

COURSE CODE: POL 230
COURSE TITLE: Current Events
SEMESTER: Fall 2005
PLACE/TIME: Room MC 204, Tues & Fri, 12:15-1:35 pm
PROFESSOR: Bruce Sabin

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TEXTBOOKS: Norberg, J. (2003). *In defense of global capitalism*. Washington, DC: Cato Institute.
Heilbroner, R.L. (1999). *The worldly philosophers: The lives, times and ideas of the great economic thinkers*. New York: Simon & Schuster
Additional reading as assigned



Diana...came into the [television] studio with a double-barreled ten-gauge shotgun. She fired twice, and the Emperor and the Empress were dead before they hit the floor.... It was then that the Bergerons' television tube burned out. Hazel turned to comment about the blackout to George. But George had gone out into the kitchen for a can of beer. George came back in with the beer.... "You been crying?" he said to Hazel. "Yup," she said, "What about?" he said. "I forget," she said. "Something real sad on television...." "Forget sad things," said George. "I always do," said Hazel.

~ "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut

WEBBER INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT:

Webber International University educates students in preparation for careers in the worldwide business environment. Emphasis is placed on the development of skills in administration and strategic planning, oral and written communication, applied modern business practices, personal growth, entrepreneurship and professional development. The University offers educational programs at the associate, bachelor and master levels exclusively in areas of business.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course is a comparative study of major current political events with past and present political, social and economic principles.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

Academic grades, as measurements, are designed to discriminate according to criteria. Therefore, grades will reflect the degree to which the student's work met the criteria included in assignment rubrics. Good work will receive good grades and poor work will receive poor grades. Grades will not be awarded based upon the student's race, age, religion, nationality or similarly capricious cause.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Education, in general, should seek to achieve three primary goals. Education should lead students toward and provide resources for:

1. self-actualization, so that students become more developed individuals.
2. productive citizenship, so that students positively impact their communities.
3. critical thinking, so that students can make better life decisions.

This course is designed to achieve educational goals within the framework described in the course catalog. During this course, students will:

1. critically analyze current politics.
2. apply business principles to political issues.
3. perform academic, social science research.
4. make well-formed, justified and persuasive arguments.
5. determine the credibility and value of information sources.
6. create and critique strategies for political and policy advocacy.
7. discuss the development of social, economic and political systems.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

Group Project 1	8%	Letter 1	3%
Group Project 2	10%	Letter 2	3%
Op-ed piece 1	3%	Test 1	10%
Op-ed piece 2	3%	Test 2	10%
Op-ed piece 3	5%	Leadership presentation	6%
Op-ed piece 4	5%	Preparation	10%
Op-ed piece 5	7%	Participation	10%
Op-ed piece 6	7%		

ERUDITIO ET INTEGRITAS:

Webber's motto, *eruditio et integritas*, may be translated as *scholarship and integrity*. As a university—a society of learners—Webber depends upon the scholarship of its faculty and students. We continually work to develop knowledge. Trust is a foundation for all societies, and is absolutely essential in scholarly communities. Because scholars share knowledge, we must have confidence in each other. Acts that damage academic trust, such as cheating on tests or plagiarizing papers, damage the ability of scholars to share and build upon knowledge, thereby threatening the university itself. Both scholarship and integrity are critical standards and must be fervently defended by all members of the university.

GRADING SCALE:

A	90.0% - 100%
B	80.0% - 89.9%
C	70.0% - 79.9%
D	60.0% - 69.9%
F	00.0% - 59.9%

Grades are calculated by rounding to the nearest tenth. An upward curve may be applied to final grades.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Each unexcused absence will result in a 3% reduction in the final grade. In case of extracurricular activities conflicting with class, the student must personally email the professor about the situation prior to the day of the absence. In case of illness, the professor should be notified as soon as possible. Absences will only be excused after the day of the absence if earlier notification was not possible. The student is personally responsible for determining what information was missed due to absences.

INCOMPLETE WORK:

Work completed more than five days late, without being excused, may not be accepted. Acceptance of late work may be contingent upon the completion of additional assignments. Any work not completed by the last day of regular classes will not be accepted without approval from the Dean of Student Development and/or the Dean of Academics.

PROFESSIONALISM AND PERSONAL CONDUCT:

This is a business university preparing professionals. Students are expected to act professionally. Cell phones should not ring or be used in the classroom. Students should treat others with appropriate respect.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

In accordance with federal regulations, students with diagnosed disabilities will be provided appropriate accommodations. It is the individual student's responsibility to register his or her disability with the Dean of Student Development and inform professors at the beginning of the semester. Accommodations cannot be provided if the disability is not registered with the Dean. Informing the Dean and professors after experiencing problems is not acceptable.

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY:

Extra credit may be offered to compensate students for taking advantage of additional learning opportunities unexpectedly available during the semester. Any extra credit opportunity will be made available to all students. Extra credit will not be offered to raise low grades for individual students.

Syllabus is subject to change

Day	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Tues Fri	8/30 9/2	Hielbroner chapters 1-2; Norberg Preface	
Tues Fri	9/6 9/9	Norberg chapter 1	
Tues Fri	9/13 9/16	Hielbroner chapter 3	Op-ed 1
Tues Fri	9/20 9/23	Norberg chapter 2	
Tues Fri	9/27 9/30	Hielbroner chapter 4, 6	Op-ed 2
Tues Fri	10/4 10/7	Norberg chapter 3-4	Letter 1
Tues Fri	10/11 10/14	Hielbroner chapters 8-9	Op-ed 3 Self-Evaluation
Tues Fri	10/18 10/21	Norberg Chapter 5-6	
Tues Fri	10/25 10/28	Norberg chapter 7	Test 1; Op-ed 4
Tues Fri	11/1 11/4		Letter 2
Tues Fri	11/8 11/11	Group presentations Group presentations	Group Project 1; Op-ed 5
Tues Fri	11/15 11/18		
Tues Fri	11/22 11/25	No Class – Thanksgiving	Test 2; Op-ed 6
Tues Fri	11/29 12/2	Group presentations Group presentations	Self-Evaluation; Project 2

Letter

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Write a letter to a government official concerning a topic of social, political, and/or economic importance. Be sure to address your letter to someone relevant to your issue. In other words, do not write to Governor Jeb Bush about the Iraq War, or to President George Bush about your sales tax. Governors are not responsible for foreign policy, and presidents are not responsible for local taxes.

Your letter should meet standards for a professional business letter, both in style and content. In general, letters to government officials should be direct and address only one issue. Be clear about your position on the issue and what action you expect from the official. Also explain why the reader should invest resources in this issue

In general, one may contact government through email. This assignment, however, requires a typed letter, which will be sent by mail. To facilitate both grading and mailing, you are required to submit two copies of your letter. One copy will be graded. The additional copy must be submitted to me in a sealed, stamped, addressed envelope, ready to be placed in the mail.

For more information on writing letters to government officials, see the following links:

<http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/branches/spc/udall/rgtwrite.pdf>

<http://www.aclu.org/TakeAction/TakeAction.cfm?ID=12011&c=242>

http://www.bread.org/issues/rise_to_the_challenge/sample_letter.html

http://www.glendale.edu/polsci/how_to_write.htm

<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/documents/bletter/index.cfm>

<http://www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/business.html>

Letter Rubric

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

	Excellent (30)	Good (25)	Mediocre (20)	Deficient (15)	Unacceptable (0)	Score
Formatting	Proper business letter format. Salutation appropriate to addressee. No longer than 1 page. Appropriate signature. Signed in blue ink.	Very minor errors that do not diminish the effectiveness of the letter.	Not signed in blue ink. Number of errors below B level.	Informal appearance.	No contact data for sender. Inappropriate salutation or addressee information. Longer than 1 page.	
Content	Provides well-written introduction, body and conclusion. Remains on 1 topic. Factual and includes necessary and valuable details. Absolutely professional.	Minor errors in details or otherwise weak presentation of argument. Sufficient details for purpose.	Lacks important detail in some area.	Deviates from topic. Lacks multiple important details.	Unclear topic. Significantly inaccurate facts or details. Lacks call for action.	
Style	No syntax mistakes. Visually attractive. Structure is objective, succinct, varied, fluid and persuasively targeted to audience.	Visually cluttered or bare. Simple sentence structure. Few minor syntax errors. Some lack of objectivity.	Monotonous structure. Several minor, or one major syntax error. Lacks objectivity.	Multiple major syntax errors. Tedious structure.	Handwritten. Derogatory. Unintelligible structure.	
					Rough Score	
Deduct 50% if addressee is inappropriate to purpose of letter.						
Late deduction						
Add 10% if addresses on envelope are computer printed.						
					Final Score	

Objectives: This assignment addresses Course Objectives 5 and 7.

PASS Learning Center approval: Signed _____ Date _____ ☐ Ready for submission ☐ Needs further revision

Op-ed Writing

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

You will write 6 op-ed articles during the semester. An op-ed is an opinion/editorial style of journalistic writing. The purpose of an op-ed is for the writer to convince readers of a certain point of view. Unlike traditional newspaper writing, an op-ed is not presented as unbiased news. Instead, an op-ed clearly expresses and supports a particular opinion. In many other ways, an op-ed is similar to newspaper reporting. Op-ed writers must use clear and concise writing that the audience will understand.

Op-ed writing should meet the same basic writing standards of other professional writing. For example, an op-ed should only deal with one topic and should include an introduction, body and conclusion. Newspaper writing should conform to the writing style of the Associated Press (AP).

For this assignment, your op-ed must focus on a current, politically salient issue. Further, a clear relationship must be made between the issue and business. Your writing should include 500-600 words (not including title, your name, etc.).

Each op-ed will be uploaded to turnitin.com and turned in during class. Each Op-ed will be graded by the professor and submitted to the *Warrior* Advisor to be considered for publication. If your op-ed is selected for publication, you will receive 2 points of extra credit toward your final course grade.

The following sites offer more information on writing an op-ed.

AP writing: <http://www.usu.edu/communic/faculty/sweeney/resources/ap.htm>

Student Press Law Center: <http://www.splc.org/>

Ethics: <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/weblines/491.html>

Op-ed Rubric

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

	Excellent (30)	Good (25)	Mediocre (20)	Deficient (15)	Unacceptable (0)	Score
Persuasion	Op-ed persuasively demonstrates critical thinking, significant support, depth and breadth of focus.	Ideas seem worthy of consideration, but lack of depth, breadth or support leaves lingering doubt.	Few new ideas are presented, superficial support or thought are demonstrated.	Ideas are inconsistent, unsupported, or otherwise poorly conveyed	Does not warrant higher grade.	
Content	Provides well-written introduction, body and conclusion. Remains on 1 topic. Factual and includes necessary and valuable details. Absolutely professional.	Minor errors in details or otherwise weak presentation of topic. Sufficient content for purpose.	Lacks important detail in some area.	Deviates from topic. Lacks multiple important details.	Unclear topic. Significantly inaccurate facts or details. Lacks call for action.	
Style	No syntax mistakes. Structure is intentional, succinct, varied, fluid and persuasively targeted to audience.	Simple sentence structure. Few minor syntax errors. Some lack of sophistication.	Monotonous structure. Several minor, or one major syntax error. Lacks sophistication.	Multiple major syntax errors. Tedious structure. Boorish.	Inappropriately derogatory. Unintelligible structure.	
					Rough Score	
Deduct 20% if not 500-600 words in length						
Late deduction						
					Final Score	

Objectives: This assignment addresses Course Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

PASS Learning Center approval: Signed _____ Date _____ ☐ Ready for submission ☐ Needs further revision

Group Project 1

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Each group will perform a basic phenomenological research project concerning an issue in current events. The research process and more detailed guidelines will be discussed in class.

Each group will begin by determining a research question. For example, a research question unrelated to current events might be: “What are the advantages to Webber students living in dorms?” For the purposes of this assignment, 10 people, who are not members of this class, will be interviewed. The interview process will be discussed in class and each group’s plan must be approved by the professor.

After completing the research project, each group will prepare a report and present their findings to the class. The presentation will be between 9 and 12 minutes in length. The group project will comprise 8% of the course grade for each student.

Schedule for Group Project 1:

- 9/23 Groups assigned
- 9/30 Research question submitted for approval
- 10/7 Research plan submitted
- 10/25 Interview transcripts submitted
- 11/8 Project due and presentations

Group Project 1 Report Rubric

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

The report will contain the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Purpose (research question and relevance), Literature Review, Methodology (including population and sample), Results, and Conclusions. Anonymous transcripts will also be included as an appendix.

A (100%)

All areas of the report are adequately addressed. Writing is succinct, accurate, articulate, and insightful. Conclusions demonstrate comprehension, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information from literature and interviews. Grammar and spelling meet professional expectations.

A- (90%)

All areas of the report are adequately addressed. Writing is succinct, accurate and articulate, but may lack significant insight. Conclusions are reasonable.

B (80%)

Grammar and spelling are below professional standards (e.g., obvious spelling errors, use of homonyms, etc.).

C (70%)

Areas of the report are addressed superficially. Writing has a few notable problems by lacking clarity, brevity and/or accuracy. Conclusions demonstrate minimal contribution to the research question. Grammar and spelling fail to demonstrate careful editing (e.g., sentence fragment, confusing structure, run-on sentence, etc.).

D (60%)

Writing demonstrates lack of editing. Conclusions demonstrate minimally acceptable (i.e., trivial) significance to the research question.

F (no credit)

Essay does not meet the standards for any of the above grades.

Grade



Deduct 20% for each day late.

PASS Learning Center approval:

Reviewed by: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

☐ Ready for submission

☐ Needs further revision

Group Project 2

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Each group will prepare a report and presentation on the topic they think should be most important in current events. The group may choose to one of two options.

- Option 1** – Take the perspective of Webber students. Address the topic your group thinks should be most important to Webber students.
- Option 2** – Take the perspective of a specific organization (e.g., a political party, non-profit organization, or corporation). Address the topic your group thinks should be most important to the chosen organization.

The project will involve choosing a topic, investigating the history and present social, political and economic atmosphere of the topic, analyzing and evaluating policies and proposals, and determining how constituents may become involved in the topic.

The topic must be related to the objectives of this course. There are countless topics within the scope of this course. It is up to the group to determine which topic is most important and provide a basis for that claim. Once a topic is chosen, it must be approved by the professor.

Investigate the topic, including history and the present situation. Consider what attempts have been made in the past to address this topic and what current efforts are being made by leaders. Analyze and evaluate the historical and current efforts to make conclusions about what should now be done to address the topic. The group may decide to endorse a specific proposal, or the group may make a new proposal. The group must defend their decision and explain the rationale for their choice of proposals.

Each group will prepare a written report and make a presentation to the class. The written report will be in the format of a ‘white paper.’ The presentation will be between 9 and 12 minutes in length.

Group Project 2 White Paper Rubric

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

A (100%)

The paper includes an excellent introduction, including demonstration of the importance of the topic. The topic context and its relevance to the constituency are well presented. Writing is succinct, accurate, articulate, and insightful. Conclusions and proposals demonstrate comprehension, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information from research. Grammar and spelling meet professional expectations.

A- (90%)

The paper includes a good introduction, including demonstration of the importance of the topic. The topic context and its relevance to the constituency are effectively discussed. Writing is succinct, accurate and articulate, but may lack significant insight. Conclusions and proposals demonstrate comprehension, analysis, synthesis and of information from research, but lack compelling evaluation.

B (80%)

The paper includes an acceptable introduction, including demonstration of the importance of the topic. The topic context and its relevance to the constituency are adequately discussed. Writing has minor problems, but is still meets moderate college level standards. Conclusions and proposals demonstrate comprehension and analysis, with reasonable attempts at synthesis and evaluation.

C (70%)

Areas of the paper are addressed superficially. Writing has some notable problems by lacking clarity, brevity and/or accuracy. Conclusions demonstrate minimal contribution to the topic or constituency. Grammar and spelling fail to demonstrate careful editing (e.g., sentence fragment, confusing structure, run-on sentence, etc.).

D (60%)

Writing demonstrates lack of editing. Paper content is minimally acceptable.

F (no credit)

Essay does not meet the standards for any of the above grades.

Grade

Deduct 20% for each day late.

PASS Learning Center approval:

Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ ☐ Ready for submission ☐ Needs further revision

Group Project Presentation Rubric

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Presenters' Names: _____

Presentation Topic: _____

		Points Possible	Points Earned
1.	Presenters introduced the topic well.	10	
2.	The introduction gained audience attention.	5	
3.	Presenters spoke clearly.	5	
4.	Presenters seemed well prepared.	10	
5.	All information was explained well.	5	
6.	Good nonverbal communication techniques were used.	5	
7.	Presenters conveyed credibility.	5	
8.	Presenters were professional.	10	
9.	The presentation was visually interesting.	5	
10.	Presenters concluded the presentation well.	10	
11.	Presenters encouraged questions.	5	
12.	The presentation was coordinated well.	5	
13.	The presentation was within the allotted time.	5	
14.	The presentation was successful.	15	
		Total Points	

Comments:

Leadership Presentation Rubric

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Presenters' Name: _____

Presentation Topic: _____

	Points Possible	Points Earned
1. Presenters introduced the topic well.	10	
2. The introduction gained audience attention.	5	
3. Presenters spoke clearly.	5	
4. Presenters seemed well prepared.	10	
5. All information was explained well.	5	
6. Good nonverbal communication techniques were used.	5	
7. Presenters conveyed credibility.	5	
8. Presenters were professional.	10	
9. The presentation was visually interesting.	5	
10. Presenters concluded the presentation well.	10	
11. Presenters encouraged questions.	5	
12. The presentation was creative.	5	
13. The presentation was within the allotted time.	5	
14. The presentation was successful.	15	
Total Points		

Comments:

Leadership Presentation

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Students will be divided into groups with 2 (or possibly 3) members for these presentations. Each group will give a class presentation based upon an assigned chapter from a leadership text. Generally, one group will present at the first class meeting of each week. A schedule will be provided, as groups are assigned.

The presentation should serve to inform the class about the content of the chapter. Each presentation should be 5-10 minutes in length. Groups are expected to conduct high-quality presentations. The provided rubric outlines the grading standards.

For information on giving presentations, see the following:

http://neeley.tcu.edu/upload/Files/PDF/CPC_7HINTS.pdf

http://neeley.tcu.edu/upload/Files/PDF/CPC_GROUPOP.pdf

<http://www.pc.maricopa.edu/cc/assets/How%20to%20give%20a%20great%20presentation.pdf>

http://home.sandiego.edu/~kaufmann/envi_mars195/handout.html

And there are plenty of books in the library.

Student Performance Self-Evaluation Form

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Directions: Please complete this form, front and back, during the week before it is due. Be sure to reflect critically on your performance for each standard.

	Exemplary	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Detrimental
1. Professionalism The student is on-time and prepared for class. Work is completed on-time and in a professional manner. Class behavior positively contributes to the learning environment. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Quality of work Completed work is of a quality indicative of a successful college student and meets objective standards of assignment rubrics. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Course knowledge The student demonstrates expected intellectual growth through both graded work and class discussions. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Collegiality The student is respectful of others and productively works as part of the learning community. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Distinction The student provides distinct contributions to the class deserving of special recognition. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Rating Definitions:

Exemplary – Consistently outstanding performance and sets the standard for others.

Exceeds Expectations – Regularly exceeds requirements and reliably performs well.

Meets Expectations – Performs according to all standards with little need for direct supervision.

Needs Improvement – Performance is unreliable or fails to meet standards.

Detrimental – Performance requires immediately and significant improvement.

Directions: Please provide responses to the following questions. Note that responses to open-ended questions may be objective (e.g., test grades), subjective (e.g., critical thinking), personal (e.g., attitude) and/or external (e.g., participation).

6. What is your greatest accomplishment during this course?

7. What do you most need to improve in this course?

8. What grade do you think you deserve in this course?

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ F

9. Why do you deserve that grade?

Reading Report

POL 230: Current Events (Fall 2005)

Name: _____ Assignment: _____

Directions: This report must be turned in at the first class meeting of each week.

1. Please indicate how well you completed the assignment.

- ☐ I did not read the assignment.
- ☐ I skimmed or partially read the assignment.
- ☐ I read the assignment closely, but did not take notes.
- ☐ I read and took notes, but do not fully understand the text.
- ☐ I read, took notes, and believe I understand the text well.

2. What do you think is the most important idea or concept in the text?

3. What questions do you have about the text?

4. Please indicate how well you think the text contributed to the course.

- ☐ The text was essential to the course.
- ☐ The text was beneficial to the course.
- ☐ The text had some slight benefit to the course.
- ☐ The text added no value to the course.

Please feel free to make additional comments on the back.