



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**POLI 415 Lecture 01: Politics through Film  
Winter 2021**

"The political is personal"

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SS710 | 403-220-5923

Run as a hybrid course online.

Students watch a film one week and discuss it online asynchronously via D2L.

Optional synchronous meeting (via Zoom) every second week, on Tuesdays at 3:30pm.

Office hours (via Zoom) on Fridays from 11:00am-12:00pm.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Film is a uniquely powerful medium through which to experience, study, and even shape politics. This course will examine how film can shed light on fundamental political problems. It is not a survey course: we will make no attempt to study all aspects of politics through film, nor will we study all possible "political" films. Instead, we will select a few films to study in depth, guided by a simple and straightforward question: what can we learn about politics through film that we don't already know through standard texts that we otherwise use? We will compare and contrast each film against exemplary texts or notions about politics. A guiding concern will be to examine the impact of the political on the personal, and on how examining the personal can in turn shed light on the political. In this sense, the course is exploratory. We will present what we take to be some possible ways to answer this question, but the best student work in the course will *critically engage and build on this material*.

By the end of this course, if you do your part through careful study, you will not only strengthen your analytical and critical thinking abilities, but also develop a foundation for making sense of political questions through the non-traditional medium of film.

The course will run on a bi-weekly schedule: students will watch a film one week, and some will post critical reviews online via D2L, and the class will discuss the film and readings online asynchronously and via an optional synchronous class the second week. I will post my own critical reflections on the films and readings to help frame discussion.

## **EVALUATION**

1. Critical reviews of two different films. Every two weeks, some people will post their reviews online to the D2L discussion board, serving as a prompt for online discussion of the film under consideration. Each discussion post should be between 500-700 words and aim to critically assess the film considering the assigned reading. In doing so, keep in mind the core aim of the course: What *general* aspect of politics does the film shed light on, above and beyond the story it tells? How successfully does it do so? How do the readings that week (or in other weeks) help us understand the film? How does the film help us understand the readings?

The posts will be *due by 5:00 pm on the Thursday of the film screening weeks*: i.e., January 21, February 4, February 18, March 4, March 18, and April 1. We will then take up the themes in the online discussion of each film, and in the optional synchronous class the following week. In your review, you are encouraged to comment on issues raised in class discussion, and on others' discussion posts from that week or prior weeks. **(2 x 15% each = 30%)**

2. Term paper: you are required to write a term paper of 2,500 – 3,500 words, due on the last day of class (April 6). The paper may consider material from outside the syllabus, but should build on and explore the themes in the course in more depth: i.e., What can we learn about politics through film that we don't already know otherwise? You are encouraged to build on the discussions in class and in the D2L entries. **(50%)**
3. Participation: This includes the *quantity and quality* of your contributions to class discussions, either online via D2L, or in the synchronous bi-weekly meeting, or both. Someone who makes a small number of pertinent or relevant comments in class will receive a higher grade than someone else who makes more frequent but less pertinent or relevant remarks. At the same time, making more frequent valuable contributions will earn you a higher mark than less frequent participation. **(20%)**

If a student misses a required course component, please get in touch the instructor as soon as possible

## **GRADING CRITERIA**

A- (80-84%) → A (85-89%) → A+ (90%-100%)

*Exceptional performance:* strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; strong capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base. Work at this level will also be clearly written, with no spelling or grammar faults.

B- (70-73%) → B (74-76%) → B+ (77-79%)

*Competent performance:* evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature. Work at this level will generally be clearly written, containing at most a few, if any, spelling or grammar faults.

D (50-54%) → D+ (55-59%) → C- (60-62%) → C (63-66%) → C+ (67-69%)

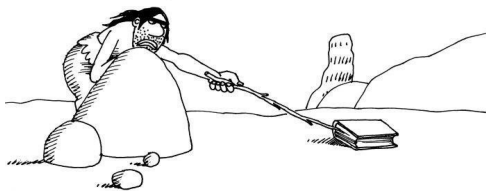
*Adequate performance:* understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour. Work at this level is sometimes or often unclear and contains from some to many spelling and/or grammar problems.

F (0-49%)

*Inadequate performance:* little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature. Work at this level is usually poorly written, with numerous spelling and grammar problems.

## **REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY**

Computer with reliable Internet connection and capability to watch films and to participate in optional Zoom meetings.



## **READING AND WRITING SKILLS<sup>1</sup>**

Learning an academic discipline requires immersing yourself in and critically engaging a substantial body of work. In other words, it requires reading and writing.

As you manage the reading for this course, you are likely to find that there is little correlation between effort and outcome. It's possible to spend hours reading something without "getting it," and equally possible to spend very little time reading something else and getting quickly to the heart of it. Reading is not an ability that either comes naturally or does not – it's a skill that has to be learned. *Figure out the heart of the argument before you read deeply.* When you know the article's centre of gravity, you read more efficiently. *Read actively.* Be skeptical, approach the text with questions, and try to answer these for yourself as you make your way through it. The more actively you read, the more you will retain, and the easier it will be to write about it.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from K. Chandra and D. Woodruff, MIT.

It should be obvious and go without saying in a university setting, but *the quality of the writing matters*. It certainly does in this course, for both the blog entries and the term paper. In fact, it matters for anything you do, in this class and elsewhere, including blogs, email, letters, and papers. The better you can express yourself in writing, the more seriously people will take you. This is true even in an otherwise informal medium such as a blog discussion, where crisp, clear, effective writing counts.

George Orwell noted that “the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.”<sup>2</sup> The advice in these articles should help you avoid slovenly writing, at least:

- William Zinsser, “Writing English as a Second Language”  
<https://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/>
- Steven Pinker, “Why Academics Stink at Writing”:  
<http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Academics-Writing-Stinks/148989/>
- And beyond Pinker’s article, I would very strongly recommend his book *The Sense of Style*: <http://stevenpinker.com/publications/sense-style-thinking-persons-guide-writing-21st-century>

If after all this advice you still need help with writing, it is available through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library): <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>



<http://www.cartoonstock.com/>

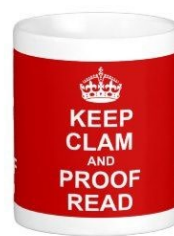


Image Copyright Unknown

## **COURSE CONTENT**

We will be studying films that explore sensitive material, which some people may find offensive or difficult to watch. Because the course places so much emphasis on film as a powerful medium through which to engage aesthetically and even emotionally, sensitive material is unavoidable. If you find it difficult to watch or discuss such content, this is probably not the right class for you.

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<sup>2</sup> George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” (1946): [http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e\\_polit/](http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit/)

**Schedule** (The schedule is tentative and may change as the need arises)

January 12

**Introduction**

- David Bordwell, "Studying Cinema":  
<http://www.davidbordwell.net/essays/studying.php>
- Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation"; <http://shifter-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Sontag-Against-Interpretation.pdf> ;  
<https://sites.ualberta.ca/~dmiall/LiteraryReading/Readings/Sontag%20Against%20Interpretation.pdf>
- Ian Jarvie, *Philosophy of the Film: Epistemology, Ontology, Aesthetics* (Taylor & Francis, 1987), Chapter 12 "Plato and the Cave"  
<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=171866#>

January 19

**Machuca:** <https://ucalgary.kanopy.com/video/machuca>

January 26

- Antonio Damasio, "Neuroscience and Ethics," *The American Journal of Bioethics* 7:1 (2007), pp. 3-7; <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/full/10.1080/15265160601063910>
- Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), Introduction (pp. 1-8) and Chapter 6 "Compassion: Tragic Predicaments" (pp. 297-353);  
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzU3MDM3MV9fQU41?sid=740e877c-356a-434f-bd51-fe1cb8c16e6b@pdc-v-sessmgr05&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>
- J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, "Chile: The Development, Breakdown and Recovery of Democracy," in Jan Knippers Black, ed. *Latin America: Its Problems and Its Promise: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (Taylor & Francis, 2010), Ch. 26, pp. 488-516; <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=579007&ppg=6>

February 2

**Cría Cuervos:** <https://ucalgary.kanopy.com/video/cria-cuervos>

February 9

- Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), Chapter 4 "Emotions and Infancy" (pp. 174-248);

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzU3MDM3MV9fQU41?sid=740e877c-356a-434f-bd51-fe1cb8c16e6b@pdc-v-sessmgr05&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>

- Omar Encarnación, *Democracy Without Justice in Spain: The Politics of Forgetting* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), Chapter 1 "History, Politics and Forgetting in Spain," pp. 27-49; <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3442320&ppg=57>
- Marsha Kinder, "Carlos Saura: The Political Development of Individual Consciousness," *Film Quarterly* 32:3 (Spring 1979), pp. 14-25 <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/docview/223106440/fulltextPDF/2A FFA2DDB992406CPQ/1?accountid=9838>

February 16

**Rashomon:** <https://ucalgary.kanopy.com/video/rashomon>

(Term break / reading week is February 14-20. You are welcome to watch the film on your own during this week or before. Those writing a review for this week are also free to submit it any time prior to February 18, including prior to term break.)

February 23

- Daniel Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," *The American Economic Review* 93:5 (Dec. 2003), pp. 1449-1475; <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/pdf/3132137.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A7bf0d79f87a32418030ebe2de42fce6c>
- George Lakoff, "Some Empirical Results about the Nature of Concepts," *Mind & Language* 4:1-2 (1989); <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-0017.1989.tb00244.x>
- Ian Jarvie, *Philosophy of the Film: Epistemology, Ontology, Aesthetics* (Taylor & Francis, 1987), Chapter 13, "Rashomon: Is Truth Relative" <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=171866#>
- Michael Lissack, "America Meets Rashomon: Donald Trump and Multiple Truth," *Huffington Post*, January 14, 2018; [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/america-meet-rashomon\\_b\\_14095364](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/america-meet-rashomon_b_14095364)

- March 2      ***The Lives of Others***: <https://media3-criterionpic-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/display/006?t=MON1187>
- March 9      • Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), Chapter 5 “Music and Emotion” (pp. 249-296);  
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzU3MDM3MV9fQU41?sid=740e877c-356a-434f-bd51-fe1cb8c16e6b@pdc-v-sessmgr05&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>
- Michel Foucault, “‘Panopticism’ from ‘Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison’,” *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 2:1 (Autumn, 2008), pp. 1-12; [https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/25594995?sid=primo&seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/25594995?sid=primo&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)
- Samuel Clowes Huneke, “An End to Totalitarianism,” *Boston Review*, April 16, 2020; <http://bostonreview.net/politics/samuel-clowes-huneke-end-totalitarianism>
- March 16      ***The Godfather, Part II***: <https://media3-criterionpic-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/htbin/wwform/006?T=P08459>
- March 23      • Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* Chapters I, II, VI-IX, XV-XIX, XXI-XXV, e.g.: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm>; <http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince.pdf> ;  
<http://www.bartleby.com/36/1/prince.pdf>
- Luigi Graziano, “Patron-Client Relationships in Southern Italy,” *European Journal of Political Research* 1 (1973), 3-34;  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1973.tb01281.x>
- Charles Tilly, “State Making and War Making as Organized Crime,” in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds. *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 169-191.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1017/CB09780511628283.008>
- March 30      ***Parasite***: <https://media3-criterionpic-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/htbin/wwform/006?T=MK20101>

April 6

- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000), Part I “The Political Constitution of the Present,” pp. 1-66; <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=4404062&ppg=20>
- Byung-Chul Han, “Why Revolution is no Longer Possible,” *Our World* (United Nations University), Nov. 3, 2015; <https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/why-revolution-is-no-longer-possible>
- Mark Blyth, “Global Trumpism,” Brown University Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs (2016); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bkm2Vfj42FY>
- Max Balhorn, “Parasite, a Window Into South Korean Neoliberalism,” *Jacobin*, November 29, 2019; <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/11/parasite-a-window-into-south-korean-neoliberalism>

### ***Term paper due***

#### **INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES:**

Students requiring assistance are encouraged to speak to the instructor during class or their office hours. Should you wish to meet outside of office hours, please telephone or email to make an appointment. It is to the student’s advantage to keep such appointments. All meetings will be held virtually.

Email is a common form of communication but it is not always the most effective way of answering student questions. If you cannot make office hours, please request a one on one meeting outside of these hours, to be held virtually.

#### **IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

##### **Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration**

As stated in the University Calendar:

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be



medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

Students can make a Statutory Declaration as their supporting documentation (available at [ucalgary.ca/registrar](https://ucalgary.ca/registrar)). This requires students to make a declaration in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths. It demonstrates the importance of honest and accurate information provided and is a legally binding declaration. Several registered Commissioners for Oaths are available to students at no charge, on campus. For a list of locations to access a Commissioners for Oaths, visit [ucalgary.ca/registrar](https://ucalgary.ca/registrar)).

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

This statement is accessible at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

### **Absence From a Mid-term Examination**

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

### **Deferral of a Final Examination**

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

### **Appeals**

If a student has a concern about the course or a grade they have been assigned, they must first discuss their concerns with the instructor. If this does not resolve the matter, the student then proceed with an academic appeal. The first step in an academic appeal is to set up a meeting with the Department Head. Appeals must be requested within 15 days of receipt of the graded assignment.

### **University Regulations**

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at

[www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html).

### **Student Accommodations**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

### **Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

### **Required Access to Technology**

Please see the University's resource page at [https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it?id=kb\\_article&sys\\_id=86e7438013753ac06f3afb2e144b031](https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it?id=kb_article&sys_id=86e7438013753ac06f3afb2e144b031)

### **Copyright Legislation**

As stated in the University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, "students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright and requirements of the copyright act to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy."

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-electronic-resources-and-information-policy.pdf> and <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>

### **Instructor Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course

materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)**

FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.

### **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

For program planning and advice, please consult with the Arts Students' Centre by calling 403-220-3580 or by email at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit [arts.ucalgary.ca/advising](http://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising) for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625].

### **Important Contact Information**

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives

Phone: 403-220-6551

Email: [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca),  
[arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)

Students' Union URL: [www.su.ucalgary.ca](http://www.su.ucalgary.ca)

Graduate Students' Association

Phone: 403-220-5997

Email: [askgsa@ucalgary.ca](mailto:askgsa@ucalgary.ca)

URL: [www.ucalgary.ca/gsa](http://www.ucalgary.ca/gsa)

Student Ombudsman

Phone: 403-220-6420

Email: [ombuds@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca)

### **Campus Mental Health Resources**

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

*SU Wellness Centre:* <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

*Student Wellness Services:*  
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

*Campus Mental Health Strategy website:* <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.