



Political Science 2142A (570)
POLITICS AND POP CULTURE
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Chater
Email: achater@uwo.ca

Course Information

Mode of Instruction: in-person

Calendar Description:

This course explores politics and popular culture through (and in) film, television, as well as digital and print media (advertisements, blogs etc.). The course will acquaint students with some major political theories, as well as examine selected issues such as capitalism, urbanism, consumerism, war, terrorism, transhumanism, technology and science.

Extra Information: 2 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: POLISCI

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Political Science 2142A: Politics and Pop Culture

Course Information

Course Name, Number and Section: Politics and Pop Culture, POLISCI 2142A, Section 570

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Chater

Email: achater@uwo.ca

Mode of instruction: In-person

Office hours information can be found on OWL Brightspace.

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course explores politics and popular culture through (and in) film, television, as well as digital and print media (advertisements, blogs etc.). The course will acquaint students with some major political theories, as well as examine selected issues such as capitalism, urbanism, consumerism, war, terrorism, transhumanism, technology and science.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Apply major analytical theories of media and demonstrate a thorough understanding by creating high-quality summaries;
- Analyze how pop culture can create or re-enforce myths about politics and apply this learning in written reflection;
- Examine the purpose of satire and evaluate current examples during classroom discussion;
- Describe the purpose of framing and interpret how pop culture can create frames by undertaking analysis in both written reflection and classroom discussion;
- Collect high-quality scholarly sources to support the creation of analysis of pop culture's influence on politics.

Required Course Materials

Required readings and videos will be posted on the class website. There is no cost to access these materials.

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

This class will take place in-person, during our scheduled class time. Each week, students will:

- Download the weekly materials from our class website;
- Carefully read an assigned reading or watch an assigned movie before coming to class;
- Complete a written reflection activity before class;
- Listen to a lecture and take notes to add class material to lecture slides, and;
- Take part in in-class participation activities and discussions.

Students should come to class ready to participate, having read the assigned reading or watched the assigned video for the week. Class or tutorial may take place on Zoom if necessary (for example, due to bad weather).

Evaluation Breakdown

Weekly Written Reflection (6 x 5% = 30% of final mark)

Each week, students will be assigned a question to answer or given a task to complete. Write an approximately one-page response answering the question or completing the task. Complete only six of ten reflections of your choice throughout the term. These are due by the beginning of class each week via the class Brightspace website. There is no late submission. Double-space your work and hand in each reflection in PDF format. The goal is to build reading, research and reflection skills, as well as to apply course concepts and theory.

Mid-Term Test (30% of final mark)

Students will complete a mid-term test during class time. It will consist of written questions. Requests to write a make-up test at a later date must be approved by an Academic Advisor and have supporting documentation. The goal is to show mastery of course material.

The make-up date for those with an approved accommodation will be November 6. Please note, Friday make-up exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Final Exam (30% of final mark)

Students will complete a final exam during the December exam period. It will consist of written questions. The goal is to show mastery of course material.

Participation (10% of final mark)

Students will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of their participation in the classroom. Students can miss one class without losing marks. The goal is to create a lively classroom environment.

Assignment Submission and Academic Consideration

To receive an accommodation for all assignments, documentation from an academic advisor is required. For more information, please see the Academic Policies and Regulations section at the end of this course outline or consult the Academic Calendar.

Academic Integrity

Statement on AI Use

Using artificial intelligence (AI) in any context in this course is prohibited. AI includes but is not limited to ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Google Translate, QuillBot and certain features of Grammarly. This includes but is not limited to using AI to generate text, summarize text, edit text, conduct research, find articles or brainstorm ideas. Using generative AI is a scholastic offence and is subject to the penalties outlined in the academic calendar. When you use AI to do your work, you are submitting work for academic credit that is not your own.

Statement on Copyright and Intellectual Property

PowerPoint lecture slides and notes, lists of readings, in-class activities, assignment guidelines and other components of the course materials are the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction through audio-recording, video-recording, photographing, sharing on social media, sharing with AI programs or posting on course-sharing websites is an infringement of copyright and is prohibited.

Statement on Turnitin Use

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Statement on Audio/Video Recording or Streaming of Classes

If necessary, some of the classes for this course may be recorded and streamed. The data captured may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers. The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings or streaming. Participants in this course are not permitted to privately record class sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, and/or the student has the prior written permission of the instructor.

Schedule of Classes

Week	Date	Topic	Reading or Film
1	September 14	Introduction	Course outline
2	September 21	Pop culture vs. politics	Read "So, How Does Pop Culture Relate to World Politics?" by Jutta Weldes and Christina Rowley (2019)
3	September 28	Mythmaking and politics	Read "Myth Today" by Roland Barthes (1957)
4	October 5	Mythmaking and war	Watch <i>The Bridge On The River Kwai</i> (1957)
<i>No class October 12 due to reading week</i>			
5	October 19	Feminism in music	Read "The Problem With No Name" by Betty Friedan (1963)
6	October 26	Mid-term test	Study!
7	November 2	Satire on terrorism	Read "The Nature of Satire" by Northrop Frye (1944)
8	November 9	Satire on capitalism	Watch <i>Robocop</i> (1987)
9	November 16	Framing of artificial intelligence	Read "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm" by R.M. Entman (1993)
10	November 23	Framing of Arctic Canada	Read "The New Knowledge Politics of Digital Colonialism" by Jason Young (2019)
11	November 30	Pop culture vs. politicians	Watch <i>The Candidate</i> (1972)
12	December 7	Review	Study!

Note

A weekly written reflection is due each week except September 14 (week 1) and October 26 (week 6). Complete only six of ten reflections of your choice throughout the term.

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of

such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:
<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can

contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports - TurnItIn.html.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or

not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.