Department of Political Science  
Brigham Young University  

SYLLABUS  

Political Science 470  
Capstone Seminar  
"Lament for America vs. Renaissance America: Challenges Facing the United States through Mid-Century"  
Summer 2012  
MW Noon – 2:30 p.m.  
793 SWKT  

Dr. Earl H. Fry  
Professor  
774 SWKT  
Ext. 2-2453  
earl_fry@byu.edu  

Office Hours  
Mondays 2:45 p.m.–4:00 p.m.  
or by appointment
COURSE DESCRIPTION: My objective in this course is to assist you in writing a scholarly paper of approximately 30 pages which will easily fulfill the Department of Political Science’s writing and research requirements for graduating seniors. I will be working with you on every phase of this project and we will meet often on a one-to-one basis. I look forward to getting to know you and working with you as fellow scholars.

The capstone topic is of great importance to me for a number of reasons. My book *Lament for America: Decline of the Superpower, Plan for Renewal* was published in 2010. It is a somewhat controversial book because I take on conventional wisdom and some so-called “sacred cows” such as the U.S. health-care system, the electoral system, the legal system, the taxation system, and U.S. foreign policy priorities. Above all, I argue that in an era of expanded globalization and unprecedented technology change, no nation is spared from the consequences of actions taken and decisions made outside its national borders, not even a superpower such as the United States. I also argue that the rest of the world has much to learn from the United States, but in turn the United States must learn many useful things from other countries, and I recently spent a year in Europe looking at what the U.S. can learn from other countries in terms of “best practices.” And finally, I assert that in various sectors, other countries are doing a far better job than the United States and there is no guarantee that the United States will be the world’s dominant superpower in 2050.

However, in my new book-length manuscript entitled *Renaissance America*, I argue that the United States has the capacity to enhance its competitiveness and remain a major force on the global stage.

The first part of the course will discuss the various dimensions of globalization and the consequences of each dimension. The second part will examine how the United States is faring in an era of globalization and unprecedented technological change. The third part will concentrate on the effects of globalization on governance in the United States—federal, state, and local. The final part will be policy oriented. What can the United States do to maximize the benefits of globalization and minimize the negative aspects of the globalization phenomenon?

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to complete an article-length scholarly research project using appropriate methods of analysis and a professional standard of writing. In doing so, you will draw heavily from your learning in previous courses;
- Accomplish the first objective by studying a specialized topic in political science together with your classmates and under the guidance of the professor;
- Deepen your familiarity with the subfield of globalization and U.S. international competitiveness, and of political science more broadly;
- Learn how to emphasize your findings in a high-quality oral presentation, and how to give and receive appropriate feedback within a community of scholars.
Texts:
The following texts are required for this course:


Various articles or segments from journals and books are also required and you will be expected to find additional readings on the major topics to buttress the assigned material. Some of the assigned material will be posted on Blackboard or placed on reserve in the Political Science office.

Requirements: The major thrust of this course is to assist you in fulfilling the University’s and Department of Political Science’s writing requirement. Optimally, you will produce a scholarly paper of approximately 30 pages which will reflect four years of rigorous college training and the development of advanced analytical, research, and writing skills. This paper will serve as a useful part of your résumé and portfolio as you prepare to enter the cold, cruel world, or at least graduate or professional school. I have actually spent time in government as part of the Executive Office of the President of the United States during the Reagan administration, and I have directed BYU’s Washington Seminar Program several times. In addition, I have been a visiting professor at the Sorbonne, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, the University of Toronto, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Helsinki, and at the Americas Society in New York City. I have also written or edited about a dozen books. With this background, I hope to assist you in developing a scholarly paper which is rigorous, readable, and relevant to what is occurring in the United States and the rest of the world. Each paper must have a policy orientation and provide recommendations for how improvements can be made in current practices in the public and/or private sectors. I also hope that the writing skills learned in the class will assist you in your careers, because I have found that the ability to write concisely and coherently is widely admired within corporate and government circles.

Three-quarters of your final grade will be determined by how well you do in the various phases of developing and submitting your capstone paper, and one-quarter will be linked to various dimensions of class participation, a verbal presentation, and a midterm.
This course will be run as a seminar and will have much in common with a graduate-level class. In plain English, this means that each student will come to class having read the assigned material and will participate, and at times, lead seminar discussions. I will also get to know each of you quite well and will actually learn all of your names, in spite of my advanced senility. You should also feel free to contact me at any time in my office, by phone, or by e-mail.

Grading:

Submission of topic: 1%
Prospectus: 4%
Polished draft: 10%
Class oral presentation: 5%
Midterm: 15%
Final capstone paper: 55%
Formal peer reviews and leading class discussion: 10%

The topic submission will be one to two pages and will consist of a proposed topic, a brief discussion of the importance of the proposed topic, a brief outline on how the topic will be developed, and a few bibliographical entries to ensure that sufficient research material will be available to write an exemplary 30-page policy-oriented paper.

The prospectus will be a few pages and is similar to what professors must do when they are trying to secure a book contract from a major publisher. The prospectus will include the title of the proposed paper and your major research question, an expanded section on why the topic is important and why your proposal has not been replicated elsewhere and thus will add significantly to current literature in the field, a major outline on how the paper will be developed from beginning to end, and an expansive bibliography of research material.

The polished draft must indeed be polished and be close to what will finally be submitted as the capstone paper. Remember, 10% of the grade is attached to this draft so a great deal of work should be devoted to its preparation. I will read this draft and provide you with recommendations on how to improve it.

The midterm will test your mastery of the assigned readings.

The oral presentation will be made in class and will be approximately 20 minutes in length. You will discuss the importance of your topic, your analysis of the topic, your research findings, and your policy recommendations. Be prepared to defend your position in class because various comments will be made by your peers and your professor.

The final capstone paper will be due the last day of class, August 6. Do not submit the paper late because one full grade will be deducted for every day the paper is late.
Your role in class discussion will determine another part of your grade. You should come to class having mastered the assigned readings and you should be prepared to participate fully in the give-and-take discussion which will ensue. **You must attend all seminar sessions unless you have a valid medical excuse.**

**HONOR CODE AND PLAGIARISM**

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. General information about the honor code can be found at honorcode.byu.edu. Details about Academic Honesty are found at http://honorcode.byu.edu/content/academic-honesty-details.

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.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's Writing Research Papers.

**DISCRIMINATION**

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 Opportunities Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

**DISABILITIES**
Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (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 UAC 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. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE:

June 18

Introduction, scholarship, and academic research and writing

Elizabeth Wager et al., How to Survive Peer Review, 3-12, 51-56

Friedman, Flat, Ch. 1

AND

Lament for America vs. Renaissance America

Fry, Ch. 1

Friedman, Flat, Ch. 2-4

June 20

Potent “Triple” Combination plus Environmental and Energy Challenges

Friedman, Hot, Ch. 1-8

June 25

Globalization and the United States

Friedman, Flat, Ch. 5-8

Friedman, Hot, Ch. 9
Topic statement for capstone paper to be submitted in class June 25

June 27

**American strengths in an interdependent global setting**

Friedman, *Flat*, Ch. 10

Fry, *Lament*, Ch. 8

July 2-9

**Challenges facing the United States**

Fry, *Lament*, Ch. 3-7

Friedman, *Flat*, Ch. 12-14

Friedman, *Hot*, Ch. 16-17

**Prospectus due July 9**

July 11

**Governance issues at the national level**

Fry, *Lament*, Ch. 2

Friedman, *Flat*, Ch. 15-16

July 16

**Governance issues at the state and local level in the U.S. federal system and special challenges in the private sector and American households**

Kresl and Fry, Ch. 5-8

July 18

**The Complex and Interdependent Global Setting**

Ferguson, Introduction plus Ch. 1-6

July 23
Individual paper consultations with Prof. Fry and MIDTERM

July 25-30

Oral presentations—20 minutes each

Polished draft due on day of individual’s presentation

The Future of the United States

Ferguson, Conclusion

Fry, Ch. 9

August 1

No class. Individual polished-draft consultations with Prof. Fry

August 6

Submission of Final Paper during the class period. No final exam.