

POL 200: Politics of Pandemics  
Maymester 2020  
Remote Tutorial Model  
M-F; May 20- June 9; 9:00am-12:30pm.  
Prof. Ricky Price Office Hours by zoom apt.

---

We are in the midst of a transformational pandemic. The novel coronavirus has directly affected our everyday lives, our hopes for the future, and the politics of the moment. In the midst of what was already a historic Presidential election, the novel coronavirus forces us to reevaluate the structure of our society economically, racially, scientifically, and institutionally. In this class we will explore the contemporary politics at stake in this pandemic, while also surveying previous pandemics and the political and community responses mounted to combat them. In doing so your final project for this class will be organized around using this information to produce public health policy for the city of Geneva, or your local community, in a political communications project, more detail below. This class will force you to think critically and creatively and you will leave this Maymester with a better understanding of the relationships between local, federal, and global politics, scientific research and politics, and how community and institutional responses shape the politics of biologic threats.

### **Organization:**

I am adopting a tutorial model of instruction for this class. This means it will be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous daily organization. This model begins where we meet and discuss the concepts and ideas from the texts for 90 minutes, and then work to break down those ideas and concepts more granularly in individual and group assignments for the second half of class. From 9:00am to 10:30am each day we will all meet synchronously in a Zoom meeting. Here we will discuss the daily readings and use them to think productively about current events. You can attend these via phone if necessary. From 10:40-12:30 you will be working in groups, or on solo assignments, that supplement our daily readings and meeting one-on-one with me; this will be primarily through zoom. Some days we will be watching documentaries together that will take up a majority of our 3-hour session. I will work to help accommodate you if this format doesn't work.

### Required Texts:

- Gina Kolata, *Flu: The Story of the great Influenza o Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Caused it*, 1999.

On days when we don't have an assigned tutorial we will watch the following documentaries:  
American Experience: Influenza 1918  
Fire in the Blood  
United in Anger

## **Assessment:**

Participation: 20%

- Attending our synchronous hour and a half. (If this becomes a problem due to health, work, or family we will work out an accommodation. It is important to prioritize these sessions as much as possible).
- Doing the reading and assignments.
- Coming to class with questions to discuss.
- Listening and supporting your fellow students.
- Group work in daily sessions (10% of total participation grade).

Two “take home” essay exams: 30%

- May 29
- June 5

Project Proposal: 10%

- Due May 25<sup>th</sup>

Presentation: 15%

- June 9<sup>th</sup>

Final Paper/Project: 25%

- June 9<sup>th</sup>

**Disability Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability for which you may need accommodations, you should self-identify, provide appropriate documentation of your disability, and register for services with Disability Services at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Disability related accommodations and services generally will not be provided until the registration and documentation process is complete. The guidelines for documenting disabilities can be found at the following website: [http://www.hws.edu/academics/ctl/disability\\_services.aspx](http://www.hws.edu/academics/ctl/disability_services.aspx). After you have completed this process please bring your letters to office hours so we can discuss how best to meet your needs in this specific course.

Please direct questions about this process or Disability Services at HWS to Christen Davis, Coordinator of Disability Services, at [ctl@hws.edu](mailto:ctl@hws.edu).

### **Department Policies:**

Critical, analytical, descriptive, and persuasive writing is central to the discipline of Political Science. In 2018 – 2019, courses in Political Science will focus on the following elements of student writing:

- Stronger thesis statements
- Greater concision in writing
- Consistent and accurate citations
- Clear quotation integration

Students can expect that their written work will be evaluated with respect to these four elements. Students can also expect to be directed to Writing Colleagues and/or CTL for help with elements as necessary (more info below).

All papers in Political Science will follow the Chicago Manual citation style.

### **Course Policies:**

I expect that you will treat each other, me, and the authors whose work we are reading with respect. Such respect can be reflected in many ways, but primarily includes doing your work, participating in the work of the course constructively, and seeking understanding of the material and discussions. This course is not about our personal political opinions and beliefs, but rather an exploration of the relationship between Sports and Politics. We will deliberate in class and in our work with evidence-based argumentation that works to persuade and educate. The key to success in the class is to be intellectually curious and academically rigorous.

It is important that you are on time and prepared to engage in discussion. The follow policies are oriented toward ensuring that outcome:

- **Absences:** I do not adjudicate between “excused absences” or “unexcused absences” – as an adult, your decision-making is your own and you have a right to reach such decisions privately. You may miss up to the equivalent of one week of class (three sessions) for any reason. A fourth absence will result in a reduction of your course grade, if you miss six classes you will be asked to withdraw from the course, as you will have missed too much material to successfully complete the semester.
- **Forget your Phone:** Phones should be turned off and put away during class time. If your phone rings—this happens—just turn it off. If you are using your phone in class for any reason, I will ask you to leave and mark you absent for the class. If this happens twice, you will fail the course.
- **Limit your screens:** Even students who are not using a device themselves show demonstrated learning loss when those near them are doing so. If you are using an electronic device in a distracting way I will ask you to put it away. If you do this a second time I will ask you to leave and follow the same protocol as I do with phones. I recommend turning off your wifi as a way to prevent the temptation to surf.
- **Take notes by hand:** Students learn the most by filtering class content into memorable notes in their own words. Typing notes often leads to something much closer to transcription for these reasons I encourage you to take notes by hand. To protect the privacy of our students, you are not permitted to record our class discussions without prior permission.
- **Speak to each other:** Students often learn best from and with each other, whether they realize it or not. Make an effort to listen to each other, and respond to the things that your classmates have said—even pose a question to the class—rather than directing comments directly to me alone. Not only does this show respect for everyone in the room, it helps us to build the kind of discussions that students (and professors’ value). If there’s anything you’d like to discuss in greater depth one-on-one, please come to my office hours.

- **Communicate effectively and appropriately:** I will typically communicate course-related information via Canvas announcements and require that students check daily for new content. Notification settings make this very easy, and you can receive notifications via email or SMS, as you prefer. Email is my preferred method of communication. I expect all students to remain reachable via HWS email until the end of finals period, in the event that I need to reach you to discuss your work. Please be mindful of appropriate email etiquette—your emails should include a form of address (Dear Professor Price, or even Hi Professor are fine) and an informative subject line (“Article link for Friday” would be good, “Question” would not). Remember that email is good for short clarifications of information not included on Canvas or in the syllabus. Longer discussions are better held during office hours.
- **Respect for Others:** Hobart and William Smith Colleges take pride in a community that nurtures the growth and development of leaders marked by integrity, propriety, and decency displayed toward themselves and toward others. Members of the HWS community are expected at all times to demonstrate respect for themselves and for others. This respect includes a responsibility to show sensitivity to differences and act justly in interactions with one another. All members of the community are entitled to and responsible for maintaining an environment of civility that is free from disparagement, intimidation, harassment and violence of any kind.
- **Intellectual Responsibility and Academic Honesty:** Hobart and William Smith Colleges espouse the ideal of academic excellence through active learning. All members of the community have responsibilities for and rights to learning, teaching, and scholarship. Within our community, teaching and learning occur in an atmosphere of reasoned discourse, intellectual honesty, mutual respect, and openness to constructive change. All members of the community are responsible for recognizing and actively avoiding violations of academic integrity, such as cheating, plagiarizing, and stealing another’s work. Any reference to other’s work must be appropriately and correctly credited. Violations of these expectations will be taken seriously, and penalties can range from failure on an assignment to a case before the Committee on Standards.

### Schedule:

May 20: Introductions

Watch beforehand: Frontline Coronavirus

### **May 21:**

- Bush Administration’s Pandemic plan
- Health & Human Service Report 2005: Pandemic Influenzas Plan
  - Executive Summary 4-15
  - Strategic Plan 15-32 & Appendixes

- Obama Administration's Pandemic Preparedness Plan
  - Playbook for Pandemic Response 1-69
- Trump's Dismantling
  - <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/obama-team-left-pandemic-playbook-for-trump-administration-officials-confirm> (Links to an external site.)
  - <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/05/trump-obama-coronavirus-pandemic-response> (Links to an external site.)

#### WATCH:

- George W. Bush, "Strategy for Flu Pandemic Preparedness and Response," Nov. 1 2005, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?189676-1/national-strategy-pandemic-preparedness> (Links to an external site.)
- Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on Ebola" Dec. 2, 2014, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?323004-2/president-obama-remarks-ebola-response> (Links to an external site.)

#### May 22:

- FLU:
  - Chapter 1: "The Plague Year"
  - Chapter 2: "A history of disease and death"
- Trevor Hoppe: *Punishing Disease: HIV and the Criminalization of Sickness*
  - "Part One: Punitive Disease Control"

#### May 25: Race, Gender and Covid-19

- Dorothy Roberts, "The Invention of Race" in *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century*, 2011, 3-25.
- Kenyon Farrow, "Covid-19 is Devastating Black Communities," *TheBody.com*, May 6, 2020
- Whitney N. Laster Pirtle, "Racial Capitalism: A Fundamental Cause of Novel Coronavirus," *Journal of Health Education and Behavior*, 00 (0), 2020.
- Dalton Walker, "South Dakota Governor Calls on Trump in Tribal Checkpoint Feud," *Indian Country Today*, May 20, 2020.
- Rosemary Westwood, "We're not Asking for Much!": Sanitation Workers Enter Second Week of Coronavirus Strike" *New Orleans Public Radio*, May 12, 2020
- Rosemary Westwood, "Striking New Orleans Sanitation Workers Escalate Their Fight," *New Orleans Public Radio*, May 18 2020.
- Elizabeth Kolbert, "Pandemics and the Shape of History" *The New Yorker*, March 30, 2020

- Meera Jagannathan, "Men Less Likely to Wear Face Masks because they're 'not cool' and a 'sign of weakness,'" NY POST, May 14, 2020
- Min Jin Lee, "What I Want the Woman Behind the Counter to Know," NY Times Opinion, May 14, 2020
- Sexworkers and Covid Pamphlet

LISTEN:

Virginia Public Radio: "African Americans Make up all of Richmond Coronavirus Deaths":  
<https://vpm.org/news/articles/12538/african-americans-make-up-all-of-richmond-coronavirus-deaths> (Links to an external site.)

### May 26: Federal Institutions

- CDC
  - Our History Our Story: <https://www.cdc.gov/about/history/index.html> (Links to an external site.)
  - CDC Timelies: <https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/1940-1970.html>
- David Rosner & Gerald Markowitz, "Emergency Preparedness, Bioterrorism, and the CDC" in Are We Ready? Public Health Since 911, 2006
- Ricky Price, "Viral Memories: The Making of Institutional History and Community Memory in the HIV/AIDS Crisis," OnCurring, Issue 42, September 2019.
- NIH:
  - Short History: <https://history.nih.gov/display/history/A+Short+History+of+the+National+Institutes+of+Health>
  - Chronology of Events: <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/nih-almanac/chronology-events>
  - Legislative Chronology: <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/nih-almanac/legislative-chronology>

Explore Public Health Archive: <https://globalhealthchronicles.org>

### May 27: International Institutions

- WHO
  - "Brief History of WHO", The Lancet, 2002

- WHO's Self Historicization <https://www.who.int/about/who-we-are/history>
- Theodore Brown, Marcus Cueto, Elizabeth Fee, The WHO and the transition from "International" to "Global" Public Health," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol 96. No. 1 2006
- Elizabeth Fee, "Whither WHO" *American Public Health Journal*, Vol 106, No. 11, 2016

Watch:

- What's behind Trump's criticism of the World Health Organization, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX6HZPxX5M>
- UN: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/health/>

WATCH in Class: Fire in the Blood, Documentary 2012.

### May 28: Polio & 1918 Revisited

- Bernard Seytre and Mary Shaffer, *The Death of a Disease: The Eradication of Poliomyelitis*, 2005.
  - Chapter 1-4
- FLU:
  - Chapter 3-4

### May 29: HIV/AIDS

- Jennifer Brier, "What should the Federal Government Do?" from *Infectious Ideas: US Political Responses to the AID Crisis*, 2009

Watch:

- ACT-UP Ashes Action: In 1992 members of ACT-UP descended on Washington DC and threw the ashes of their loved ones who had died from HIV/AIDS related causes on the lawn of the White House: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWbzinqlIPk&list=PL\\_-b-ctiMW3wteFeSD39xf1XWgx4JD8R1&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWbzinqlIPk&list=PL_-b-ctiMW3wteFeSD39xf1XWgx4JD8R1&index=2)
- Treatment Activist Guerrillas (TAG) action from 1991 where activists placed a giant condom over the house of anti-lgbtq and anti-condoms Senator Jessie Helms. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS-w4Pqvkuw>

Watch in class "United in Anger" by Jim Hubbard and Sarah Schulman

## June 1: No Readings

## June 2:

- FLU
  - Chapter 5, "Swine Flu"
  - Chapter 6, "A Litigation Nightmare"
- Read or Listen: "Thucydides on the Plague of Athens":  
<https://www.ancient.eu/article/1535/thucydides-on-the-plague-of-athens-text-commentar/> (Links to an external site.)
- John Mullhall, "Plague before the Pandemics: The Greek Medical Evidence for Bubonic Plague before the Sixth Century," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol 93, No. 2, 2019.
- Watch: "Plagues and Pandemics in the Ancient and Medieval World" *Ancient History Encyclopedia*,  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=\\_5g1P0WggQ4&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=_5g1P0WggQ4&feature=emb_logo)

## June 3: Developing Scientific Facts

- FLU
  - Chapter 7, "John Dalton's Eyeballs"
- Ludwig Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, 1979 [1935]
  - Chapter 1 & 2

## June 4: Vaccines and Insurance

- NIH Report: Insurance & Vaccines, 2004
- Paul Olfit, *The Cutter Incident: How America's First Polio Vaccine led to Today's Growing Vaccine Crisis*
  - Chapter 1: Little White Coffins
  - Chapter 2: How does it Feel to be a Killer of Children?
- Ricky Price, "Treatment and Prevention of HIV Bodies" *LGBTQ Politics Reader*.

## June 5: Public Health Communications

- Public Health and Activist Archives (On canvas)



- FLU
  - Chapter 8

**June 8: Workshop & End of FLU**

- FLU
  - Chapter 9
  - Flu Chapter 10

**June 9: Project Presentations**