COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course is designed to (1) identify and use campus resources that will enhance your academic activities and plans for the future, (2) create life-long habits that will help you be more aware of and better understand national and global events, (3) encourage critical thinking, (4) enhance speaking skills.

We will accomplish these goals by reading in the news magazine The Economist about current events both in the United States and in the world. You will suggest topics and we will learn about these topics through a variety of methods: debates, critical reading, questioning, role playing, quizzes, etc. For each class period there will be a good number of assigned readings and you should come to class not only having read the assigned readings but also being prepared to actively participate in our course discussions and activities. You, and the events of the past few weeks, will determine which topics we discuss. My goal as instructor is to provide background information, context, theory, and connections so that you can better understand and interpret the world around you.

This course is both an introductory course and only a one-credit course. Because there are many one-credit courses at BYU that have minimal requirements, some people might assume that there is little work in this course. University documents, however, specify an expectation of 2 hours of work outside of class for every hour in class. In previous semesters students in this class reported working about 2 hours per week outside of class. This workload is consistent with University guidelines and less than for a typical three-credit class, but the workload is more than the workload of many other one-credit courses taught at BYU.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Quizzes. You will need to learn about current events by reading the weekly magazine The Economist. Quizzes will have questions about the articles in the most recent edition of The Economist with a couple of questions about very recent current events that have occurred too recently to be in The Economist. You should prepare for quizzes by reading The Economist (giving priority to the first part of the magazine, the “Leaders” section as well as the area sections—United States, The Americas, Middle East and Africa, Asia, Europe) and keeping up with daily events through a reliable new source that you prefer. The quizzes will be given each class day at the beginning of class. You are required to
order a student subscription (discounted) to The Economist through their web page at www.economistacademic.com. (Please go to this website and not to www.economist.com They have subscriptions available there too, but they are not the same and will end up costing you more money) A 15 week subscription costs $24. When you order your subscription, use the faculty registration ID number of 6274 for our class. When you order your subscription, please also activate your access to their Internet archive. You should be given an access code in the reply e-mail that you receive from the Economist after you buy a subscription. You will need to use this code to access their Internet archive. We will have additional readings on some topics, and some of them will likely come from past Economist articles on the topic that we plan to discuss. You may also find the archive useful in your research for other classes. In addition, you will have the opportunity in class to ask questions and direct our discussion of current events based on your readings in The Economist. Please note any questions that you have as you read The Economist and bring those questions to class.

Quizzes count fifty percent of your course grade. I will drop your two lowest quizzes. If you have to miss class or are late for class and miss the quiz, I expect you to use that missed quiz as one of your dropped quizzes. Make up quizzes are only given when a student has more than two excused absences. There will be 14 quizzes given in our class, so 12 of them will count towards your grade. If you add the class after the first day of class, you will miss one or more quizzes. These missed quizzes count as your dropped quizzes.

2. Final Exam. There will be a final exam at the scheduled time for final exams in this course. It will be held in our classroom. The final exam will cover what we discussed in our class periods. You should take notes on what we discussed about current events, background information, theories, and competing arguments surrounding those current events. Taking notes will make it possible for you to review before you take the final exam The final exam will be comprehensive, and it will count fifty percent towards your course grade. If the date and time of the final exam is inconvenient for you, you may want to take this class a different semester. University policy does not allow giving final exams early. If you absolutely must miss the final exam and also decide to take the course, your only option is to take an incomplete in the course and take the exam when you return to campus.

3. Pass/Fail. This course is graded pass or fail. Students who earn a 60 percent or higher as their course grades will earn a pass. Those whose course grades are lower than 60 percent will earn a fail. Most students will pass the course, but if a student misses class often or doesn’t prepare for the quizzes or the final exam, it will also be possible to fail the course. This course is not graded on attendance; rather you are expected to complete and remember assigned readings for the quizzes and learn the material discussed in class for the final exam.

4. Extra Credit Students may earn extra credit points by volunteering to role play, question, present, or debate in class. Also students who would like to become “experts” on a current event topic by doing additional reading or research may do so for extra credit. “Experts” may also be asked to present briefly to the rest of the class. The amount of
extra credit earned will depend on the quality of your effort. All extra credit points must be approved by Brother Christensen in advance, and must be done at the same time as each topic during the semester. Do not expect to be able to create your own extra credit assignments at the end of the semester to make up for too many missed quizzes. I will typically present an opportunity for extra credit during class (for the next class period) and will take volunteers for those assignments at that time. The maximum number of extra credit points that can be earned is thirty.

5. Learning Outcomes
The Political Science major at BYU has developed a set of expected student learning outcomes. These will help you understand the objectives of the courses in this major, including this class (even though this class doesn’t count towards the major and is geared primarily for non majors who have an interest in current events). To examine these goals for student learning in the Political Science major as well as other majors at BYU, go to <http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu> and click on the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences and then Political Science.

This course also has specific learning outcomes that are aligned with some of the learning outcomes for the Political Science major. The course outcomes are given first; the outcomes for the major that the course outcomes are aligned with are then given in parentheses and italicized:

A. Read The Economist weekly, as well as another source of news, and learn about important national and international events. (Participate effectively in political processes by having an appropriate knowledge of international and national politics and political thought).

B. Learn the historical context, theories, arguments, and data that illuminate discussions of the most important political issues. (Possess a factual and theoretical knowledge of countries, political processes, political theories, and political thought).

C. Meet professors in the Political Science Department and learn about their areas of specialization. (Demonstrate a familiarity with each of the four major subfields of political science: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political philosophy.)

6. Deductions for Inappropriate Behavior
Occasionally students are disruptive or rude in their interactions with others. Because our class is large, such behavior can hurt the learning atmosphere for the rest of the students. If a student leaves class after taking the quiz, disrupts the presentations of others, responds to disagreements with meanness or ridicule, or behaves in any other inappropriate way, the student may lose credit for that day’s quiz because of the inappropriate behavior. We want to have vigorous debate and disagreement but we also should abide by common standards of civility in our discussions.

7. Discrimination and Access. Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the
Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honor Code Office (4440). If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.