POLITICS AND FILM

COURSE INFORMATION:
Title: Politics and Film
Course Number: PS 493 / FLM 493 / NORS 693
Credits: 3
Prerequisites: PS 100X Political Economy, or permission of the instructor
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Class Location: 401 Gruening Building

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:
Instructor: Dr. Brandon Boylan
Office Location: 603A Gruening Building
Office Hours: Monday, January 4 – Saturday, January 9 and Monday, January 11 – Wednesday, January 13, 2016; 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. and by appointment
Telephone: (907) 474-6503
E-Mail: bmboylan@alaska.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Harold Lasswell has famously argued that politics is the study of “who gets what, when, and how.” In this course, we use films as vehicles for surveying and discussing a broad range of concepts and themes related to political power discussed in the political science and related literature. Specifically, we explore the quest for political power and difficulties of governance, institutions of power (formal branches of government, the media, and interest groups), the politics of campaigning for public office, privacy and governmental surveillance, political violence, as well as indigenous governance and issues.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course uses a wide variety of instructional methods, including seminar and discussion, lecture, and film viewings.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To learn about theories and concepts related to political power through the close reading of academic scholarship and viewing of films with political messages
2. To evaluate political theses in film against the empirical record of real-life political processes
3. To develop students’ critical thinking, communication, and writing skills
**COURSE POLICIES**

**Academic Honesty**
You are expected to adhere to the provisions of the “Student Code of Conduct” as outlined in the UAF catalog, available at [www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html](http://www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html). In particular, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will lead to an F for the course, at a minimum. This includes plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or fabrication. Please talk to me if you are unsure about whether or not your approach constitutes academic dishonesty.

**Use of Electronics**
Use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during class. Failure to comply with this policy will lower your reading, preparation, and participation grade (see below). Laptop computers may be used for note-taking purposes only. If you are caught browsing the web, checking e-mail, etc., you will be asked to put your laptop away and your reading, preparation, and participation grade will be lowered.

**DISABILITY SERVICES**

Information for UAF’s Office of Disability Services is here:

208 Whitaker Building  
(907) 474-5655  
uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu  
http://www.uaf.edu/disability/

Please note that I will work with the UAF’s Office of Disabilities Services to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

- All course materials (readings and reviews) are posted on BlackBoard. There is no textbook required for the course.

**GRADING SCALE**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
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<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
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**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reading, Preparation, and Participation (50 points)**
You must come to class prepared to contribute to discussions and talk about readings and films. The effectiveness of the course is determined largely by how well you engage the reading material and films, assess key concepts, and participate. Your participation grade will be calculated by how much and how well you contribute to class discussions. The use of cell
phones and other electronic devices (apart from laptops for note-taking purposes) during class is prohibited and will lower your reading, preparation, and participation grade.

**Film Essays (50 points – 10 points each)**
During the course, we will cover nine themes. You must choose five of them and write one essay per theme connecting the concepts from assigned readings to the corresponding film. In other words, you will interpret the film through the lens of the arguments and points unveiled in the assigned readings. Each essay must be at least three pages in length (double spaced) and is due the day after we discuss the readings and film. Late essays will not be accepted.

**Mid-term Exam (50 points)**
The mid-term exam is scheduled for Friday, January 8. It will cover the first four days of class (readings and films). Make-up exams will not be given.

**Final Exam (50 points)**
The final exam is scheduled for Wednesday, January 13. It will cover the last five days of class (readings and films). Make-up exams will not be given.

***If you are taking this course as NORS 693, in addition to the above assignments, you must choose a film related to Arctic and Northern Studies (you must receive my approval of the film) and write a research paper in which you apply a theory of political science or related discipline in order to interpret the film and make an argument. Your paper must be at least fifteen pages in length and is due by the end of the session. Late papers will not be accepted.
**Schedule of Classes**

**Monday, January 4:** The Quest for Political Power

Readings:

Film:
- “Lord of the Flies” (1963; United Kingdom)

**Tuesday, January 5:** Institutions of Power

Readings:

Film:
- “Advise and Consent” (1962; United States)

**Wednesday, January 6:** The Politics of Presidential Campaigning

Readings:

Film:
- “Primary Colors” (1998; United States)

**Thursday, January 7:** Political Manipulation and the Media

Readings:

**Film:**
- “Wag the Dog” (1997; United States)

**Friday, January 8:** Interest Groups and the Fourth Branch of Government

**Readings:**

**Film:**
- “Thank You for Smoking” (2005; United States)

**Saturday, January 9:** Privacy and Surveillance

**Readings:**

**Film:**
- “Das Leben der Anderen” (2006; Germany)

**Monday, January 11:** The Fear of Warfare

**Readings:**

**Film:**
- “Dr. Strangelove” (1964; United Kingdom and United States)

**Tuesday, January 12:** The Logics of Terrorism

**Readings:**

**Film:**
- “The Terrorist” (1998; India)
**Wednesday, January 13:** Indigenous Issues in the Arctic

**Readings:**

**Film:**
- “Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner” (2001; Canada)