

Political Science 391: Advanced Seminar on Current Events
Brigham Young University
Fall 2020

Instructor: Jay Goodliffe
Seminar: Friday, 9 am – 5 pm
Office Hours: TBA
Email: goodliffe@byu.edu (preferred way to contact me with academic,
non-emergency matters)
Phone: [REDACTED]

Course Overview

This course is designed to help you understand how local, national, and international public policy works. The overarching goal of the seminar is to learn how public policy is shaped and to expose you to information from experts, both in person (or remotely) and in print. You will have the unique opportunity to listen to first-hand accounts from government and non-government officials who participate in policymaking, as well as engaging the historical background related to critical policy issues. The seminar will engage questions including who shapes policy and how; what makes advocacy successful and/or influential; and what the major issues facing the country are—local, national, and international, and how they are intertwined—many of which are being highlighted by the 2020 presidential campaign.

The seminar will be conducted remotely primarily on Fridays during the semester. *You will need to reserve all day Friday* for seminar meetings and briefings with experts from a variety of fields. As the scheduling constraints of our guests require, *we may hold portions of the class during weekday evenings*. Friday course time will usually include multiple sessions. Much of that time will be classroom instruction and briefings with practitioners in the policy process. Your flexibility on Fridays, and occasionally on weekday evenings, is essential to be able to bring in the best policy guests. I will try my best to let you know at least a week in advance what times we will be meeting on Friday or during the week. Please note, however, that our guests' schedules may change, necessitating adjustments to our schedule and preparatory readings.

Learning Objectives

- Students will be expected to examine policies and institutions with the intent of seeing how the overall policy-making processes and institutions might be ameliorated.
- Students will identify some best practices which might improve both the overall U.S. system of governance and the ability of government officials in Washington, D.C., to represent the citizens of the United States more effectively.

- Students will remember and apply to their studies what is cited in *Doctrine and Covenants* 134:1: “We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that He holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.”

Expectations, Responsibilities, and Course Policies

Student Responsibilities: Attendance and quality participation are essential to success in this seminar; failure to attend required seminar meetings and briefings, as well as lack of preparation for and engagement in the seminar meetings, will negatively affect your grade. Only absences due to serious illness or work required by your internship supervisor will be excused, and must be approved by me in advance. Job interviews, family events, and travel are not acceptable reasons for missing seminar meetings and briefings. In addition, you are responsible for the information and requirements outlined in the most recent version of the Washington Seminar Student Handbook.

Code of Conduct for Briefings: All briefings are off-the-record and not for attribution unless announced otherwise. This means that you cannot record the briefing or reference the briefing—either positively or critically—in a public forum. This includes, but is not limited to, social media (e.g. blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram). Such behavior is unprofessional and will negatively affect your participation grade in the seminar. The same principles should be observed with your internship provider. We are holding the briefings remotely. Always arrive (i.e. sign in) early (at least 5 minutes, and more if required); arriving late is discourteous to the speaker and reflects poorly on BYU. Always dress professionally and act appropriately at the briefings. Keep your video on. Texting, reading, multitasking, and other inattentive behavior is unacceptable—even if a speaker is less dynamic than expected. Be professional and engaged throughout the presentation. After the briefing, questions should be asked respectfully and should be reasonable. You may disagree with the views of some speakers—indeed, this is done by design in many instances. You are welcome and encouraged to challenge the assertions, facts, or assumptions of any speaker; however, this should be done in a polite and courteous manner. Since our class size is small, I expect every student to ask a question in every briefing. Please allow others the opportunity to engage with the speaker before asking a second question. Inappropriate behavior—especially repeated offenses—will be penalized and will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

Preparation for Briefings: Seminar participants should always know something about the speaker and the topic. Many of the assigned readings will help you develop foundational knowledge of the issue being addressed, but you will be expected to do additional preparation as well (e.g. regular reading of the *Washington Post* or another major national newspaper, like the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*, for relevant material, background research on the speaker and topic that goes beyond the assigned readings). At least once during the semester each participant will have the opportunity to introduce one of our seminar speakers. Introductions should be professional and reflect thorough

preparation.

Late Penalties: Failure to submit any of the writing assignments on time will result in a grade penalty. Each 24-hour period after the stated due date will incur a penalty of two letter grades (e.g. B to D), NO EXCEPTIONS. Excuses such as getting engaged, broken-hearted roommates, computer catastrophes, or “I had an unexpected assignment for my internship,” will not cut it. If Learning Suite crashes, email me the assignment as an attachment. Plan ahead. You are an adult; you are responsible for your own success or failure.

Course Communication: This seminar will be on Learning Suite, so please be sure to check it regularly. Outside of the seminars and office hours, the best way to communicate with me about academic matters is by email.

Course Content: As we explore questions of local, national, and international policy, we will read, listen to, watch, and discuss material that could potentially be shocking or even offensive (morally or politically) to some of you. The course material has not been selected for your entertainment or comfort, but rather for your education. It aims to expand your understanding beyond your own experience. Course materials and discussions may at times be disquieting or challenge your assumptions and/or beliefs and viewpoints, but at the same time will be descriptive of the human condition and relevant to the events and themes central to the course. If you have questions or concerns about the course content, please discuss them with me as soon as possible.

Deliberation Guidelines: To facilitate productive and open discussions about sensitive topics about which there are differing opinions, members of the BYU community should:

1. Remember that we are each responsible for enabling a productive, respectful dialogue.
2. To enable time for everyone to speak, strive to be concise with your thoughts.
3. Respect all speakers by listening actively.
4. Treat others with the respect that you would like them to treat you with, regardless of your differences.
5. Do not interrupt others.
6. Always try to understand what is being said before you respond.
7. Ask for clarification instead of making assumptions.
8. When countering an idea, or making one initially, demonstrate that you are listening to what is being said by others. Try to validate other positions as you assert your own, which aids in dialogue, versus attack.
9. Under no circumstances should an argument continue out of the classroom when someone does not want it to. Extending these conversations beyond class can be productive, but we must agree to do so respectfully, ethically, and with attention to individuals' requests for confidentiality and discretion.
10. Remember that exposing yourself to different perspectives helps you to evaluate your own beliefs more clearly and learn new information.
11. Remember that just because you do not agree with a person's statements, it does not mean that you cannot get along with that person.

12. Speak with your professor privately if you feel that the classroom environment has become hostile, biased, or intimidating.

Adapted from the Deliberation Guidelines published by The Center for Democratic Deliberation.

(<http://cdd.la.psu.edu/education/The%20CDD%20Deliberation%20Guidelines.pdf/view?searchterm=deliberation%20guidelines>)

Respectful Environment: "Sadly, from time to time, we do hear reports of those who are at best insensitive and at worst insulting in their comments to and about others... We hear derogatory and sometimes even defamatory comments about those with different political, athletic, or ethnic views or experiences. Such behavior is completely out of place at BYU, and I enlist the aid of all to monitor carefully and, if necessary, correct any such that might occur here, however inadvertent or unintentional. I worry particularly about demeaning comments made about the career or major choices of women or men either directly or about members of the BYU community generally. We must remember that personal agency is a fundamental principle and that none of us has the right or option to criticize the lawful choices of another." (President Cecil O. Samuelson, Annual University Conference, August 24, 2010) "Occasionally, we ... hear reports that our female faculty feel disrespected, especially by students, for choosing to work at BYU, even though each one has been approved by the BYU Board of Trustees. Brothers and sisters, these things ought not to be. Not here. Not at a university that shares a constitution with the School of the Prophets." (Vice President John S. Tanner, Annual University Conference, August 24, 2010)

Academic Civility and Etiquette: Feel free to express opinions that are contrary to what I say, what other students or the guest speakers opine, or what the readings argue. Often, it is through debates over interpretation of contemporary issues or historical material that clarity (if not consensus) emerges. Also, questions and points of clarification are encouraged. Remember, however, that this is an academic environment. A spectrum of opinions exists on any given subject and it is vital to respect the opinions of others even if you are convinced that their view is totally, completely, and unconditionally wrong. Personal attacks or criticisms based on gender, ethnicity, race, political or religious beliefs, etc., are not consistent with treating each individual as a child of Heavenly Parents. In addition, please use proper forms of academic address in class and in course-related communication. In a university setting, unless a professor tells you otherwise, refer to them as Professor or Doctor and their last name (e.g. Dr. Goodliffe or Professor Goodliffe rather than Mr. Goodliffe, Jay, Brother Goodliffe, or something else). The same principle holds true for your professional encounters in your internship. Avoid being overly familiar in your office and with those with whom you interact—for example, first names should only be used if invited to do so.

Honor Code: In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others

and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and every instructor's expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Academic Honesty: The first injunction of the Honor Code is the call to "be honest." Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. "President David O. McKay taught that character is the highest aim of education" (The Aims of a BYU Education, p.6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim. BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.

Plagiarism: Intentional plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft that violates widely recognized principles of academic integrity as well as the Honor Code. Such plagiarism may subject the student to appropriate disciplinary action administered through the university Honor Code Office, in addition to academic sanctions that may be applied by an instructor. Inadvertent plagiarism, which may not be a violation of the Honor Code, is nevertheless a form of intellectual carelessness that is unacceptable in the academic community. Plagiarism of any kind is completely contrary to the established practices of higher education where all members of the university are expected to acknowledge the original intellectual work of others that is included in their own work. In some cases, plagiarism may also involve violations of copyright law.

Intentional Plagiarism-Intentional plagiarism is the deliberate act of representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own without providing proper attribution to the author through quotation, reference, or footnote. Intentional plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) borrowing a friend's paper, lifting text from digital sources (including "open access" material and the internet), using "paper mills," and reproducing the ideas and phrases of other authors without credit. **Inadvertent Plagiarism-**Inadvertent plagiarism involves the inappropriate, but non-deliberate, use of another's words, ideas, or data without proper attribution. Inadvertent plagiarism usually results from an ignorant failure to follow established rules for documenting sources or from simply not being sufficiently careful in research and writing. Although not a violation of the Honor Code, inadvertent plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct for which an instructor can impose appropriate academic sanctions. Students who are in doubt as to whether they are providing proper attribution have the responsibility to consult with their instructor and obtain guidance.

Examples of plagiarism include: **Direct Plagiarism-**The verbatim copying of an original source without acknowledging the source. **Paraphrased Plagiarism-**The paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, of ideas from another that the reader might mistake for the author's own. **Plagiarism Mosaic-**The borrowing of words, ideas, or data from an original source and blending this original material with one's own without acknowledging the source. **Insufficient Acknowledgement-**The partial or incomplete attribution of words,

ideas, or data from an original source. Plagiarism may occur with respect to unpublished as well as published material. Copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own individual work without proper attribution is a serious form of plagiarism.

In addition, in this course, you cannot “self-plagiarize;” that is, you cannot use a paper from another course (past, present, or future) for this course, and vice versa. All course work must be created exclusively and originally for this course.

Gender Equity and Sexual Misconduct: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (an important piece of legislation in American history) prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. Intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education (admissions, programs, sports, etc.), Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment, including sexual violence, committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Brigham Young University prohibits unlawful sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. The university also prohibits sexual harassment-including sexual violence-committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of “Sexual Misconduct” prohibited by the university.

University policy requires all university employees in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report all incidents of Sexual Misconduct that come to their attention in any way, including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Incidents of Sexual Misconduct should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at t9coordinator@byu.edu or (801) 422-8692. Reports may also be submitted through EthicsPoint at <https://titleix.byu.edu/report> or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours a day).

BYU offers confidential resources for those affected by Sexual Misconduct, including the university's Victim Advocate, as well as a number of non-confidential resources and services that may be helpful. Additional information about Title IX, the university's Sexual Misconduct Policy, reporting requirements, and resources can be found at <http://titleix.byu.edu> or by contacting the university's Title IX Coordinator.

Student Disability: Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Whether an impairment is substantially limiting depends on its nature and severity, its duration or expected duration, and its permanent or expected permanent or long-term impact. Examples include vision or hearing impairments, physical disabilities, chronic illnesses, emotional disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety), learning disorders, and attention disorders (e.g., ADHD). If you have a disability which impairs your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 801-422-2767 to request a reasonable accommodation. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. If you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, please contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895, D-285 ASB for help.

Mental Health: Mental health concerns and stressful life events can affect students' academic performance and quality of life. BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, 1500 WSC, 801-422-3035, caps.byu.edu) provides individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as stress management services. These services are confidential and are provided by the university at no cost for full-time students. For general information please visit <https://caps.byu.edu>; for more immediate concerns please visit <http://help.byu.edu>.

Diversity and Inclusion: In the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, our classroom participation and behavior are guided by our mission statement,¹ the BYU honor code,² and principles of Christian discipleship.³ It is imperative that we value and respect every person as a child of Heavenly Parents who has divine worth. Consequently, we need to take steps to listen to, learn from, and love one another by striving to consider thoughtfully the opinions of others and use language that is polite, considerate, and courteous even when we strongly disagree. It is essential to create an educational environment that ensures "the gift of personal dignity for every child of God."⁴ This includes embracing one another compassionately and "eliminat[ing] any prejudice, including racism, sexism, and nationalism⁵...regardless of age, personal circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, or other unique challenges."⁶ It is vital to delight in individuality and welcome diverse perspectives and experiences as we "work tirelessly to build bridges of understanding rather than creating walls of segregation."⁷ To accomplish these goals we seek unity in higher principles of equity, charity, collaboration, and inclusiveness in order to build an environment in which all students, faculty, and staff can participate in, contribute to, and benefit equally from the academic community.

Inappropriate Use of Course Materials: All course materials (e.g., outlines, handouts, syllabi, exams, quizzes, PowerPoint presentations, lectures, audio and video recordings, etc.) are proprietary. Students are prohibited from posting or selling any such course materials without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course. To do so is a violation of the Brigham Young University Honor Code.

¹ "provide an education that helps students become informed citizens and thoughtful leaders who make the communities and families in which we live more just, equitable, and happy."

² "[we live] in accordance with the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ and strive to maintain the highest standards in [our] personal conduct regarding honor, integrity, morality, and consideration of others."

³ "The Creator of us all calls on each of us to abandon attitudes of prejudice against any group of God's children." President Russell M. Nelson, News Release, 2020; <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/president-nelson-shares-social-post-encouraging-understanding-and-civility>; https://medium.com/@Ch_JesusChrist/locking-arms-for-racial-harmony-in-america-2f62180abf37

"he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile." (2 Nephi 26:33)

⁴ Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Perfect Brightness of Hope", April, 2020

⁵ Elder M. Russell Ballard, "The Trek Continues", October, 2017

⁶ President Russell M. Nelson, "The Love and Laws of God", September, 2019

⁷ President Russell M. Nelson, "The Love and Laws of God", September, 2019

Assignments and Grading

Please be aware that your previous academic preparation (e.g. writing and research skills) and effort expended will affect your performance in this course. In addition, your *perception* of your effort—by itself—is not enough to justify a distinguished grade. Remember that in the university setting (at least a university of BYU's caliber), students are graded on excellence, not effort. Your grade will be determined on your performance in the following areas:

Attendance and Participation (25%):

See above for the expectations for attendance and participation. Your attendance and participation grade will not simply be determined by whether you are present and participating but by whether or not you are prepared, whether or not you have completed the readings, and are asking informed questions that demonstrate that or not. This portion of your grade will also include discussion leading on the readings.

Because this semester is taking place remotely, we will not have the ability to meet informally in person throughout the week in the Barlow Center. We will instead meet informally remotely. Each week, there will be a Digital Dialog (on Learning Suite) on current events. Each week there will also be discussion groups that will meet on Zoom to talk about issues that will inform the discussion for that week's briefers. Your grade will depend on your active participation in these activities.

Pre-briefing Reading Responses (25%):

Reading responses are due Thursday mornings at 8 a.m. on Learning Suite. Some readings are assigned (by me or the briefers) to help you think about the topics addressed in the briefings. We usually have two shorter readings for each speaker. Some readings help you prepare for writing assignments. We usually have a chapter of Graham and a chapter of Austin. I want you to make connections between the new things you are learning and the things you already know. Short reading responses are designed to do this. For each assigned reading, write a paragraph that takes one of the following four forms:

1. **Intra-class connection.** Example: This reading reminded me of the earlier reading by.... The connection I see is.... This author reads the evidence differently because....
2. **Cross-curriculum connections.** Example: This reading got me thinking about a similar problem last semester in my economics class....
3. **Data connections.** Example: This reading implied that all politicians are genuinely seeking to pursue policy goals, yet *The Washington Post* just carried a story reporting that stocks "picked" by members of Congress beat the market...
4. **Puzzlement.** Example: This reading argued that proposed policy changes should be narrowly focused. But we read something earlier by the same author that said to make a proposed change successful, it must attract a large audience of support. How can these both be right...

After your paragraphs on each reading, write down one interesting fact obtained from a search about each briefer beyond the information I provide you. And finally, write down one question that you plan to pose in each briefing. This question should not be so generic

that you could ask it of any person (e.g. “What does your typical day look like?”), but something specific to the briefer. Most weeks, we have 6 readings and 2 briefers. Thus, your reading response will usually have 6 paragraphs on the readings, 2 sentences of interesting facts, and 2 questions you will pose.

The reading responses are graded pass/fail. Turning in responses after 8 a.m. on Thursday will cost 50%. No credit is given for responses turned in after the briefing.

Midterm Paper (20%):

You will write an analytical paper that will require you to engage the key issues in the 2020 presidential election campaign. See the midterm paper handout for more details on this assignment. The paper should be 7-8 pages in length and will be due on Tuesday, October 27, 11:59 pm, on Learning Suite.

Final Paper (24%):

You will write a paper on how to solve a political problem. It will require you to identify a problem confronting your local community, state, or the nation, and *propose how you will get the government to solve the problem*. This paper is meant to demonstrate your knowledge about how to be an effective citizen in an area that you care about. See the final paper handout for more details on this assignment. The paper should be 7-8 pages in length and will be due on Tuesday, December 8, 11:59 pm, on Learning Suite.

Enrichment Activity (3%):

One Friday during the semester no briefings will be held so that you can pursue an enrichment activity. You may participate in this activity in person or virtually. This activity should focus on history or the arts (e.g. touring a historical site; virtually visiting a museum such as the Smithsonian Institution; watching a digital concert at the Kennedy Center). This is an opportunity for you to visit a site or participate in an activity that may only be open during business hours during the week when you would normally be at your internship or seminar meetings; however, you are free to complete this assignment at any time as your schedule permits. You will write a report that briefly (1-2 pages) summarizes the experience and discusses what you learned from the activity. Due Tuesday, November 24, 11:59 pm, on Learning Suite.

Service Learning (3%):

Because you may not be in DC, you will find a service opportunity where you are currently living, and have it approved (before participating) by me. I encourage you to consider how your involvement with the specific volunteer organization relates to your life and to what you are learning about government and service. You will write a brief report (1-2 pages) about your experience and what you learned. Due Tuesday, December 1, 11:59 pm, on Learning Suite.

Required Readings

Pre-briefing readings: Readings for each week's briefings will be announced (and posted on Learning Suite) approximately one week in advance.

Bob Graham and Chris Hand, *America, the Owner's Manual: You Can Fight City Hall—and Win*, new edition (CQ Press, 2017).

Michael Austin, *We Must Not Be Enemies* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

In addition to the seminar readings, you should get in the habit of reading a major national newspaper on a daily basis. Many (if not all) of the offices in which you work will have copies of the *Washington Post*. See if you can use their digital subscription. (You can also buy a subscription on sale [here](#).) BYU also has an academic pass to the New York Times. See [here](#) for details. Alternatively, there are online versions of major media organizations such as National Public Radio and opinion journals. *You should read at least five articles about current events each weekday*. Keeping up-to-date on current events is a significant component of this seminar, and we will spend time each week discussing these issues.

Tentative Seminar Schedule

Times and locations for the weekly seminar meetings will be contingent on the schedule of briefings and subject to change with little advance notice; the default schedule will be **Friday** at 9:00 am.

Reading responses are due each Thursday at 8 am.

September 4 (F) First day of class

September 8 (T) First day of internships

October 27 (T) Midterm Paper Due

November 24 (T) Enrichment Paper Due

December 1 (T) Service Paper Due

December 8 (T) Final Paper Due

December 10 (R) Last day of internships

December 11 (F) Last day of class