YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Attendance and Discussion** - Everyone must come to class and participate in discussion. If you are going to be absent, please email me in advance of class. No excuses are necessary. More than one absence will lower your final grade by $\frac{1}{3}$.

2. **Reading** - Readings are available on the course website. Two inexpensive paperbacks are available from the Tufts Bookstore, though you may get them from the library or purchase them anywhere you can find the same edition (you can buy them for about $5 each on Amazon).

3. **Papers** - Two short argumentative papers (2 pages each). You may request an extension for a paper deadline if you email me a request, with a prospective due date, 24 hours before the deadline. Without an extension, late paper grades will be dropped by $\frac{1}{3}$ for each day a paper is late.

4. **Current Events Presentation** - Each student will be assigned one class day on which to present a news article related to issues discussed in class. Students should prepare 5-8 open-ended questions to lead discussion about issues related to the article.

5. **Final Presentation** - 10-15 minutes. 10-15 minutes. Students will create a thought
experiment or present a case study, analyzing it through the lens of one or more of the thinkers or theories discussed in the course. This presentation will demonstrate that students have the ability to apply what we have discussed in class to new situations. Students should be creative, and may consider multimedia, fictional, or other methods for presenting their work.

GRADING: Participation (Attendance, Discussion, Reading) 15%
Papers 40%
Current Events Presentation 20%
Final Presentation 25%

Student Accessibility Services: Tufts University is committed to providing equal access and support to all students by providing reasonable accommodations so that each student may access their curricula and achieve their personal and academic potential. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations please contact the Student Accessibility Services office at 617-627-4539, or through their email at Accessibility@tufts.edu to make an appointment with the director to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

BOOKS TO BUY OR BORROW

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

**Week 1 - How do you define a lie?**
Course introduction. Student introductions. Working definitions of Lie, Truth, and Politics, and case studies from contemporary politics that will help refine our definitions.

**Week 2 - Is lying a necessary part of political life?**
(Film) Errol Morris - *The Unknown Known*
St. Augustine - Selections from “Lying” (395 CE) (Sections I-III)
Activities: Current Event Presentation (Instructor): “US ‘Foils Oregon Bomb Plot’”

**Week 3 - What’s are lies for?**
Plato - Selections from *The Republic* (ca. 380 BCE)
Lucian of Samosata - Selections from *True History* (ca. 120-190 CE)
Activities: Current Event Presentation (Instructor): “Lives and Lies of a Professional Impostor”
Week 4 - Who does lying harm?
  Immanuel Kant - Selections from *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and “On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives” (1799)
  Assignments: Paper 1 Due at the end of the week.

Week 5 - Are lies empowering?
  Niccolò Machiavelli - Ch. 18 of *The Prince* (1532)
  Ben Jonson - *Volpone* (1605) (First Half)

Week 6 - Are lies pleasurable?
  Francis Bacon - “Of Truth” (1625)
  Ben Jonson - *Volpone* (1605) (Second Half)

Week 7 - What do lies have to do with action?
  Hannah Arendt - “Truth and Politics” (1968) (sections IV and V only)
  J.L. Austin - “A Plea for Excuses” (1956)

Week 8 - When are Lies Acceptable? (I)
  Nella Larsen - *Passing* (1929) (first half)
  Assignments: Paper 2 due at the end of the week.

Week 9 - When are lies acceptable? (II)
  Nella Larsen - *Passing* (second half)
  Mark Twain - “On the Decay of the Art Lying” (1880)

Week 10 - Who cares about truth anymore?
  Jean Baudrillard - Selections from *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981/1994)

Week 11 - How can we live in a world without certainty? (I)
  Vladimir Nabokov - *Pale Fire* (1962) (first half)

Week 12 - How can we live in a world without certainty? (II)
  Vladimir Nabokov - *Pale Fire* (1962) (second half)

Week 13 - Conclusions. And What’s Next?
  Activities: Final thoughts and lingering questions.
  Assignments: Final Presentations.