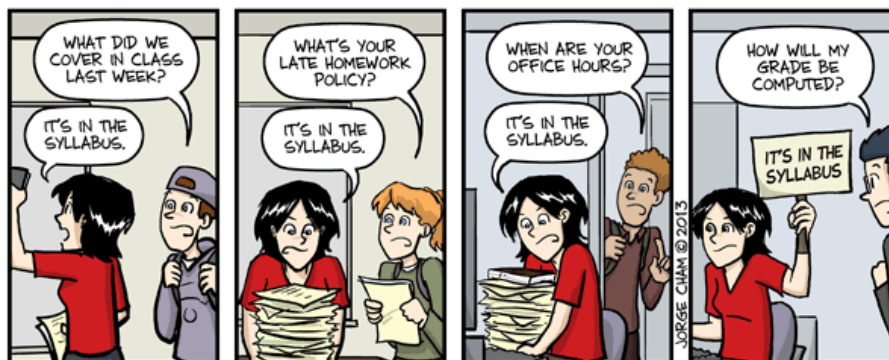# Political Science 203: U.S. Government and Politics

TA: Milan Ilnyckyj (milan.ilnyckyj@mail.utoronto.ca)

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Office hours: Mondays 2–3pm (location to be agreed upon in advance by email). My email is checked once daily, Monday to Friday.

Figure 1: If you have a question, please check whether it is in the syllabus before emailing me or the professor.

Students are expected to attend lecture and sections, complete all readings and assignments, and be able to discuss the material covered by the class in an intelligent and respectful manner. In addition, students should stay informed of current affairs in American politics by reading the relevant sections of *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, or some other

serious newspaper. Your class participation grade will be based on your attendance and the quality of your contributions to classroom discussion.

1 Grading

Tutorials will be worth 10% of the final course grade. Students will be graded on the basis of their attendance and participation, as well as on the basis of randomly-assigned presentations. Grades will be assigned in keeping with the University of Toronto's grade scale:[1]

Grade meaning	Refined letter grade scale	Numerical scale of marks
	A+	90–100%
Excellent	A	85–89%
	A-	80–84%
	B+	77–79%
Good	B	73–76%
	B-	70–72%
	C+	67–69%
Adequate	C	63–66%
	C-	60–62%
	D+	57–59%
	D	53–56%
	D-	50–52%
Inadequate	F	0–49%

Simple attendance of the tutorials may be sufficient to earn an adequate grade, but will not result in a good or excellent one. Preparation and active participation in the discussion are expected. Attendance will be recorded using a sign-in sheet each week.

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[1]Source: http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grgrade.htm

2 Presentations

For each assigned reading, students are expected to prepare brief notes answering three questions:

1. What was the main argument made in the reading?

2. What logic or evidence was used to support the argument?

3. What questions does the reading raise for the group discussion?

About one 3" by 5" index card worth of notes is expected for each reading. Notes can be handwritten or electronic. In addition to serving as preparation for presentations, these notes will be useful as study materials for the midterms.

For each reading, a random student will be called upon to give a short oral presentation during the tutorial, not to exceed five minutes in length. The presentation should be based upon the written notes and cover the questions listed above. The purpose of the presentation system is to encourage all students to be familiar with all readings, which will in turn allow for an informed and useful conversation. The presentations will provide an introduction to the group discussion and give students experience with providing oral summaries of scholarly work.

In each case, the student who will provide the presentation will be selected randomly. Those who have already presented may still be called upon to present. People who have not yet presented are fives times as likely to be called as those who have already done so in a term.

If a student who is called upon to present is uncomfortable with making a short oral presentation, they may submit their notes at the end of the tutorial instead. Most notes will not be collected — only those of students who are called upon but who feel uncomfortable with presenting them orally. Submitting notes after a tutorial is not a substitute for being present. It is always better to be present and unprepared than to be absent.

3 Computers

Laptops and tablet computers are not required for these tutorials, and students are encouraged to not bring or use them. Using computers during

tutorials distracts both the student who is doing so and the people around them.[2] If, however, your whole note-taking system relies on a computer, you are free to use it. It is also acceptable to bring a computer because you want to be able to refer to electronic readings during the discussion without printing them.

4 Plagiarism

Papers will be put through the TurnItIn system to detect plagiarism. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to university officials for investigation.

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[2]See: http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/laptop-use-lowers-student-grades-experiment-shows-1.1401860