

Syllabus for: (name of class) U.S. Government and Politics	
Semester & Year:	Fall 2012
Course ID and Section Number:	POLSC 10- E1543
Number of Credits/Units:	3
Day/Time:	M/W 2:50- 4:15
Location:	FM 100
Instructor's Name:	Emenaker
Contact Information:	Office hours: FM 200E; M/W 1:15-2:30 & T/Th 1:15-2:00 Phone:707.476.4306 Email:ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu
Course Description (catalog description as described in course outline): This course addresses both the philosophic roots and the contemporary operation of American national, state, and local government. Specific topics include constitutional development, federal-state relations, and the rights and obligations of citizens under the federal and California constitutions.	
Student Learning Outcomes (as described in course outline) : Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the history and philosophy of the Constitution, politics, and government in the US. 2. Identify the major provisions of the California and US Constitution. 3. Compare the three branches of California and US Government, and related political institutions. 4. Outline the relationship between the states and national government (ie. federalism). 5. Analyze contemporary issues facing California and the US system of government. 	
Special accommodations: College of the Redwoods complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request at least one week before the first test so that necessary arrangements can be made. No last-minute arrangements or post-test adjustments will be made. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability related services and may need accommodations, please see me or contact Disabled Students Programs and Services. Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS.	
Academic Misconduct: Cheating, plagiarism, collusion, abuse of resource materials, computer misuse, fabrication or falsification, multiple submissions, complicity in academic misconduct, and/ or bearing false witness will not be tolerated. Violations will be dealt with according to the procedures and sanctions proscribed by the College of the Redwoods. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating on exams will receive an "F" in the course. The student code of conduct is available on the College of the Redwoods website at: http://www.redwoods.edu/District/Board/New/Chapter5/Ap5500.pdf	
College of the Redwoods is committed to equal opportunity in employment, admission to the college, and in the conduct of all of its programs and activities.	

POLSC 10: US Government & Politics

Fall 2012 Course Syllabus

I advise you to bring your syllabus to each class session. The syllabus will orient you to the day's activities and allow you to fill in new assignments, due dates and/or make changes to the course outline as they occur.

Professor: Ryan Emenaker -- ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu -- 707-476-4306

Office Hours: FM 200E; M/W 1:15-2:30 & T/Th 1:15-2:00. Please think of me as a resource. I am happy to chat about anything going on in this class, politics, or whatever is on your mind. I am also available to help you by phone and e-mail and I will attempt to make other arrangements if needed.

Course Overview: This course addresses both the philosophic roots and the contemporary operation of American national, state, and local government. Specific topics include constitutional development, federal-state relations, and the rights and obligations of citizens under the federal and California constitutions.

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain the history and philosophy of the Constitution, politics, and government in the US.
2. Identify the major provisions of the California and US Constitution.
3. Compare the three branches of California and US Government, and related political institutions.
4. Outline the relationship between the states and national government (ie. federalism).
5. Analyze contemporary issues facing California and the US system of government.

Ideally, you would leave this class and be able to remember the particulars about U.S. government years from now. Realistically, you should be able to apply the fundamental principles of this course to political issues for years to come. Facts are simple to memorize, but they fade quickly. Thinking and analyzing stay with you forever. Even if years from now you can't remember great deal about how a bill becomes a law but can support your opinion in a political debate with friends or family, this course will have succeeded in empowering you.

Significant attention will be given to having students think about questions with no clear answer, especially the issues of how democratic is American politics and how much emphasis should be given to the competing values of security, liberty, and equality. Students are encouraged to raise questions at any time. The professor does not have all the answers; you should feel free to question and challenge me.

Meeting Times/Locations: M/W 2:50- 4:15 (Section E1543) Forum (FM) 100. 3 Units.

Text (required):

1) American Government: Power & Purpose (Brief 12th Edition) by Lowi et al. is a traditional textbook. Any version of the 12th edition will work for this course. The 11th edition is similar and may work, but the page numbering and examples will differ; you are responsible for the information in the 12th edition.

2) POLSC 10 Course Packet (MUST BE THIS SEMESTER'S COURSE PACKET) is a collection of readings I have compiled. Many students comment their favorite readings come from the packet. **You should bring the packet to every class**; we will often get into deep discussions on these readings and you will need your highlighted text to join the discussion.

3) Additional readings and/or activities will be assigned through MyCR and/or handed out in class. The readings and handouts are intended to help broaden your understanding of classroom discussion.

4) You should keep up with national and local news. Most news sources are on the web. I will be giving an assignment early in the semester that helps you identify some of the better known news sources.

Instructor Expectations Students should be aware that a considerable amount of reading, web research, and other work will be required as preparation for each class. To receive a passing grade a minimum of 2 to 4 hours will be required to prepare for each session. Additional time will be needed to prepare for the Mid-Term, Final, and to complete homework and writing assignments.

At a minimum, students are expected to:

1. Prepare carefully before class. Do the assigned reading, complete any assignments, think about the material, and bring questions and comments.
2. Expect that most of the work will be interesting and stimulating; contribute to making it so.
3. Keep abreast of current events. This includes regularly reading at least one newspaper.
4. Show up on time. Do not make other appointments during class hours.

MyCR- Be certain that you know how to use MyCR and can check your MyCR e-mail. I will be communicating to the class by e-mail and through MyCR with some frequency and will assume you check your MyCR e-mail at least every other day. MyCR will be used to, post assignments, PowerPoints and lecture notes, send out announcements, and make changes to the course outline. If you are not able to use MyCR or are not receiving messages from me do not wait to fix this problem.

Grading:	Class Participation & Homework = 250 points	Reading Responses = 200 points
	Quiz = 50 points	
	In-Class Mid-Term Exam = 200 points	In-Class Final Exam = 200 points
	Take Home Mid-Term Essay = 100 points	Take Home Final Essay = 50 points
		Total Semester Points = 1,000

Assignments & Grading:

1. Class participation & Homework is 25% of your grade and vital for success in this class. I do not accept excuses for missed participation; you either participate or you don't. You can't participate if you're not in class. Participation in this course means taking an active role in class discussions, group-work, in-class written assignments, and completing all assigned readings, and other assigned homework.

If you fail to attend class it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from one of your colleagues. If you miss a handout most are on posted on MyCR, for those that are not you might ask a colleague if you may copy theirs. I encourage everyone to exchange contact information with at least two other students for these purposes.

2. Reading Responses are written pieces to 10 of the required readings. Please do not attempt to summarize the entire chapter or article. Instead, you are to pick a direct quote, theme, or idea from the assigned reading for that week 1) write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing the author's intended meaning for the theme, quote, or idea; 2) write 1-2 paragraphs describing your reactions to the quote or theme. *I do simply want to know what the authors said; I want to know what YOU think about what they said.* A sample reading response is included in the course packet.

You must be responding to the current week's readings. You may only turn in one per week; absolutely no excuse--no matter how valid--will allow you to turn in more than one per week. Since you only need to turn in 10 for the entire semester you are already allowed to "miss" reading responses for 5 weeks of the semester. If you miss more than that--no matter the reason--then you do not deserve to receive full credit for this portion of the class. Extra credit will not be given for turning in more than 10.

These writings are designed to get you thinking about the readings we do throughout the semester, they reinforce classroom discussion and sharpen your analytical skills. *Each response piece should be at least one **typed page**. Due at the start of class!!! No late or e-mailed response pieces will be accepted!!! You must have at least one turned in by Wednesday September 19th, however you should feel free to turn one in before this.*

3. Mid-Term Exam will be held during week #10 of the course (Monday October 29th). It will start promptly at the beginning of class. It may include true/false, multiple choice, identification, as well as short and long answer questions. Make-up exams are not allowed except under the most exceptional of extenuating circumstances and are allowed at the discretion of the instructor. In such cases a student must: 1) contact the instructor immediately; 2) provide written documentation of a medical, legal, or similarly serious nature; 3) schedule a time to take the exam within 72 hours of the original exam time. The Mid-Term Study Guide will be handed out the week before the exam. Last semester's study review guide is included in the course packet, you may want to look at this throughout the semester to ensure you are learning the relevant material. There will be a Mid-Term review the class before the Mid-Term is given.

A take-home essay question will also be given out with the Mid-Term Study Guide. The take home essay is due at the start of the mid-term exam; no late essays will be accepted.

4. Final Exam, as per college policy, must be taken on the designated day and time for your class section- no exceptions, no make-up exams. We will do an in-class review for the Final during our final class meeting. The format will be substantially similar to the Mid-Term.

A take-home essay question will also be given out with the Final Exam Study Guide. The take home essay is due at the start of the Final exam; no late essays will be accepted.

GRADING SCALE:

A	= 930 – 1000 pts	C+	= 750 – 799 pts
A-	= 900 – 929 pts	C	= 700 – 749 pts
B+	= 860 – 899 pts	D	= 600 – 699 pts
B	= 825 – 859 pts	F	= 0 – 599 pts
B-	= 800 – 824 pts		

An "incomplete" grade will not be given except under extraordinary circumstances.

A worksheet will be handed out to help you compute your class grade.

Accommodations: Everyone deserves a learning environment that maximizes their strengths, therefore, students with the appropriate paperwork from the office of Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) should notify me of any accommodations required.

If you believe you might benefit from disability related services and may need accommodations, please see me or contact DSPS. Through DSPS students can request alternative media. No last-minute arrangements or post-test adjustments will be made.

ESOL students may be allowed to utilize a bilingual dictionary on some parts of the exams-please see the instructor for more information.

Classroom Etiquette: Everyone should come to class prepared to be actively involved (i.e. listening, taking notes, asking questions, providing comments, discussing readings, etc.). If you arrive late please enter as quietly as possible. No side-conversations, eating meals, sleeping, using cellular phones, etc. For further information please view College of the Redwoods Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Honesty: Cheating, plagiarism, collusion, abuse of resource materials, computer misuse, fabrication or falsification, multiple submissions, complicity in academic misconduct, and/ or bearing false witness are expressly prohibited by the College of the Redwoods Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.redwoods.edu/District/Board/New/Chapter5/Ap5500.pdf>) and will NOT be tolerated in this class. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will *automatically fail* that component of the course and may also, at the instructor's discretion, be assigned a failing grade in the course. All students caught cheating or plagiarizing, regardless of the nature or severity of the offence, will be referred to the Vice President of Student Services and may be subject to additional college-level sanctions, which, depending, on the nature of the offense, can include suspension or expulsion from the College.

Course Outline, Readings, and Due Dates Subject to Change at Instructors Discretion
(Changes will be announced in class and/or on MyCR)

POLSC 10: US Government & Politics
Course Outline & Reading Schedule

FOUNDATIONS OF US POLITICAL THOUGHT

- Week #1** (8/27) **Class Discussion:** Course Outline: Why are you in this class? What are the ground rules? What do we know/not know? How do you do well in this class?
- Readings:** 1) Course Syllabus & Outline. *Make sure to read thoroughly.*
2) Table of Contents & Sections 1.1 to 1.10 in Course Packet (CP)
3) "Why are some countries Rich and Others Poor?" (Section 2.1 CP)
4) The Declaration of Independence (Section 2.2 CP)
5) Sample Reading Response (Section 1.9 CP) *Why did I pick this one as an example?*
6) News Survey Assignment (MyCR) Due 9/10
7) Student Information & Contract Form (MyCR) (Due 9/10 or dropped from class!)
- (8/29) **Class Discussion:** Declaration of Independence: What are unalienable rights? Why do people form governments? Where does the legitimate power of government come from? What is Critical Reading?
- Readings:** 1) Handout- "Noam Chomsky on Democracy."
2) Preface & Ch. 1 from Text
3) "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" Frederick Douglass (CP)
4) Group Citizenship Test (MyCR) Due 9/12
-
- Week #2** (9/5) **Class Discussion:** Democracy: How is democracy defined?
- Readings:** 1) "Yes the Health-Care Mandate is About Liberty," Cohn & Strauss (CP)
2) "Health Care Ruling Back Responsibility," Sacramento Bee (CP)
3) "Some Truths are not Self-Evident," Howard Zinn (CP)
4) "Fred Korematsu, 86, Dies." (CP)
5) "The Problem is Civil Obedience," Howard Zinn (CP)
-
- Week #3** (9/10) **Class Discussion:** **News Survey Assignment Due.** What is Social Contract theory? Would you form a government if you lived in the "original condition?" The Articles of Confederation: the first U.S. Constitution, why wasn't it the last? US Constitution: Why was it written? Who was excluded?
- Readings:** 1) Ch. 2 from Text
2) "4 Myths about the Constitution." (CP)
3) Group Constitution Scavenger Hunt Exercise (MyCR) Due 9/24
- (9/12) **Class Discussion:** **Group Citizenship Test Due.** What does citizenship mean? What obligations does government have? US Constitution: What structures of did it establish?
- Readings:** 1) How Democratic is the American Constitution? Ch. 3 "The Constitution as a Model: An American Illusion" Robert Dahl (CP)
-
- Week #4** (9/17) **Class Discussion:** US Constitution Continued
- Readings:** 1) Ch. 3 p. 56-76 from Text
2) "'We the People' Loses Appeal with People Around World," NY Times (CP)
3) "At Heart of Health Law Clash, 1942 Case of Farmer's Wheat," NY Times (CP)
4) "Jumping Frogs, Endangered Toads, and Ca's Marijuana Law," (CP)
- (9/19) **Class Discussion:** **Must have at least one Reading Response turned in.** Federalism: Why did the founders establish federalism? What does it mean for us today?
- Readings:** 1) Ch. 3 pp. 76-83 from Text
2) "Justices to Rule on Role of States in Immigration," NY Times. (CP)
3) "Leery of Washington, Alaska Feasts on Its Dollars," NY Times. (CP)
4) "The Health Reform Battle Will Go on," American Prospect. (CP)
5) "How Obama Can Attack the Supreme Court—and Win," The Atlantic (CP)
6) State Government Action Assignment (MyCR) Due 9/24
7) Review Guide for Quiz (MyCR)

- Week #5** (9/24) **Class Discussion: Constitution Scavenger Hunt & State Government Assignment Due**
Separation of Powers: What are the powers of the 3 branches of government? How can each branch check the other two?
- Readings:** Review for Quiz
- (9/26) **Class Discussion: Quiz!! Constitutional Summation.**
Readings: 1) Ch. 5 from Text
2) "How Congress Works" (CP)
3) Taking on the F-Word," Boston Globe (CP)
4) Enumerated Powers of Congress & Legislative Branch Assignment (MyCR)

GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS

- Week #6** (10/1) **Class Discussion:** Legislative Branch: What are the powers of Congress? How is law made?
Readings: 1) "Lawmakers' End of Earmarks Affects Local Programs," (CP)
2) "Earmarks Could Help Candidates in Midterms," PEW Research (CP)
3) "Cuts Hit Home for Boehner, Cantor," POLITICO (CP)
- (10/3) **Class Discussion: Legislative Assignment Due.** Legislative Branch: What influences decision making? How well does Congress represent the people?
Readings: 1) Ch. 6 from Text
2) "What if Senators represented people by income..." (CP)
3) "Congress and Country: Behold the Differences," Sam Roberts. (CP)
4) "Include all Candidates in Presidential Debates," Farai Chideya (CP)

-
- Week #7** (10/8) **Class Discussion:** Finish Legislative Branch. Start Executive Branch: How has the presidency grown? What constrains the president?
Readings: 1) "Congress's Unused War Powers," George Will (CP)
2) "Obama Uses Powers to Expand Federal Rights..." Washington Post (CP)
3) "Obama Looking for Ways Around Congress..." Huffington Post (CP)
4) "House Panel Votes to Strip EPA of Power," NY Times (CP)
5) "The War on Terror & Obamacare: Mirror Images," Washington Post (CP)
- (10/10) **Class Discussion:** Executive Branch
Readings: 1) Ch. 8 from Text

-
- Week #8** (10/15) **Class Discussion:** Finish Executive Branch. Start Judicial Branch.
Readings: 1) "Why States and Localities are Watching Lower Courts" (CP)
2) "Federal Court Strikes Down California Same Sex Marriage Ban" (CP)
- (10/17) **Class Discussion:** Judicial Branch-- What is the role of an undemocratically appointed Supreme Court in a democratic society? Do we have an imperial judiciary?
Readings: 1) "Should the Courts Seek the 'Original Meaning'?" (CP)
2) "When is Judicial Activism Appropriate?" Chicago Tribune (CP)
3) Judicial Branch Assignment (MyCR) Due 10/24

-
- Week #9** (10/22) **Class Discussion:** Judicial Branch: How do judges interpret the law and Constitution?
Readings: 1) Official Mid-Term Review Guide (MyCR)
2) "The Supreme Court Can't Be Absolute," The Boston Globe (CP)
3) "The High Court not Final Say on U.S. Law," Times-Standard (CP)
4) "Crush Videos: A Constructive Dialogue" (CP)
5) "Supreme Court Appears Divided in Cross Case" (CP)
- (10/24) **Class Discussion: Judicial Assignment Due.** Mid-Term Review
Readings: Study for Mid-Term

-
- Week #10**(10/29) **Class Discussion: !!!MID-TERM!!!**
Readings: 1) Ch. 10 from Text

POLITICAL FORCES

- (10/31) **Class Discussion:** Elections: How has access to the vote expanded?
Readings: 1) "Justice Department Blocks Texas on Photo ID for Voting," NY Times (CP)
2) "Portland, Maine, Weighs Letting Noncitizens Vote" (CP)
3) "Beyond the Voting Rights Act," Reclaim Democracy (CP)
-

- Week #11** (11/5) **Class Discussion:** Elections: How does the Electoral College work? Why is it unlikely to change?
Readings: 1) "How to Expand the Voter Roles," NY Times (CP)
2) "A President by Popular Vote," LA Times (CP)
3) "Can Obama Lose," National Journal (CP)
4) "Obama 2008 Gains Key to Presidential Battleground," NY Times (CP)
5) "Is Low Turnout a Problem?" (CP)
6) Political Parties Assignment (MyCR) Due 11/14

- (11/7) **Class Discussion:** Elections: Why do people vote the way they do? Does voter turnout matter?
Readings: 1) Ch. 11 from Text
2) "Third Parties in Amer. Politics: Rich History, Many Roles" (CP)
3) "Can Activist Win by Losing?" Congress.org (CP)
4) "Right Fight: Activist vs. House GOP," POLITICO (CP)
5) Polling Assignment (MyCR) Due 11/19
-

Week #12 (11/12) **No Class**

- (11/14) **Class Discussion:** **Political Parties Assignment Due.** Political Parties: What do political parties do? What impacts do they have? Should the role of parties be expanded?
Readings: 1) Ch. 9 274-297 from Text
2) "Dysfunction: Maybe it's What the Voters Want," Sac Bee (CP)
3) "Partisan Psychology: Why do People Choose Political Loyalties..." (CP)
4) "White House Works to Shape Debate Over Health Law," NY Times (CP)
-

- Week # 13**(11/19) **Class Discussion:** **Polling Assignment Due.** Public Opinion & Polling: What is public opinion? How much does it influence policy? How much should it?
Readings: 1) Ch. 9 from Text p. 297-309
2) "The Perils of Polling," Benjamin Ginsberg (CP)

- (11/21) **Class Discussion:** Video: Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky & the Media.
Readings: Handout- Manufacturing Consent Video Questions. Due 11/26
-

- Week #14** (11/26) **Class Discussion:** **Manufacturing Consent Assignment Due.** Media: What role does the media play in politics?
Readings: 1) Ch. 4 from
2) "A History of the Civil Rights Movement" (CP)
3) "Did Brown Matter?" Cass Sunstein (CP)
4) Interest Group and Social Movements Assignment (MyCR) Due 12/3

- (11/28) **Class Discussion:** Civil Rights/Civil Liberties What rights and liberties do we have as US citizens?
Readings: 1) "What We Want," Stokely Carmichael (CP)
2) Rosa Park's Gift to the Disabled," Charles Wilson (CP)
3) Feminism is for Everybody "Feminist Politics: Where We Stand," bell hooks (CP)
4) "Despite New Law Gender Salary Gap Persist," (CP)
5) "Feds Demand Diversity on Wall Street," POLITICO (CP)
6) Ch. 12 from Text.
-

- Week #15** (12/3) **Class Discussion:** **Interest Group and Social Movements Assignment Due.** How do interest groups influence political decisions? Do they allow a variety of voices to be heard or unfairly emphasize certain interest over others?
Readings: 1) "An Issue of Sovereignty" Josh Lohmer (CP)
2) Ca. Gov. Article (MyCR)
3) Study Guide for Final (MyCR)

- (12/5) **Class Discussion:** State Government. Tribal-Federal Relations. Course Review.

Readings: Study for Final **Final Monday DECEMBER 10th 3:15-5:15**