Section 1: 280 SWKT on T Th at 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Karpowitz
Office: 850 SWKT
Office Hours: T 3-5pm or by appointment
Office Phone: 422-2788
Email: ckarpowitz@byu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Political Science 310—Theories of American Politics. This course is designed to teach you about the nature of political science theory and the major approaches to American politics. It is also intended to give you an overview of how those theories and approaches have been applied to important topics in the study of American politics. We will ask about the purposes and goals of political science, and we will explore how political scientists go about creating and answering key research questions. In some respects, the course will be similar to courses that students of American politics often take their first year in graduate school. (One important difference is that the reading load is somewhat lighter than what you might find in graduate school – where students in graduate seminars read entire books, we will read chapters, summary overviews, and articles.) Still, you will read some of the literature studied by graduate students and familiarize yourself with the content of the field of American politics.

Because this is a relatively small (by BYU standards), upper-division course, I will conduct the class as a seminar. I will begin each session with an overview of the important elements that I see in the reading, adding some background and context to allow you to gain a broader perspective on the scholarly landscape. We will then discuss the issues together, working to delve more deeply into the implications of particular lines of thought and to more fully understand the subject matter. You are expected to arrive at class having read the material carefully and ready to participate actively in the discussion. Adequately preparing for our discussions will mean considerable time spent before class working through the texts, making notes, and critically assessing the ideas contained in them. Failure to adequately prepare will significantly harm your ability to understand the material and your ability to do well in the course.

Beyond the specific themes in American political thought we will investigate, this course will be a success if it develops in you the habits of work and mind that are central to college-level thought and argument and that will serve you well long after the final exam. We will emphasize the importance of attentive reading, thoughtful questioning, and compelling writing. By the end of the term, you should be practiced in the scholarly skills of critical reflection and persuasive reason-giving, and you should be able to craft an effective, insightful, and perhaps even eloquent college-level argument.

In the language of our department learning outcomes, this course should contribute to your intellectual enlargement in the following ways: it will help you demonstrate a familiarity with the subfield of American politics; increase your factual and theoretical knowledge of American politics; help you think critically, analytically, and synthetically; strengthen your ability to write professional grade research papers (with properly cited sources and other such details); and encourage you to communicate effectively by presenting ideas in a high quality oral presentation. I hope, too, that our discussions will include moments in which you will be able to articulate principles of faith in political analysis.

More generally, I hope the course will promote your desire for learning and that you will begin to become a producer of ideas, not just a consumer of them. By adding something new – your unique ideas and
perspectives – to the intellectual life of the university, you will become an integral part of the BYU community. The course will be valuable not simply because of what has been taught, but because of what you have learned.

While this process of learning can be demanding, it can also be exhilarating and extremely rewarding. Remember, too, that we are in this together. I expect our class to be an intellectual community in which we support and respect one another, giving each other constructive feedback and encouragement along the way.

COURSE POLICIES

Prerequisites
Students should have completed an introductory course in political science. Completion or concurrent enrollment in Political Science 200 is strongly encouraged.

Texts & Materials

Course Packet
All course readings will be made available to you via Learning Suite. If multiple members of the class prefer a printed packet, rather than online access to the readings, I will be happy to facilitate that preference.

Participation Policy
In order to succeed in this course, your consistent attendance and regular participation in class discussions is essential. Class participation involves regular, high-quality interventions in class discussion. Quality is more important than quantity, but you should try to participate actively in the discussion. High-quality comments are usually only possible when you have read carefully and prepared for the class session. For some, speaking up in class is an especially difficult challenge. If this is true for you, please come see me so we can talk about alternative ways to participate in the ongoing scholarly conversation.

You are responsible for all material presented and/or discussed in class (you are also responsible for all course readings, even if we do not spend significant time on them in class). Multiple unexcused absences will be noticed and are grounds for a significantly lower participation grade. If you are ill or experience a family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible. Illness or other emergencies are reasons for your absence to be excused.

Grading Policies
In this course, when computing your final course grade, I do not follow a curve or limit the number of students who can receive top marks in any way. If every student in the course produces A-level work, every student in the course can receive an A. (Conversely, if no student produces A-quality work, no student will receive an A.) My expectations for your work will be high.

When grading, I evaluate only the words on the page before me. The effort you put into an essay or exam will most certainly be evident in what you submit. Please note that I expect your work to be free of grammatical, spelling, and formatting errors. (I am happy to explain any technical issues that seem confusing or obscure.) Failure to meet these expectations may result in a lowered final grade.
Due dates for assignments are **firm and final**. Personal extensions are not fair to other members of the class, including me. For this reason, there will be **no personal extensions** under any circumstances **except** documented illness or family emergency.

Because personal extensions are not allowed, **failure to meet assigned due dates will bring serious consequences**. For essay assignments, including drafts and final revisions, your assignment grade will be docked one full letter grade per 24-hour period beginning one minute after the deadline.

Exams must be taken on the days indicated in the schedule. The date and time of the final exam are set by the university. Do not ask for extensions or changes; I am not allowed to give them. I will, however, consider making the final a take-home exam if the class members prefer that option.

**Learning Outcomes**

The following are the learning outcomes for all sections of Political Science 310 at BYU:

*Politics, International Relations, and Political Philosophy*
Understand important theoretical traditions in the study of (American) politics.

*Effective and Professional Writing*
Craft your own effective and insightful argument using clear and engaging prose that is analytically sound.

*Critical Thinking and Analysis*
Apply theories of politics to explain current practices in American Politics.

**Course Requirements**

The requirements for this course are rigorous but fair. I expect you to come to every class prepared. That means you should complete all reading assignments **before** class, and you should arrive at class having already made some notes and begun to think critically about what you have read. The reading assignments usually consist of about 125-175 pages per week (sometimes a little more, sometimes a little less). This is not a great deal of reading in terms of the number of pages (especially for an upper-division course), but often, we will cover several writers or thinkers per class period. More importantly, because this material can be difficult at times, you will need to read more carefully (and probably more slowly) than you might with other kinds of reading assignments.

Assignments for this class include a reading memos, a group presentation and paper, an essay, a midterm, and a final. The remainder of your grade comes from active participation in class discussions.

**Assignment Descriptions**

*Exams:
We will have two exams over the course of the semester – a closed-book midterm that you will take home and complete on your own and a final exam given on Tuesday, April 17 from 11am-2pm. More detail about the exams will be distributed prior to the exam dates.*

*Final Essay:
The final essay is meant to provide you an opportunity to begin finding your own voice as a political scientist. Think of the final essay as an introductory chapter to a dissertation or a research monograph, and you can look to the introductory chapters of existing books for a model.*
For this essay, you will pose a general research question, and you will develop your own theoretical ideas in the context of a critique, synthesis, and reformulation of the existing literature on the subject, including some of the pivotal ideas we have discussed in the class. Your essay should include a well-designed research question, a review of existing literature, a discussion of your own theory and hypotheses, and a general discussion (this is not a full research design) of the data you will need to answer your question or test your hypotheses. Your final essay may emerge out of ideas you generated in the participation emails you sent.

The essay should be approximately 12-15 pages in length. You will complete a full draft no later than November 15, and the final revision is due on December 12. You will be part of a writing group that will meet to provide constructive feedback to each other. You will meet as a writing group to discuss the drafts of each member of the group, and you will also write a formal response to each member of the writing group. More detailed information about the essay will be distributed at the end of September. I am available to meet with you at any point in the writing process, and I encourage you to come visit me to talk. In November, I will also schedule formal writing conferences for us to discuss your plans for your paper.

**Group Presentation:**
After the midterm, the class sessions will include group presentations from the students. You will be assigned to groups of 4-5 students. You may choose to form a group of your own or Dr. Karpowitz can assign you to a group. These groups will also function as your writing groups for the essay assignment.

The theme of our presentations this semester will be the following: What does political science teach us about the election of 2012? Your goal as a group is to find a political science article, book, or book chapter that deals with any aspect of electoral politics (the behavior of candidates, the behavior of elected officials, the behavior of the media, the role of the economy, the role of parties, the consequences of elections, etc.) and use it to help explain what happened in the election of 2012. You may not pick an article or book that has already been covered on the syllabus.

On presentation days, each group will be assigned to present their chosen article. The presentations should offer an overview of the article’s theoretical approach, methods, and findings. Each presentation should apply the lessons from the article to the election of 2012. Presentations should last approximately 15 minutes, plus 5 minutes for questions. On each presentation day, multiple groups will present, with the remainder of the class period devoted to discussion of the issues raised by the presentations. The purpose of the presentation is for you to help the members of the class think critically and to set the stage for an effective discussion of the material. Be creative and have fun with these presentations! See [http://themonkeycage.org](http://themonkeycage.org) for helpful examples of political scientists applying their work to contemporary events.

Part of the grade for this assignment will come from the students who watch the presentation, part will come from your fellow group members, and part will be based on Dr. Karpowitz’s overall evaluation of the presentation. Additional details about the group presentations will be given to you after the midterm.

**Reading Memos:**
Success in this course depends upon engaging deeply with course readings. To facilitate such engagement, you will write 10 brief memos over the course of the semester. These memos are to be completed prior to the class session in which the readings are discussed. For Tuesday classes, reading memos are due by midnight on Monday. For Thursday classes, memos are due by midnight on Wednesday.
For the period prior to the midterm, you will choose 5 topics and submit a brief, one-page single-spaced memo to me for each. The memo should be no more than 500 words. Please do not exceed the 500-word limit.

The first paragraph must give a brief overview of the main ideas or assumptions of one of the assigned readings. Think about the following questions as you write this part of the memo: What is the main question or topic the author is trying to answer or explore? Why does this main question or topic need to be explored? What is the author's main argument or causal model? What are the main types of evidence used?

The second paragraph should include your critical questions and ideas about the reading. Be thoughtful and imaginative. Here are some ideas: What makes it useful? What are its weaknesses? Is it falsifiable? Why or why not? Do alternative hypotheses better explain the data? How does this article relate to current political events? To other articles on the same topic? Is this argument believable? Why or why not? This paragraph may also critically contrast the theory under discussion with other theories we have read and discussed. This second paragraph is your attempt to critically evaluate the reading prior to our classroom discussion.

Please send these emails to the following address: karp310@byu.edu. In the subject line of the email, type “PLSC 310:” then the name of the theory we are covering. Do not type your own name in the subject line. Since I sometimes receive many emails in a given day, sending these messages to the above address and including the requested subject line will help me sort the emails and make sure you get full credit for your work.

During the second half of the course, you will also send brief emails about the topics in American politics that we are discussing. For these emails, you are to choose one of the readings for the day. The first paragraph should offer a brief overview the reading's main argument or idea. For example, this paragraph could explain the theory and/or the hypotheses, identify the independent and dependent variables, or summarize the author’s data. This paragraph should identify the theory or research tradition at the heart of the reading. The second paragraph should analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s argument and evidence. Be constructively critical, and you may compare and contrast with other readings from the course, if you prefer. This is a good opportunity to ask questions, too, but you should also include constructive discussion, not merely a question by itself. You should choose 5 readings on which to write during the second half of the course.

You may choose any topic/reading, but you may only submit one memo per week. You may not write the day your group completes its presentation.

You are responsible for submitting response memos for at least 10 weeks during the semester, and you must submit at least 5 times prior to the midterm. You may submit memos for as many as 12 weeks, and if you submit more than 10, I will count only the highest 10 grades.

Your memos must be well written. They will be graded on a three-point scale, as follows:

3: Exceeds Expectations. The memo introduces interesting, important ideas and shows evidence of thoughtful, critical engagement with the reading. This grade will be given only to work that reaches the highest standards of excellence.

2: Meets Expectations. The memo highlights a claim or idea from the reading and begins to offer a response, but the response may overlook an important idea, argument, or counter-argument. Elements of the author’s argument may be ambiguous, too broad, or muddled. Alternatively, this memo achieves modest aims well: it takes on an interesting claim and includes some critical response, but it does not achieve the clarity and creativity of those that exceed expectations.
1: Does Not Meet Expectations. The memo does not achieve the basic purposes of the assignment. The memo is mostly summary and is lacking in critical response. The memo lacks thoughtful analysis or reflection on main points and/or may get some of the details of the reading wrong. The author has incorrectly understood the main point of the reading and/or provides no critical evaluation. The writing is vague, confusing, or plainly erroneous.

0: No journal entry was submitted.

Over the course of the semester, then, you will send 10 memos about various course topics (5 about the readings or topics covered in the first half of the course and 5 about the issues or topics we cover in the second half of the course).

**Point Breakdown**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Reading Memos</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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**Course Schedule**

Note: Reading assignments are to be completed before class on the day indicated. Detailed instructions for the writing assignments will be furnished during the semester. Specific topics to be covered in the second half of the course will be announced after consultation with students. *Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are recommended, not required.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T – Sep 3</td>
<td>Introduction and Course Overview</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Smith, Rogers M. 2002. &quot;Should We Make Political Science More of a Science or More about Politics?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>References</td>
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Garrett Hardin. 1968. “The Tragedy of the Commons.” Presidential address presented before the meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Utah State University.  
Jane J. Mansbridge. 2013. “What Is Political Science For?” Presidential address presented before the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
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Margaret G. Hermann. 2002. “Political Psychology as (*) |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Th – Oct 17</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>T – Oct 22</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>Th – Oct 24</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>T – Oct 29</td>
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<td>Th – Oct 31</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>F – Nov 1</td>
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<td><strong>Final Paper Proposal Due</strong></td>
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<td>T – Nov 5</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td><strong>Writing Conferences with Dr. Karpowitz (November 4-8)</strong></td>
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<td>Th – Nov 7</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>T – Nov 12</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>Th – Nov 14</td>
<td><strong>No Class</strong></td>
<td>Work on Final Paper, Meet with Writing Groups as</td>
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For dates TBA (To Be Announced), the schedule will be determined by the instructor.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>F – Nov 15</td>
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<td>Draft of Final Paper Due by Midnight</td>
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<td>T – Nov 19</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th – Nov 21</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>F – Nov 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Group Meetings Must Be Completed</td>
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<td>T – Nov 26</td>
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<td>Friday Instruction</td>
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<td>Th – Nov 28</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>T – Dec 3</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th – Dec 5</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
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<td>T – Dec 10</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th – Dec 12</td>
<td>Course Conclusion: What Can American Political Science Teach Us Today?</td>
<td>Final Paper Due by Midnight</td>
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<td>F – Dec 13</td>
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<td>Exam Preparation Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>T – Dec 17</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Communication**

My door is always open to you, and I hope you will feel free to contact me about any issues that arise during the course of the semester. I’m happy to meet with you during office hours or by appointment to discuss any aspect of this course. Just ask or e-mail me, or drop by my office during my regularly scheduled office hours.

Because it is the best way for us to communicate with each other outside of class, all class members are required to maintain an active email account. It is your responsibility to ensure that the email address that is listed for you in the BYU directory is accurate. I will relay important or time-sensitive class announcements via email. I strongly encourage you to check your email daily throughout the semester. You are responsible for any information that I pass along via this medium.

**Extensions**

All deadlines in this course are firm. Except in the case of medical or family emergency, I give no individual extensions. If, due to such an emergency, you cannot meet a deadline, please contact me as soon as possible. In the event of a medical emergency, you must produce a note from a doctor or from the Student Health Center (or bring me pictures of your newly born baby). Late written work will be marked down one full letter grade for each day late, beginning one minute after the assignment is due.
BYU 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 my own 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.

Plagiarism Policy

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

You should be careful to avoid the following examples of plagiarism: (1) Turning in work or portions of work that are identical to work submitted by another student. If two paragraphs of different papers are identical, we will assume that plagiarism occurred and will treat the incident as a serious violation of the Honor Code. (2) Using work from past semesters as anything other than a guide or supplement. If work is submitted for this semester that follows the format or instructions of a previous semester, I will assume that plagiarism occurred. I encourage you to work with other students and even consult work done in previous semesters. However, the work you turn in must be entirely your own work. Because of the simplicity of "cut and paste," it is easy to pass off another person's work as your own. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work is entirely your own. If an assignment for this course overlaps substantially with an assignment from another course and you would like to turn in a paper for both courses, you must receive permission from me and the other professor prior to the assignment due date.

Honor Pledge

As a way of reinforcing the importance of academic honesty, I am adopting a tradition from Princeton University for the exams and final essay you turn in this semester. You should write the following pledge at the end of all drafts and revisions, and then sign it (or, if the paper is submitted electronically, print your name, which will count as your signature): “This paper represents my own work in accordance with University regulations.”

Preventing Sexual Discrimination and Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university, but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Students with Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your
ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

OTHER RESOURCES

Librarian Information
Name: Brian Champion
Office: 1225 HBLL
Phone Number: 422-5862
Email: brian_champion@byu.edu

Reference Desk Information
Name: Social Sciences / Education
Phone Number: 422-6228
Email: No library information available
Hours: M-Th: 8am-9pm; F: 8am-6pm; Sat: 10am-6pm

WHAT TO DO NOW

When you get to this point in the syllabus, please e-mail Dr. Karpowitz at ckarpowitz@byu.edu to say that you read it, and tell me something about yourself and about your goals for the semester. Feel free to ask any questions that you may have about the course.