with an asterisk*.

- *The Personal is Political*, original 1969 essay and 2006 reflection on the original essay
- *Civil Disobedience*, by Henry David Thoreau
- *On Liberty*, by John Stuart Mill
- *The Inferno* by Dante Alighieri (Transl. by Hollander and Hollander)*--ISBN: 978-0-385-49698-8
- *Linden Hills*, by Gloria Naylor—ISBN: 0-14-08829-6
- *Babbitt*, by Sinclair Lewis*—ISBN: 0-14-018902-5
- *Bastard Out of Carolina*, by Dorothy Allison—ISBN 0-452-26957-1
- *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury*—0-345-34296-8
- *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* by Laila Lalami—ISBN: 0-15-603087-x
- *Man of the People*, by Chinua Achebe— ISBN: 0-385-08616-4
- *Windy City*, by Scott Simon— ISBN: 978-1-4000-6557-8

Required Coursework

Three analytical reflections of the readings (at least 2 pp. each, single-spaced) 10pts each/30% total

These are analytical commentaries on the core themes and concepts of the novels, not summaries or reviews of them. Mere summaries/ reviews will not receive credit. These assignments are intended to promote substantive discussions of the novels. Each of you will sign up for two dates to submit your analyses, and on those days you will co-facilitate class discussion of the readings, based on your analyses.

Each reflection must include and be structured around the following five parts:

- Part 1: Identification/explanation of the political “moral/s of the story”.
- Part 2: Identification/explanation of the evolution (or devolution) of key character/s.
- Part 3: How the novel correlates with the three framing essays.
- Part 4: How the novel contributes to your understanding of your own political self.
- Part 5: Two questions for class discussion, with YOUR answers.

- ☞ You must submit your assignments by 3 pm on the dates you signed up for them. I will accept either e-mailed (crivers@depaul.edu) or hard copies. I will not accept late assignments, and I will not accept a written reflection if you’re absent on the day you signed up to discuss it.

Liberal Studies Program Curriculum List (due in class at 6 pm on Wednesday, May 18) 25%

This assignment is designed for you to reflect on the value of your liberal arts education, and how that education has shaped your views of yourself and your place in society. Given the variety of formats possible for this project the page length will vary. See page 4 of the syllabus for specific instructions.

- ☞ This assignment must be submitted in hard-copy format only; you may include audio, videos, etc in addition to the hard copy, but not instead of it.
- ☞ I will dock late assignments by 5 points per day late; late means any time after 6 pm on May 18.

Novel/Character Study (due on Wednesday, June 8, by 6:00 pm) 30%

I will distribute detailed assignment instructions later in the term. Very generally speaking, the basic components of this study will address the following:

1. How the novels/characters shed light on your Political Science studies
2. How the novels/characters relate to or reflect your own political identity and sense of citizenship

- ☞ You must use standard referencing in the body of your paper, and you must include a separate bibliography page. No references = plagiarism = no credit, and possible failure for either the assignment or the course. See any standard college writing handbook or DePaul’s Writing Center website for examples/guidelines of referencing and bibliography formats. See page 3 of syllabus for more on this.
- ☞ Papers must be submitted in hard copy format AND uploaded to the D2L dropbox.
- ☞ I will dock late assignments by 5 points per day late; late means any time after 6 pm on June 8.

Class Participation and Attendance 15%

- ☞ Consistent, thoughtful, honest, voluntary participation is ideal, and I strongly encourage respectful disagreement and debate amongst us. I will not tolerate grandstanding, irrelevant, polemical, or hegemonic participation, and will lower the final grades of those who engage in it.
- ☞ Tardiness and mid-class departures/returns are incredibly rude and disruptive—don’t do it.
- ☞ Laptops and cell phones must be closed and silenced (i.e. ‘no vibrate’ mode) unless otherwise instructed.
- ☞ Obviously, steady attendance is essential, especially in a course that meets only once per week. I do not excuse absences unless they’re due to religious observations, jury duty, or official school, road, transportation closures, or authorized DePaul athletic team commitments.
- ☞ Each unexcused absence will lower your overall grade by half a letter grade.

GENERAL GRADING CRITERIA

☞ NOTE: I DO NOT SIMPLY “GIVE” YOU GRADES—*YOU EARN YOUR GRADES.*

‘A’--designates work of extraordinarily high quality. Written and oral arguments are clearly articulated, well-developed, thought-provoking, and are supported by your sources. Writing is coherent and free of structural errors. Class participation is voluntary and frequent. It is also relevant and reflects that you have read, fully understood, and are prepared to discuss the readings.

‘B’--designates work of high quality. Written and oral arguments reflect good understanding of issues and concept, are developed and well-supported by your sources. Writing is coherent, with minimal structural errors. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, and reflects that you have read and understood the readings.

‘C’--designates work that meets minimum requirements. Written and oral arguments are not fully developed or supported by your sources. Organization may be loose. Writing has occasional structural errors. Class participation is occasional and/or rarely voluntary, with comments that reveal moderate grasp of issues and concepts.

‘D’ or below--reflects poor clarity and comprehension. Written and oral arguments are confusing, contradictory, repetitive, and/or not supported by your sources. Writing is marred by frequent structural errors. Class participation is minimal, never voluntary, and reveals that you have minimal grasp on the readings.

FUNDAMENTAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Attend class consistently and on time. I understand that life can get in the way of school, and that you may at times have to miss class. Ultimately, you get out of the course what you put into it. In this regard, consistent and punctual attendance is crucial.

Keep up with the readings. If for some compelling reason you fall behind in the readings, I would be happy to meet with you to help you strategize how to get back up to speed, but I will not simply review the materials for you. Also, keep in mind that you usually have to read something more than once to get a good grasp on it.

Participate in class discussions. This may be an intimidating thought, especially to those of you who hate to speak up in class. I assure you that class discussions are not about showing off or making others look stupid. Ideally, such discussions should help you better understand and analyze the readings--which should in turn enhance your grade. Finally, good class discussions can make things more interesting for everyone!

Put forth your best effort in your writing, no matter how short the length of the assignment. *If I have high expectations of your writing, you should too!* Always strive to present your views in the best possible light--they deserve it. A paper that is written the day it is due, and that consists of a minimally edited first draft is highly likely to be unacceptable. If you have problems with or hesitations about writing do come talk to me, and/or consult with DePaul’s Center for Writing-Based Learning.

Be technologically prepared. Computer problems, printer problems, full computer labs, empty printing accounts, lost work, busy internet, dead laptop battery, etc. are not acceptable reasons for submitting late work.

Work honestly. Violations of DePaul’s Academic Integrity Policy “include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating, plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university’s academic resources--alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct.” Plagiarism includes missing or insufficient citations of direct quotations, paraphrased quotations or other references to sources. The penalty for academic violations is at my discretion. ***I will fail intended, egregious, or repeated violators either for the assignment or the course.*** For more on this policy see <http://www.depaul.edu/university-catalog/academic-handbooks/undergraduate/undergraduate-academic-policies/Pages/academic-integrity.aspx>.

Please notify me if you have a disability that requires assistance. You must register with the Office of Students with Disabilities, and provide me with the appropriate requests for accommodation.

PSC 390—LIBERAL ARTS CURRICULUM INVENTORY PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS
THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE *IN CLASS, HARD COPY ONLY, BY 6pm ON MAY 18*

This assignment has two goals. The first is for you to demonstrate your understanding of the structure and purpose of a liberal arts education in general. The second is for you to reflect on the significance and utility of a liberal arts curriculum to your political science studies and to the development of your political identity. This assignment will be based on an inventory of 10 experiences that you believe have most influenced your evolution while at DePaul or in college. These experiences can include courses, readings, instructors, staff, films, documentaries, study abroad, community service, internships, artistic events, guest lectures, panels, teach-ins, protests, religious events, etc. For those who transferred into DePaul, this list can include those experiences at your previous institution(s) that would fit into DePaul's liberal arts curriculum.

To get yourself started, select 10 courses or other academic experiences that fall into the following categories:

1. Liberal Studies Core _____
2. Liberal Studies Core _____
3. Learning Domain _____
4. Learning Domain _____
5. Learning Domain _____
6. Political Science _____
7. Political Science _____
8. Political Science _____
9. Elective , Extra-curricular, or Double Major _____
10. Elective , Extra-curricular, or Double Major _____

This assignment must be structured around and include **ALL** of the components below. The broader your inventory and the more you engage the framing essays and the novels in this course, the better. You are free to use a scrapbook or other creative formats. You can include video or audio clips, but they cannot substitute for a tangible copy and format.

Part I. An essay of at least 1 single-spaced page in which you explain:

- A)** Your understanding of the purpose of a liberal arts education
- B)** How an LA&S curriculum has contributed to your studies as a PSC major
- C)** How an LA&S curriculum has influenced your personal and political evolutions
- D)** How an LA&S education has prepared you for life ahead, at least as you currently envision it

Part II. For each item, provide an explanation of why it is significant to you. Each explanation should be at least 250 words long, single-spaced.

Part III. For each item, provide an explanation of how it correlates with the framing essays and with the novels you've thus far read for this course. Each explanation should be at least 250 words long, single-spaced.

Part IV. For each item, attach an artifact or image that symbolizes it. This can include photos, artwork, prayers, poems, newspapers/magazine clippings, receipts, tickets, post-cards, sound or video recordings, awards, letters, clothing, etc. *Be creative and have fun with this!* I will return all artifacts to you.

READING SCHEDULE

**Do not skip the introductions to each reading,
or the glossaries and explanatory footnotes that are included in some of the readings.**

- March 30:** Course introduction and overview; discussion of framing essays
 “The Personal is Political”, by Carol Hanisch
 “Civil Disobedience”, Parts 1-3, by Henry David Thoreau
On Liberty, Ch. II—excerpts, by John Stuart Mill
- April 6:** *The Inferno*, by Dante Alighieri, as translated by Hollander and Hollander
- April 13:** *Linden Hills*, by Gloria Naylor
- April 20:** *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury
- May 27:** *Bastard Out of Carolina*, by Dorothy Allison
- May 4:** *Babbitt*, by Sinclair Lewis
- May 11:** *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, by Laila Lalami
- May 18:** *Man of the People*, by Chinua Achebe
NOTE: Curriculum List due by 6pm in class today!
- May 25:** *Windy City*, by Scott Simon (Chs. 1-17)
- June 1:** *Windy City*, by Scott Simon (Chs. 17-40)

**Final paper due Wednesday, June 8, 6:00 p.m. in my office or dep’t. mailbox AND
on D2L dropbox**