

York College of Pennsylvania  
Department of History and Political Science  
PS440/450 Senior Seminar in International Relations/Political Science  
TTH 9:30-10:45 in HUM130  
Fall 2010

**Instructor** Dr. John A. Altman

**Office** HUM104

**Office Hours** MWF 9:00-11:00 a.m. and TTH 8:00-9:30 a.m.

**Office Phone** (717) 815-1953

**Email** jaltman@ycp.edu

**Course Website** <https://blackboard.ycp.edu>

**Faculty Website** <http://faculty.ycp.edu/~jaltman>

**Blackboard.** I make extensive use of Blackboard for course management. There you will find announcements, the syllabus, readings, assignments, and grades. You should check Blackboard on a regular basis. It is the main tool I use to communicate with you in addition to the things I tell you in class. All YCP students have a network account, and computers on campus are plentiful. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard regularly.

**Email.** I will email you only at your YCP email address. Again, all YCP students have a network account, and computers on campus are plentiful. It is your responsibility to check your YCP email regularly or have it forwarded to an email address of your choosing. Please consult this syllabus and the course website on Blackboard before you email me with a question about course policies. Most of the answers to your questions can be found either in this syllabus or on the course website. Do not be concerned if I reply to your email with a short answer. I'm often using my Blackberry when I reply to emails, so I usually keep my replies brief.

**Catalog Course Description.** This course is a senior level seminar for [international relations] and political science majors. The purpose of the course is to offer an opportunity for students to integrate and synthesize their previous course work in the discipline. A major research paper will be required. Topics to be discussed will be professionalism and ethics; practical issues and concerns in applied research; controversies in research methods; the current state of the discipline. Open to senior [international relations] and political science majors, students minoring in political science, and others with the consent of the instructor.

**Principal Course Objectives.** To offer students the opportunity to integrate and synthesize their previous coursework in international relations and political science. To develop the students' ability to think analytically and to understand how the concepts presented in the course relate to contemporary international relations and political science. To develop the students' ability to engage in original research. To enable students to pursue depth in the discipline of political science by focusing on a specific topic of interest. To prepare students for graduate study and public sector employment by honing their research, writing, and analytical skills.

**Required Text.** There is no required text for this course. All required readings are available through the course website in the "Readings" section on Blackboard.

**Attendance and Participation (See pages 51-52 in the College Catalog and page 22 in the Student Handbook).** Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. Students are expected to arrive on time. Students are expected to remain in the classroom for the duration of the class. Students are expected to read the assigned reading for each class. Students are expected to be actively engaged in what is going on in the class. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. Attendance will be recorded at each class meeting. *No absence will be excused under any circumstance. Students who arrive after the roll has been taken will be counted as absent.*

**Assignments (40%).** Each student will complete a number of assignments, all equally weighted and together accounting for 40% of the course grade. A detailed description of each assignment will be made available in the "Assignments" section on Blackboard and discussed in class. Detailed guidelines for completing and submitting the assignments are also available in the "Assignments" section on Blackboard. The grade you earn for each assignment will be based on the following scale: "A" work = 95, "B+/A-" work = 90, "B" work = 85, "C+/B-" work = 80, "C" work = 75, "D" work = 65, "F" work = 55. *No assignment will be accepted via email. No assignment will be accepted after it is due. If you don't submit an assignment by the time it is due, then you will earn a zero ("0") for that assignment.*

**Oral Presentation (10%).** Each student will give a 15 minute oral presentation of their research findings. The oral presentation will account for 10% of the course grade. Guidelines and expectations for the oral presentation will be provided during class on Thursday, November 11 during my own oral presentation example. *Failure to give an oral presentation will not be excused under any circumstance. If you don't make an oral presentation, then you will earn a zero ("0") for the oral presentation.*

**Senior Seminar Research Paper (50%).** Each student will write a 15-20 page empirical research paper as part of an original research project accounting for 50% of the course grade. A detailed description of the senior seminar research paper will be made available in the "Paper" section on Blackboard and discussed in class. Detailed guidelines for completing and submitting the senior seminar research paper are also available in the "Paper" section on Blackboard. The grade you earn for the research paper will be based on the following scale: "A" work = 95, "B+/A-" work = 90, "B" work = 85, "C+/B-" work = 80, "C" work = 75, "D" work = 65, "F" work = 55. *No research paper will be accepted via email or as a hard copy. No research paper will be accepted after it is due. If you don't submit a research paper on Blackboard by the time it is due, then you will earn a zero ("0") for the senior seminar research paper.*

**Course Standards and Grading Criteria (See pages 52-53 in the College Catalog and pages 22-23 in the Student Handbook).** This course is an upper level course that will enable students to pursue depth in the discipline of political science by focusing on a specific topic of interest. Students already should possess some knowledge and understanding of the substantive fields in political science, as well as knowledge of research methods.

4	= ("A")	= 90-100	= Superior
3.5	= ("B+/A-")	= 87-89	= Excellent
3	= ("B")	= 80-86	= Good
2.5	= ("C+/B-")	= 77-79	= Above Average
2	= ("C")	= 70-76	= Average
1	= ("D")	= 60-69	= Below Average
0	= ("F")	= 0-59	= Failure

**Warning Grades (See page 55 in the College Catalog).** I will post mid-term grades by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 15 on Blackboard. All assignments completed up to that point together will account for 100% of the mid-term grade. Mid-term grades will serve as warning grades (grade of "U" meaning unsatisfactory) for those students whose mid-term course average is below 70.

**Communication Standards (See pages 50-51 in the College Catalog).** York College recognizes the importance of effective communication in all disciplines and careers. Therefore students are expected to competently analyze, synthesize, organize, and articulate course material in papers, examinations, and presentations. In addition, students should know and use communication skills current to their field of study, recognize the need for revision as part of their writing process, and employ standard conventions of English usage in both writing and speaking. Students may be asked to further revise assignments that do not demonstrate effective use of these communication skills.

**Academic Integrity** (See **Academic Dishonesty on page 51 in the College Catalog and page 24 in the Student Handbook**). York College's mission statement stipulates that strict adherence to principles of academic honesty is expected of all students. Therefore, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated at York College. Academic dishonesty refers to actions such as, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabricating research, falsifying academic documents, etc., and includes all situations where students make use of the work of others and claim such work as their own.

When a faculty member believes a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member must inform the student in writing and then has ten business days from that written notification to the student to report the incident to the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Department Chair. Documentation related to instances of academic dishonesty will be kept on file in the student's permanent record. If the academic dishonesty is the student's first offense, the faculty member will have the discretion to decide on a suitable sanction up to a grade of 0 for the course. Students are not permitted to withdraw from a course in which they have been accused of academic dishonesty.

Students who believe they have been unjustly charged or sanctioned (in cases involving a first offense) must discuss the situation with the faculty member and have 10 business days thereafter to submit an appeal to Student Welfare Committee through the Dean of Academic Affairs. If an appeal is filed, the Student Welfare Committee will then conduct a hearing to review the charge and/or sanction. In cases of a first offense, the faculty member may request that the Student Welfare Committee conduct a hearing and decide on the sanction, which can involve academic suspension or dismissal from the College, if the faculty member believes the offense to be of an extremely egregious nature.

If the Dean of Academic Affairs determines that the academic dishonesty is the student's second offense, the Dean will provide written notification to the student, the faculty member, and the Department Chair. The Student Welfare Committee will automatically conduct a hearing to review the charge and decide on an appropriate sanction, which will involve academic suspension or dismissal from the College. Students who believe the Student Welfare Committee has unjustly sanctioned them may submit a written appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 72 hours of receiving notification of the Student Welfare Committee's sanction.

**Personal Technology Policy.** While York College recognizes students' need for educational and emergency related technological devices such as laptops, PDA's, cellular phones, etc., using them unethically or recreationally during class time is never appropriate. The college recognizes and supports faculty members' authority to regulate in their classrooms student use of all electronic devices.

**Classroom Decorum** (See **pages 32-33 in the Student Handbook**). Behaviors or actions that disrupt the teaching and learning environment will not be tolerated. Any such behaviors will be addressed by the Academic Department and/or Academic Dean and may result in the temporary or permanent removal from the class/course. Disorderly or disruptive conduct is prohibited. *I am especially disrupted by students arriving late and departing early, getting up in the middle of class to leave the room, reading and studying for other classes, talking and passing notes, allowing their cell phones to ring or vibrate, text messaging, wearing headphones and listening to mp3 players, and using laptops. Please do not engage in these activities during my class.* Failure to comply with the official and proper order of a designated College official acting within the scope of his/her employment responsibilities is prohibited.

**Course Schedule and Topic Outline.** All assigned readings are listed under their respective seminar topics in the "Readings" section of the course website on Blackboard.

Tuesday, October 31      Course Introduction

Thursday, September 2      Getting Started, Research Questions, and Topic Discussion

Tuesday, September 7 Previous Research, Reference Tools, and the Literature Review  
Thursday, September 9 Previous Research, Reference Tools, and the Literature Review

Tuesday, September 14 Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)  
Thursday, September 16 Working with ICPSR Data Using SPSS/PASW

Tuesday, September 21 Data Collection Using SPSS/PASW  
Thursday, September 23 Career Development Presentation

Tuesday, September 28 Graduate Education and Careers in Public Service  
Thursday, September 30 Developing Testable Hypotheses

Tuesday, October 5 APSA Style and Paper Format  
Thursday, October 7 APSA Style and Paper Format

Tuesday, October 12 Statistical Analysis Using SPSS/PASW  
Thursday, October 14 Statistical Analysis Using SPSS/PASW

Tuesday, October 19 **Fall Break (no class)**  
Thursday, October 21 Tables and Figures

Tuesday, October 26 The State of the Discipline  
Thursday, October 28 The State of the Discipline

Tuesday, November 2 Conclusions and Implications  
Thursday, November 4 Political Science as a Profession and Its Associations and Annual Meetings

Tuesday, November 9 PowerPoint Bad  
Thursday, November 11 Dr. Altman's Oral Presentation Example

Tuesday, November 16 Oral Presentations  
Thursday, November 18 Oral Presentations

Tuesday, November 23 Oral Presentations  
Thursday, November 25 **Thanksgiving Vacation (no class)**

Tuesday, November 30 Oral Presentations  
Thursday, December 2 Oral Presentations

Tuesday, December 7 Oral Presentations  
Thursday, December 9 Oral Presentations

Tuesday, December 14 **Senior Seminar Research Paper Due**

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO REVISION BY THE INSTRUCTOR