

**GEO 1931-01 – Colloquium in Social Science and Public Affairs  
(Fall 2007/Spring 2008)**

**Instructor: Dr. Phil Steinberg, Associate Professor of Geography**

**Teaching Assistant: Sandra Hunkele**

**Class Meets Mondays 7:00-9:30, Bellamy 021**

**Contacting Your Instructor:**

**Office: Bellamy 305**

**Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00-2:00 or other times by appointment**

**Phone: 850-644-8378 (4-8378 from an on-campus phone)**

**DeGraff Office: DeGraff 1109**

**DeGraff Office Hours : Wednesdays 2:30-3:30**

**E-mail: psteinbe@fsu.edu**

**Website: <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~psteinbe>**

**Contacting your Teaching Assistant:**

**Office: DeGraff 1109**

**Office Hours: By appointment**

**E-mail: [sjh8665@fsu.edu](mailto:sjh8665@fsu.edu)**

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## **Overview**

You've chosen to live in the Social Science and Public Affairs Living-Learning Community because you have an interest in the world around you. Whether your interest is in understanding the systems by which goods and services are produced, distributed, and consumed (economics); institutions of power and authority (political science); the structures and norms that govern social interactions from the family to world society (sociology); or the specific environmental and social characteristics of a place that give it its unique history and future (geography), the social sciences are, in the broadest sense, about understanding the world around you, at all scales.

An introductory colloquium in the social sciences thus should be an introduction to the world. That's a bit much to fit into a 1 credit-hour course, however. So instead this course introduces eight "hot" issues (four each semester) that lie behind many of the conflicts that one reads about in newspapers on the web. The aim of this colloquium is to give you a foundation for the more detailed classes that you'll be taking later on as you pursue your studies in the social sciences. Thus, for instance, instead of learning in-depth about a particular war, we'll be discussing why nations fight with each other and what they tend to fight for. Instead of learning about a specific election, we'll be discussing the processes by which elections are contested.

Each issue area is taught over a three-week period. Feature films shown during the first two weeks introduce the topic. In the third week, we divide the colloquium into four

groups. Each group discusses the topic in the context of the films, an assigned reading, and current events that are in the news at the time.

In addition, you are required to attend a number of sponsored events and lectures by guest speakers each semester (which meet outside of the regular class time). There also will be a final exam.

This is a one-year course, which is offered for one credit hour in both the Fall and Spring semesters. Enrollment in the course is restricted to students in the DeGraff Hall Social Science & Public Affairs Living-Learning Community, and students in the Community are required to take the course both terms.

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## **Objectives**

By the end of the course, you will have gained skills in:

- describing a broad range of social and policy problems;
- summarizing the views of various parties interested in these social and policy problems;
- devising and justifying potential policy solutions for resolving or navigating through these social and policy problems; and
- expressing your opinions, both orally and in writing, regarding these social and policy problems.

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## **Structure of a Typical Three-Week Cycle**

Each semester, after the first class session, this class is divided into four three-week cycles, with each cycle being devoted to a specific topic. A typical cycle is as follows:

Week 1: One or more relevant, timely news stories and/or editorials are posted on the Blackboard page along with a brief introduction to the topic. The first film is screened during the regular class time (Monday, 7:00) at the classroom in Bellamy Hall. The screening will be followed by a brief discussion to clear up any possible confusion about the film's characters and plot. Attendance at the screening is optional, as the film will also be available for viewing in the basement of Strozier Library, however you must view the film before the discussion session that will be held during week 3 of the unit.

Week 2: The second film is screened during the regular class time (Monday, 7:00) at the classroom in Bellamy Hall. The screening will be followed by a brief discussion to clear up any possible confusion about the film's characters and plot. Attendance at the screening is optional, as the film will also be available for viewing in the basement of Strozier Library, however you must view the film before the discussion session that will be held during week 3 of the unit.

Week 3: By class time this week (Monday, 7:00), you are expected to have read the assigned reading(s) and viewed both assigned films. For this class session, the class will be divided into four discussion sections of 8-10 students (these groups will have been determined during the first class session of the semester). Group 1 will meet with the instructor in the DeGraff classroom (DeGraff 1106) from 7:00-7:50. Group 2 will meet with the teaching assistant in the DeGraff student lounge (DeGraff 1108) from 7:00-7:50. Group 3 will meet with the instructor in the DeGraff classroom (DeGraff 1106) from 8:00-8:50. Group 4 will meet with the teaching assistant in the DeGraff student lounge (DeGraff 1108) from 8:00-8:50.

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### **Other Classes and Events**

*First Class:* In the fall semester, the first class session will focus on general class orientation as well as assignment of students to one of the four discussion groups. In the spring semester, this class session will focus on a discussion of the previous semester's final exam, as well as a new assignment of discussion groups. As mandated by FSU's first-day attendance policy, attendance in class this day is required for both semesters.

*Sponsored Out-of-Class Events:* Over the course of each semester, you will be required to attend a number of out-of-class events. These events fall into three categories:

- College of Social Sciences-sponsored Broad and Anderson-Ashby Lectures. Each semester the College brings in five guest lecturers who speak on topics of general interest. These are often people like journalists or diplomats who span the academic and non-academic worlds. In almost all cases, these lectures will be held on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 3:30, in the Broad Auditorium in the Pepper Center.
- Community-sponsored out-of-town speaker. Each semester the Community will bring in one out-of-town speaker, associated with one of the social science disciplines, to address the Community. This lecture will most likely occur on a Thursday evening (precise date to be determined) in the DeGraff student lounge (DeGraff 1108), and her or his talk will be followed by a reception.
- Other Community-sponsored events. In most cases, these will be held at 6:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings in the DeGraff classroom (DeGraff 1106). These include:
  - Presentations by FSU professors and local policy-makers and advocates on timely topics. For instance, in Spring 2007 we sponsored a forum where a state representative and a Florida health-care advocate discussed health-care policy issues being taken up by the Florida legislature.
  - Presentations about specific resources that may be available to you at FSU as someone interested in the social sciences. These may include, for instance, presentations by representatives of social-science-oriented programs (e.g. FSU's International Programs), academic departments

- (Economics, Geography, Political Science, and Sociology), or student organizations (e.g. the World Affairs Program/Model U.N.).
- Events sponsored by other living-learning communities to which members of the Social Science & Public Affairs Living-Learning Community are invited.

You are required to any four of these sponsored events, plus the lecture by the Community-sponsored out-of-town speaker. If you cannot attend the out-of-town speaker's lecture, you will need to attend an additional two events.

It is *your* responsibility to sign the sign-in sheet at any of these events. In almost all cases, either Dr. Steinberg or Sandra will be at the event, with the sign-in sheet. If neither of us can attend, someone else will be there to take attendance and it is your responsibility to find that person. To get credit for attending an event, you must be there from start to finish.

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## Film Viewing

All films shown in class will be on reserve all semester in the Digital Media Center in the basement of Strozier Library (except when they've been checked out for showing that day in class). You are encouraged to review films in preparation for discussions and for the final exam.

In order to screen the film at the DMC on your own, you will need the following:

- Title of the film
- Instructor name and course number (Steinberg/Hunkele GEO 1931-01)
- Your FSU Card

The DMC's hours are:

- Sunday: 1pm-10pm
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-10pm
- Friday: 8am-6pm
- Saturday: Closed
- Schedule may change during holidays

You will **NOT** be able to check out the videos, however the DMC will play the film for you on a designated PC (for individuals) or in the screening room (for groups only).

The DMC has only one copy of each film; therefore, you may wish to coordinate with your classmates in order to view the film in groups. Otherwise, if you choose to view the film alone, there is a possibility that someone else is already watching it and you must wait until he or she is finished.

For more information, call the DMC at 644-5924 (4-5924 from an on-campus phone) or see their website at <http://www.lib.fsu.edu/dlmc/dmc>.

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## Grade Calculation

Your grade in this course will be calculated on a 100 point scale. Your final grade will be determined according the following formula:

A: 93-100  
A-: 90-92  
B+: 88-89  
B: 83-87  
B-: 80-82  
C+: 78-79  
C: 73-77  
C-: 70-72  
D+: 68-69  
D: 63-67  
D-: 60-62  
F: 0-59

Points can be earned as follows:

*Final Exam (2 questions x 30 points each) = 60 points.*

The final exam will consist of four essay questions, each of which will cover one or more of the topics dealt with in class that semester. You may choose any two of the four essay questions (there will be no extra credit for answering a third or fourth question). For each question, you will earn points as follows.

An essay with the following qualities will earn 29-30 points:

- \* Good, clear, and complete description of the problem.
- \* Clear statement of the argument you will make about the problem.
- \* Good, clear supporting arguments, with each argument supported by evidence or plausible examples.
- \* May offer unique arguments or evidence not developed or noted by others.
- \* Paper well-organized with few errors in sentence structure, spelling, or mechanics.

An essay with the following qualities will earn 26-28 points:

- \* An adequate description of the problem.
- \* A clear thesis statement, but somewhat weakly stated.
- \* Advances good arguments and tries to supply evidence or examples to back up each one.
- \* Generally a good job. Clearly written with few errors.

An essay with the following qualities will earn 23-25 points:

- \* Incomplete description of the problem.
- \* Reasons or evidence left unstated.
- \* Weak or unclear thesis.
- \* Arguments are advanced, but they are not clearly stated, or no evidence or example is offered in support of one or more of the arguments advanced.
- \* Problems with articulation of ideas, transitions, organization, spelling, or other mechanics.

An essay with the following qualities will earn 20-22 points:

- \* Doesn't describe problem.
- \* Weakly organized, poor development of idea.
- \* Little or no evidence offered in support of arguments made.
- \* No evidence of familiarity with the films or readings.
- \* Generally sloppy, with too many typos, misspelled words, and poor articulation.
- \* Description without argument

*Discussion Sections (4 class sessions x 7 points per session = 28 points)*

At each discussion section, students earn points as follows:

- \* A student will earn 4 points for attending
- \* A student will earn a fifth point for actively participating in the discussion
- \* A student will earn a sixth and/or seventh point for making significant contributions to the discussion and/or for sharing exceptional insights

*Sponsored Out-of-Class Events (12 points)*

Attendance will be taken at each sponsored event (whether the event is sponsored by the College of Social Sciences or by the Living-Learning Community). Each student in attendance will receive 4 points for attending the out-of-town guest's lecture and 2 points for attending each sponsored event, up to a maximum of 12 points per semester. In other words, each semester, to receive full credit you must either attend four sponsored events plus the guest lecture, or six sponsored events.

*S/U (Pass/Fail) Option*

During the Spring Semester (and *only* during the Spring Semester) students who wish may take this course on an S/U basis. To take the course S/U, you must fill out the appropriate form and file it with the Registrar's office no later than the last day of the seventh week of the semester (see the calendar at [http://registrar.fsu.edu/dir\\_class/spring/acad\\_cal.htm](http://registrar.fsu.edu/dir_class/spring/acad_cal.htm) for the precise date). If you take the course S/U, you will accumulate points and be graded throughout the semester as if you were taking the course for a letter grade. At the end of the semester, if you have at least 70 points you will receive an "S." If you have fewer than 70 points you will receive a "U."

## Class-by-Class Outline

### *Fall Semester*

Week 1 (August 27): Introductory Class

Weeks 2-4: Urbanization, Development, Social Change, and Pride in Place

Week 2 (September 10): *Sunshine State* (2002)

Week 3 (September 17): *Yulee's Gold* (1997)

Week 4 (September 24): Discussion Sections

Weeks 5-7: Migration, Assimilation, Culture, and Race

Week 5 (October 1): *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002)

Week 6 (October 8): *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004)

Week 7 (October 15): Discussion Sections

Weeks 8-10: Postcolonialism, Violence, and Nationalism

Week 8 (October 22): *Burn* (1969)

Week 9 (October 29): *Paradise Now* (2005)

Week 10 (November 5): Discussion Sections

Weeks 11-13: War

Week 11 (November 19): *Three Kings* (1999)

Week 12 (November 26): *No Man's Land* (2002)

Week 13 (December 3): Discussion Sections

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 12, 8:00-10:00 PM, Bellamy 021

### *Spring Semester*

Week 1 (January 7): Introductory Class

Weeks 2-4: Media Consolidation and Public Accountability

Week 2 (January 14): *Network* (1976)

Week 3 (January 28): *This Film is Not Yet Rated* (2005)

Week 4 (February 4): Discussion Sections

Weeks 5-7: The Political Process: Compromise, Honesty, and Representation

Week 5 (February 11): *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939)

Week 6 (February 18): *Bulworth* (1998)

Week 7 (February 25): Discussion Sections

Weeks 8-10: Elections and the Media

Week 8 (March 10): *Primary Colors* (1998)

Week 9 (March 17): *Wag the Dog* (1998)

Week 10 (March 24): Discussion Sections

Weeks 11-13: Elections and Society: Bureaucracy, Character, Charisma, and Leadership

Week 11 (March 31): *The Candidate* (1972)

Week 12 (April 7): Double Feature: *Election* (1999) and *You're Not Elected, Charley Brown* (1972)

Week 13 (April 14): Discussion Sections

Final Exam: TBA

## **Academic Honor Policy**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

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## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC); and
2. Bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for academic accommodations and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
97 Woodward Avenue, South  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
850-644-9566 (voice)  
850-644-8504 (TDD)  
[sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu)  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

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## **Code of Civility**

This colloquium, by definition, deals with controversial issues. You are expected to have opinions and to voice them. However, you also are expected to respect the opinions of your colleagues, even if you disagree with them. By residing in the living-learning community and enrolling in this colloquium, you are committing yourself to interact with your colleagues with civility and respect, and consistent failure to do so may result in your being asked to leave the community.

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### **Other Student Issues**

For other policies concerning your rights and responsibilities as a student, see the FSU Student Handbook, available online at [http://registrar.fsu.edu/student\\_handbook/handbook\\_tal.pdf](http://registrar.fsu.edu/student_handbook/handbook_tal.pdf).