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Fall 9-1-2005

### PSC 195.01: Writing and Analysis in Political Science

Jonathan Tompkins

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PSC 195  
**Writing and Analysis in Political Science**  
Fall 2005

**Instructors**

Jon Tompkins, Professor  
LA 350, any time not in class  
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**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to prepare students for success in upper division courses, graduate studies, and post-graduate careers by improving basic writing and thinking skills. The course's primary goal is to help political science majors begin thinking like political scientists and to expose them to the types of writing that may be required of them in their subsequent careers. To this end, the course explores how the social sciences seek to understand the world around us and introduces students to political science as an academic discipline. It also examines the distinctions between description, comparison, explanation, and conceptualization. Finally, it clarifies how writing style and format must change with the audience and situation.

**Course Requirements**

Students are required to read all reading assignments prior to coming to class, participate in all class discussions, and submit several short writing assignments.

Final Grades will be based on the following percentages:

A = 93-100% of total points.

A- = 90-92%

B+ = 87-89%

B = 83-86%

B- = 80-82%

C+ = 77-79%

C = 73-76%

C- = 70-72%

**Required Text**

Jessica Stern, Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill (HarperCollins, 2003).

Additional articles as assigned.

## Weekly Assignments

**Wed., Aug. 31**

**Knowing the World Around Us**

Read the Prologue to Courtney Brown's *Cosmic Voyage*, which you can find at:

<http://www.courtneybrown.com/publications/CosmicVoyageByCourtneyBrown.pdf>.

**Fri., Sept. 2**

**Science as a Way of Knowing -- Underlying Assumptions**

Read Chapters 1 and 2 of *Cosmic Voyage*.

**Mon., Sept. 5**

**\*\*Labor Day Holiday\*\***

**Wed., Sept. 7**

**Discussion of Courtney Brown's *Cosmic Voyage***

Read Chapter 10 of *Cosmic Voyage*, submit writing assignment #1 in class, and be prepared to discuss your analysis.

**Fri., Sept. 9**

**Limitations of the Scientific Method**

Read Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (Handout).

**Mon., Sept. 12**

**How the Social Sciences Seek to Know Reality**

**Wed., Sept. 14**

**Political Science as an Academic Field of Study**

**Fri., Sept. 16**

**The Role of Language and Concepts in Knowing the World**

Read Stern's Introduction to *Terror in the Name of God*, pp. xiii-xxxi. Writing assignment #2 is due Monday.