

Gov 20 – Colin's Sections – Fall 2012

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to my Gov 20 section for Fall 2012. I am excited to have you in our class and to have the chance to get to know all of you over the next few months. I want to outline a few expectations for section, and also let you know how to get in touch with me in case you have any questions or concerns.

My office hours will be Mondays from 2pm to 4pm in the CGIS Cafe. It never hurts to let me know that you're coming, but you can always feel free to drop in without an appointment. If you can't meet at this time, or if you need to talk about more sensitive issues (i.e., grading concerns) and would prefer to schedule a one-on-one meeting, we can also set up an appointment outside of office hours. As I've mentioned in section, I can be a bit absent-minded, so anything that you need me to take action on should be e-mailed to me at brown4@fas.harvard.edu. I promise to reply to all e-mails within 48 hours--usually it will be much quicker than that, but at busy times of the semester it may take me those two days to respond. If the question is a long, course-material related question, I may ask you to set up an appointment instead, or encourage you to bring the question to section for group discussion.

Participation in section is absolutely required as part of the course. You are expected to attend section every week and to take part in the discussion. If you truly can't make a week's section, let me know *ahead of time* and we will try to find an alternate section for you to attend or a way to make it up (such as a 1-2 page response essay). Unexcused absences will hurt your participation grade.

What is expected for a good participation grade is simply that you are actively following the conversation and contributing a couple of thoughts and/or questions---you can always feel free to talk more but should not feel that you must compete to talk as much as possible to receive the best possible grade. To facilitate the conversation, *I will require a discussion question to be e-mailed to me by 10 am Thursdays (the beginning of lecture)*. This will ensure that everyone is prepared with something to talk about, and that I'll know what topics are of greatest interest to you in a given week (or are giving you the most trouble). Some examples of questions you could ask will be sent in a separate e-mail. In order to fully participate, *you are required to have completed the week's readings by the start of section*. Because section is a discussion rather than simply another lecture, you shouldn't need to take more than a handful of notes over the course of the session. Because of this, while laptops are permitted in section, I strongly encourage you to leave them at home or to leave them closed during the discussion, and Facebook, Gchat, etc. are not permitted during section.

Lastly, as with all courses at Harvard, plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration are not permitted and may bring serious consequences. Because these concepts can be a bit unclear and there are so many first-year students in the course, we will be discussing what precisely this means throughout the semester, particularly around the paper assignments. In brief, cite all sources, and assume that working with others on assignments is not permitted unless we *explicitly* say it is allowed. But if you are unsure of whether something counts as plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration, ask!

Thanks so much, and as always, feel free to contact me with any questions. Looking forward to a good semester!

-Colin