

**Department of Political Science  
Rutgers University-Newark  
Politics and Literature  
Spring 2022**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1.15am-3.15pm; and by appointment

This course examines the intersections between literature and politics by looking at how literary works offer representations and figurations of political life. Our inquiry would be framed from the perspective of political theory and how it invites the critical study of political thought. Usually, courses on the intersections of literature and politics tend to emphasize the politics of reading writing or writing and reading as political acts. Students, accordingly, are expected to explore the textual politics of literary works. Likewise, students are invited to critically explore depictions of cultural practices and ideologies as imagined and represented by a literary work: say, representations of the nation and national identity, peace and war); or how particular texts are cast as interventions at once invoking and claiming the idea of a public (sphere/s); and how a literary work frames questions of community or division (including race and ethnicity). Finally, literary approaches to the intersection between literature and politics focus their analytical beam on the cultural repercussions of *politics as such*: party, interest group and faction, polemic and censorship; the sponsorship or suppression of literary work by government (or opposition); and actual political participation by writers, as politicians or government officials.

While sharing some of the concerns associated with the aforementioned approaches, our course would be sharply focused on how some of the main concepts, themes and figures, that are constitutive of political life are represented and problematized in literary works. This approach is not only consistent with what is known as the western tradition of political theory – which is constituted by different genres of reflection and writing, as a figure like Niccoló Machiavelli, the archetypical political theorist who reflected on political life by means of different literary genres, say, comedies, history and poetry – but also seeks to think politically about the way literary works re-present political life. Among the themes to be explored are how power and authority, imperialism and violence, war and revolution, political ethics and responsibility, equality and collective life, are formulated in a variety of works, which include poetry, short stories, plays, and novels.

**Course Schedule:**

1/18	Introduction
1/20	T. Eagleton, <i>How to Read Literature</i> , 1-44 (PDF)
1/25	T. Eagleton, <i>How to Read Literature</i> , 45-116

1/27	T. Eagleton, <i>How to Read Literature</i> , 117-174
2/1	T. Eagleton, <i>How to Read Literature</i> , 175-206
2/3	J. M. Coetzee, <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i>
2/8	Cont. J. M. Coetzee, <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i>
2/10	L. Tolstoy, <i>Hadji Murad</i>
2/15	Cont. L. Tolstoy, <i>Hadji Murad</i>
2/17	FIRST Essay DUE
2/22	Selections from B. Brecht's Poems (PDF)
2/24	B. Brecht, <i>St. Joan of the Stockyards</i>
3/1	Cont. B. Brecht, <i>St. Joan of the Stockyards</i>
3/3	T. Morrison, <i>Home</i>
3/8	Cont. T. Morrison, <i>Home</i>
3/10	NO CLASS
3/12-3/20	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
3/22	R. Bolaño, <i>By Night in Chile</i>
3/24	Cont. R. Bolaño, <i>By Night in Chile</i>
3/29	SECOND ESSAY DUE
3/31	J. L. Borges, "Utopia of a Tired Man" (PDF)
4/5	Cont. J. L. Borges, "Utopia of a Tired Man" (PDF)
4/7	A. Kluge, <i>Air Raid</i>
4/12	Cont. A. Kluge, <i>Air Raid</i>
4/14	S. de Beauvoir, <i>The Blood of Others</i> (PDF)
4/19	Cont. S. de Beauvoir, <i>The Blood of Others</i> (PDF)

- 4/21 F. Kafka, "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk" (PDF)  
4/26 R. Bolaño, "Rat Police" (PDF)  
4/28 LAST DAY OF CLASS

### **FINAL ESSAY due on TBA**

### **Required Texts**

- B. Brecht, *St Joan of the Stockyards* (Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama)  
R. Bolaño, *By Night in Chile* (New Directions)  
J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (Penguin)  
T. Eagleton, *How to Read Literature* (Yale University Press)  
A. Kluge, *Air Raid* (Seagull)  
T. Morrison, *Home* (Vintage)  
L. Tolstoy, *Hadji Murad* (Vintage)

The required texts are available for purchase at any online bookstore (abebooks.com, amazon.com, etc.). Please read the texts in the assigned translations/editions, otherwise it will be difficult to follow the lectures and discussions. Translations/editions often vary significantly. All other readings (PDF) can be found on the Course page on *Canvas*. Please download all readings from *Canvas* when you register for the course, to be prepared in the event of a service disruption.

**(For In-Person Instruction) This is an electronic free classroom. So, please, no phones, laptops, or electronic books are allowed; you must bring a hard copy of the assigned reading to class. You'd lose 2% of your final grade every time you show up to class without the reading in hand. Make sure that you show me the reading when I call your name at the beginning of each class.**

### **TECHNICAL PROBLEMS**

In the online environment, there is always a possibility of technical issues (e.g., lost connection, hardware or software failure). Many of these can be resolved relatively quickly, but if you wait to the last minute before due dates, the chance of these glitches affecting your success are greatly increased. Please plan appropriately. If a problem occurs, it is essential you take immediate action to resolve the problem. Technical questions should be directed to the Student Help Desk at:

[help@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@newark.rutgers.edu)  
973-353-5083  
Hill Hall 109  
<http://ncs.newark.rutgers.edu/hd>

### **REQUIREMENTS**

All students are responsible for the required readings and for participation in class discussions. Your written work consists of three 5-page essays. Each essay comprises 30%

of your final grade (three essays = 90% of your grade). The remaining 10% of your final grade will consist of participation/attendance.

This is how the 10% for participation/attendance works: if you participate, your grade will be raised (5 points overall); if you violate the attendance policy, your grade will be lowered (5 points overall). Namely, you get 5 points for attending, and an additional 5 for participating.

You are permitted three absences for the semester. Any additional absences will result in the aforementioned penalty. A pattern of unexcused absences will result in the student failing the course (you will get an “F” as your final grade). **I reserve the right to conduct oral examinations on your written work.**

## **ASSESSMENT**

The course is designed to help students develop the reading, writing, and oral skills they need in order to precede through the university:

**1. Conscious and critical reading:** We will discuss effective reading strategies (to find “main arguments” or identify evidence, for example). We will practice effective reading approaches to theoretical texts.

**2. Clear and effective writing:** This course will help students to improve their ability to express themselves clearly on paper. It will provide students with the opportunity to practice revising their written work in order to improve the organization and presentation of their ideas. In writing, they will work toward being able to use evidence appropriately in order to deal with and apply complex ideas accurately.

**3. Critical thinking:** In writing or speaking, students will learn to be active, critically informed individuals. This course will teach students how to approach interpretative challenges by providing them with a range of intellectual resources that will allow them to respond critically to these challenges. Among these intellectual resources are the socio-cultural background, the historical context, and the knowledge of critical concepts related to the texts under study. These intellectual resources will foster a climate of critical inquiry.

**4. Self-assessment:** Students will work on becoming conscious of the strengths and learning skills they already have, and they will set goals for improving their skills. At various points during the semester, students will evaluate their progress in improving their learning skills by reviewing the work they have completed thus far during the term.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

Students are also expected to read the material assigned in the course; log in to the course at least three times per week to ensure you do not miss pertinent postings, messages, or announcements.

## **Late Submissions**

Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments are due at the time and date listed in the syllabus. If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, please inform the professor **prior** to the date the work is due. Late work will result in points taken off, a lowering of the assignment grade, and/or an “F,” depending on the assignment.

## **EVALUATION**

### **I. Essays**

Students will write three essays (5 pages each) in which they should critically address a question formulated by the professor about the texts under study. The answer to this question must be in the form of an academic essay. Grades on the essay will be based on how students:

- 1. develop an argument about the text and state it clearly in their thesis;**
- 2. support that argument with evidence from close reading of the text;**
- 3. use the proper academic vocabulary with precision;**
- 4. bring curiosity about language and concepts;**
- 5. write responsibly using the dictionary;**
- 6. do it all in clear and precise English.**

**FORMAT: 5-page double-spaced Times New Roman, point 12, Chicago Style:**

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

Essay Topics/Prompts will be made available on Canvas two-weeks before the Essay is due.

## **EVALUATION RUBRIC**

Essays (30% each)	90%
Participation/Attendance	10%

## **Cautionary Note/Important Advice**

There are several things that you should keep in mind to avoid unpleasant surprises. I expect students to critically ponder the arguments each thinker presents and to make an effort to understand these arguments with the goal of developing a rigorous and informed critique. Second, the text under scrutiny is sometimes dry, difficult, and dense, therefore, it is important that you have your thoughts together when you work your way through these texts. I encourage you to do the readings when you are awake, and in an environment conducive to study, otherwise it will be difficult to keep up with the reading.

## **Academic Integrity**

All work you submit for the course is expected to be your own. Cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation) will lead to failing the course and action from the University. Whenever you quote, closely paraphrase, refer to or make use of arguments or examples from other sources in your written work, you must cite the appropriate source in a footnote, endnote, or in parentheses at the end of the sentence,

depending of what citation style you are using. Please see the university's guidelines on student conduct:

<http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct>

Multimedia presentations about academic integrity may be found at

<http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html> and

[http://wps.prenhall.com/hss\\_understand\\_plagiarism\\_1/0,6622,427064-,00.html](http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_understand_plagiarism_1/0,6622,427064-,00.html)

### **Grading Response Time**

Assignments should be graded within two weeks of the due date. Assignments that are lengthy may take longer to grade.

### **Grading Scale**

All grades will be posted to Canvas. The final average will determine the final grade, with letter grades corresponding to the levels of achievement established in the college-wide policy determined by the University's Faculty Senate, as follows:

<b>A</b>	90-100	achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
<b>B</b>	80-87 (88-89 B+)	achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
<b>C</b>	70-77 (78-79 C+)	achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
<b>D</b>	60-69	achievement that is worth of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements
<b>F/N</b>	0-59	represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit; or (2) was not completed and there was not agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (incomplete).

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Communication Policy**

- Course announcements. Announcements will be posted on Canvas and e-mailed to students. You are responsible for providing the instructor with a current e-mail address that you check regularly, and for reading all announcements posted by the instructor. You should log into our course and your e-mail at least three times per week to check for new announcements and/or messages.
- Course-related questions. Please post course-related questions to the Questions and Answers Discussion Board on Canvas. Asking course-related questions in this way allows other participants with the same question to benefit from the responses. For this reason, please make sure you review this forum prior to posting a question; it may have already been asked and answered in previous posts.

- Personal and/or confidential matters. For personal and/or confidential matters, please e-mail the instructor at [a.vazquez@rutgers.edu](mailto:a.vazquez@rutgers.edu). For course-related questions, please use the Questions and Answers Discussion Board within the course. Except for weekends and holidays, the instructor typically will respond to email messages within 24 business hours.

### **Netiquette**

“Netiquette” is network etiquette, the dos and don’ts of online communication. When posting to our discussion board or communicating with others in our class, please remain courteous. Below are the guidelines we will follow in this course (adapted from <http://www.indiana.edu/~icy/netiquette.html#rules>):

1. Make your messages easier to read by making your paragraphs short and to the point.
2. Use normal capitalization. TYPING IN ALL CAPS IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING ON THE INTERNET. Messages in all lowercase letters can be difficult to read.
3. Avoid using slang and abbreviations because they can lead to misinterpretation. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism. When being humorous, use emoticons to express humor. (tilt your head to the left to see the emoticon smile) :-)
4. Never give your userID or password to another person. System administrators that need to access your account for maintenance or to correct problems will have full privileges to your account.
5. Respect the fact that the class list is a closed discussion; do not forward mail from your classmates to others without their permission.
6. Be professional and courteous. In an online forum or newsgroup, debate is welcome, but be tactful in responding to others. Remember that there's a person (or a whole class) at the receiving end of your post.
7. Keep your questions and comments relevant to the focus of the discussion group. Information intended for an individual or small group of individuals should be emailed to those people directly.
8. If you are responding to a message from someone else, briefly summarize her or his post.
9. When posting a question to the discussion group, request that responses be directed to you personally. Post a summary or answer to your question to the group.
10. If you quote a previous post (by using the reply function for example), quote only enough to make your own point.
11. Include your signature at the bottom of Email messages when communicating with people who may not know you personally or broadcasting to a dynamic group of subscribers.
12. Be respectful of other points of view. Remember that these discussions are “public” and meant for constructive exchanges. Treat the others on the list as you would want them to treat you.
13. If you want to get in touch with only one person in the class, send a message to that individual's e-mail address, not to the entire discussion list.

14. When replying to a message posted to a discussion group, check the address to be certain it's going to the intended location (person or group). It can be very embarrassing if they reply incorrectly and post a personal message to the entire discussion group that was intended for an individual.
15. Think and proofread before you submit!

### **Time Commitment**

To be successful in this course, you will need to commit to an estimated average of 9 hours of coursework per week for the fifteen-week semester. (Some weeks will require more time, some less.) This is the same amount of time that you would need to commit to in a traditional, face-to-face three-credit class.

### **Dropping the Course**

In order to withdraw from a course, it is not sufficient to stop posting assignments or contributing to discussion. In accord with university policy, students wishing to withdraw from a course must do so formally through the Registrar's office. It is the student's responsibility to complete all forms. If this is not done, the instructor must assign a grade of F at the end of the semester.

### **Required technological skills**

- Ability to utilize Canvas and Word Processor

### **Required equipment/materials (for Remote sessions)**

- Computer, Internet access, webcam with microphone OR headphones with microphone
- Software that can save a file in the format of Microsoft Word or PDF

### **Resources for Students**

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- Students with Disabilities. Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:ods@newark.rutgers.edu).
- Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations. Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious

observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or [DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu).

- Counseling Services. Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/>.
- Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries. Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.
- Students who Are Pregnant. The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu).
- Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment. Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). To submit an incident report: [tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm](http://tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm). To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does **NOT** have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or [run.vpva@rutgers.edu](mailto:run.vpva@rutgers.edu).

Additional resources available to students include the following:

- Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)  
Room 140, Bradley Hall  
(973) 353-5608  
<https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center>
- Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops)  
Room 126, Conklin Hall  
(973) 353-5847  
[nwc@rutgers.edu](mailto:nwc@rutgers.edu)  
<https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center>  
Introduction: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/DaAYHC5aUHs?rel=0>
- Rutgers University Libraries  
Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email and chat. Information about the library can be found here: <http://libguides.rutgers.edu/intro>  
Please review this 2-minute video about the library online resources: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJvFVqjz8Dg>

### **In-Class Discussions**

Our classroom discussions are open, frank, and casual. Please respect the perspectives and inquiries of your peers and instructor. Do not interrupt someone who is speaking and refrain from deliberately demeaning language or intimidating behavior. Do not read newspapers or other unrelated materials during class. **Students found doing so will be dismissed.**

**Please make sure that cellphones are turned off. If your cellphone rings during class you will be dismissed. There are No exceptions to this rule. All written work is to be typed and double-spaced. Incomplete grades will NOT be automatically given; these will be granted only in reference to particular situations and at the instructor's discretion.**

### **COVID-19 Protocols**

In order to protect the health and wellbeing of all members of the Rutgers-Newark community, masks must be worn by all persons inside campus buildings when in the presence of others, and in buildings in non-private enclosed settings (e.g., common workspaces, workstations, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Masks should securely cover the nose and mouth. Masks must be worn during class meetings. Each day before you arrive on campus or leave your residence hall, you must complete the brief survey on the My Campus Pass symptom checker self-screening app found at: [myRutgers Portal](#).