

## Sample Syllabus 2

**Kuen-Da Dalton Lin**

### **Political Science 359: Problems in American Foreign Policy**

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*Office Hours:* **Dalton:** Monday and Wednesday 11 am – 12 pm (Central Time, USA)  
**Mark:** Wednesday 12 – 2 pm (Central Time, USA)  
Office hours will be held online in a chat room. To access the chat room, click on the “Office Hours” tab at the top of the page in your Learn@UW. At the times specified above, your TAs will be available to chat.

Welcome to Political Science 359!

#### **PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION BOARDS:**

The goal of the discussion part of this course is to help you do well in the course. So, you can expect us to use the discussion boards to answer questions, clarify readings and lectures, and to provide you with an opportunity to discuss relevant course material in a smaller setting. Only the other members of your section (no more than 18 people) have access to the board, so we expect to create a classroom-like environment through the message boards.

To that end, we expect you to be engaged participants in this course by watching all the lectures in a timely manner, completing all the readings and assignments, and actively participating on the discussion boards. We expect you all to promote an active learning environment by supporting each other intellectually, asking questions (of me and your fellow students), and by being an aggressive learner.

Remember, 5% of your grade is based on your online participation, but more importantly, discussion participation provides you with an opportunity to discuss political concepts in more depth and gain a better understanding of the issues at hand.

#### **OVERVIEW OF THE DISCUSSION BOARDS:**

- You will find the discussion boards on your Learn@UW page under the “Discussion Groups” tab at the top of the page.
- There will be a separate discussion board for each week—make sure you make your postings on the appropriate board.
- Each week’s discussion board will be open for comments for one week only. After that, you will be able to read messages on the old boards, but will no longer be able to post. If you have not posted by the time the discussion board closes, you will not get any discussion credit for that week.

- Professor Pevehouse will post a ‘question of the week’ each week that you should think about while watching the lectures and doing the readings. This question will refer to material for the coming week (so, for example, the discussion question posted on June 12<sup>th</sup> is for lectures covered on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>), and will lead part of our discussion for the week. But we also expect you to post your own questions/thoughts/ideas on the discussion board for the class to discuss.

### HOW TO USE THE DISCUSSION BOARDS:

To create a new post, first go to the appropriate message board, then click on the “Compose” tab. Fill in the subject line, and then write your questions/comments in the “message” area.

To keep the discussion boards as well-organized as possible, your TAs would like you to do the following when posting on the discussion boards:

- When you post, we would like to you categorize your posting by including one of the following categories into your subject line :
- **Clarification:** Use this when you’d like the TAs (or your classmates) to answer a clarification question about the course material—if there was some concept you didn’t quite understand, or an example you didn’t completely follow. So basically, use this for any question about the material that has one, correct answer.
  - **Example:** What does Prof. Pevehouse mean when he talks about the Two Presidencies?
- **Discussion:** Use this when you have a question/thought/idea that you’d like the class to discuss or debate. So basically, use this when you’d like to hear everyone’s opinions on a topic.
  - **Example:** Here’s an article I read in the NYT about Obama’s decision to send more troops to Afghanistan:  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/24/world/asia/24policy.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=obama%20afghanistan%20troops%20congress&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/24/world/asia/24policy.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=obama%20afghanistan%20troops%20congress&st=cse). Does the relationship between Obama and Congress in this article really follow Wildavsky’s “Two Presidencies” theory, or are we seeing an exception to the rule?
- **Logistics:** Use this when you have a question about course logistics— basically anything that doesn’t have to do with the course material, but rather with the structure of the course.
  - **Examples:** When are the assignments due? How do we turn in assignments? When will we be able to access next week’s readings?
- **Other:** For any question that does not fall in to one of the above 3 categories
- So when you post on the discussion board, the subject line of your posting should be in the following format:  
[Category]: [Question/topic]  
For example, your subject line would look like: “Clarification: Two Presidencies”  
OR “Discussion: Two Presidencies”  
OR “Logistics: Due dates”
- The point is to keep the discussion boards well–organized, and help other students find the discussion threads that are relevant to them

If you have a question about the course material, do not email your TAs directly—post it on the discussion board. This is because, if you have a question, chances are, someone else in the class has the same question. This way, everyone will have access to the same information.

If you have any questions about how to use the discussion boards, please feel free to ask. We look forward to working with you this semester!