

Syllabus for: US Government and Politics	
Semester & Year:	Fall 2012
Course ID and Section Number:	POLSC 10-- #032453
Number of Credits/Units:	3
Day/Time:	Monday and Wednesday 3:00 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.
Location:	Room 111, Mendocino Coast Education Center
Instructor's Name:	Tobias Green
Contact Information:	Office location and hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. or by appointment Phone: 707-962-2682 Email: toby-green@redwoods.edu or tgreen@mcn.org
Course Description (catalog description as described in course outline):	
A course addressing 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 both the federal and the California constitutions.	
Student Learning Outcomes (as described in course outline) :	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the history and philosophy of the Constitution, politics, and government in the United States. 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 (i.e. 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.	
<p>The student code of conduct is available on the College of the Redwoods website at: http://redwoods.edu/District/Board/New/Chapter5/AP%205500%20Conduct%20Code%20final%2002-07-2012.pdf</p> <p>Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the college catalog and on the College of the Redwoods homepage.</p> <p>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.</p>	

United States Political Institutions

PolSc 10 (032453) – Fall 2012 – Monday/Wednesday 3:00-4:25, Room 111

Course website: <http://mycr.redwoods.edu/xsl-portal>

Instructor: Tobias Green; Office: #304; Phone: 962-2682; Email tgreen@mcn.org

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:30-12:55 and 1:30-2:30, and by appointment

Course Description:

This course addresses both the philosophic roots and contemporary operation of U.S. national, state, and local governments. Specific topics include the Constitution, federal-state relations, and the rights and obligations of citizens. Students will consider various political concepts, including democracy, federalism, separation of powers, the theory of the unitary executive, political opinion, campaigns and elections, and civil liberties. Discussions will explore the ways in which various political institutions relate to national and local issues. A case study will analyze the formation of oil policy.

Objectives:

In this course, students will develop a strong understanding of the complex democratic process in the United States and in California. They will learn to understand and analyze the arguments underlying current social and political controversies, and relate them to foundational principles and institutions. Students will also gain insight into a variety of news media and the ways in which they present information.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain the history and philosophy of the Constitution, politics, and government in the United States.
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 (i.e. federalism).
5. Analyze contemporary issues facing California and the US system of government.

Texts:

Ira Katznelson et al, *The Politics of Power*, 6th ed. (NY: W. W. Norton & Co, 2011) ISBN 978-0-393-93325-3

John P. MacKenzie, *Absolute Power* (NY: Century Foundation, 2008) ISBN 0-87078-511-7

Richard Heinberg, *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality* (New Society Publishers, 2011) ISBN 978-0865716957

Edgar Kaskla, *California Politics: The Fault Lines of Power, Wealth, and Diversity* (CQ Press, 2008) ISBN: 978-0-87289-276-7

Occasional readings, access from website

Class Format:

You must take the Weekly Quiz online by 2:55 each Monday. Monday's class will include a discussion of the readings and a synthesis with the materials from the previous week. Each Wednesday's class will consist of a topical lecture which focuses on a crucial topic of the period under study, a visual presentation (video, slides, physical evidence, etc.), and/or a class exercise. The order of these will vary depending on the material at hand.

Grading:

Quizzes and Discussions (10%): These will comprise 10% of the final grade.

News Analyses (20%): Six times during the semester each student will submit a review of an article about national or state political issues from a major news source. Some articles will be supplied by the instructor.

Essay (20%): There will be one expository essay required for this class; see below under Essay for details. It will comprise 20% of the final grade.

Examinations (40%): There will be one Midterm examination and one Final examination, which will include two short answers and one essay. Each examination will comprise 20% of the final grade.

Participation (10%): Regular attendance and participation in classroom discussion will be 10% of the final grade.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism (presenting some else's work as your own) and cheating (receiving unauthorized assistance) are dishonest practices and will not be tolerated in this class. CR's policy provides severe penalties in these cases, from warning to permanent suspension. If you have any questions or doubts about this issue, ask the instructor.

Expectations:

Students will attend every class and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. ALL written assignments must be clearly written in paragraphs of complete sentences. Assignments must be typed in 12-point Times Roman font with 1" margins on all sides. Late assignments will be penalized one grade increment for each day (including weekends) that they are late.

News Analyses:

These exercises are intended to help students become more knowledgeable about and involved in current affairs, and to help them learn to analyze news sources critically. Material for evaluation will include "objective" news articles, editorials, and analytical print articles, and radio and television news; the instructor will furnish a structure for these exercises. NAs should be substantive, and the subjects must be on major national and/or state issues.

Movies/Videos:

Movies and videos shown in class are part of the curriculum. Attendance in classes where these are shown is required, as for any other class meeting. Discussions during these class meetings will include material which be necessary for papers and examinations.

Essay:

Based on the overview of political institutions and the in-depth study of either water or oil in relation to policy, write an essay of ten to fifteen pages that makes connections between these two subjects. It must analyze how two or more political institutions facilitate or inhibit public participation in policy discussion and formulation. Use at least two additional news sources and one secondary source in addition to material from the class to develop an argument. The last part of the essay will suggest institutional changes or reforms which would increase citizen participation.

We will spend time in class to develop thesis statements (arguments), explore sources of information, and review the use of footnotes.

Submitting the Essay:

Your essay will be submitted in two formats. Turn in a paper copy in class at the beginning of the period on the due date. You must also submit an electronic version to the instructor.

Help:

The Learning Assistance Center on campus is an excellent source of editorial help, both before and after submitting work. Students will receive review sheets before each exam. In addition, English faculty are available to students for several hours each week for focused help on building writing skills. Students receive from ½ to 1 credit for this by registering for English 152.

Benefits:

Writing these assignments or creating these presentations will give you the opportunity to explore some of the detail of history, which is often the most interesting part. It will also introduce you to the process of reconstructing history by interpreting historic data. Finally, it will help you develop the skills you need to succeed on the exams, in particular the critical thinking skill of putting particular objects or accounts of events in the broader context of historical events and trends.

MORE:

See the back page of the syllabus for additional information about special classroom and instructional arrangements, scheduling, expectations, and legalisms.

Caveat:

The above schedule and procedures are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Political Science 10 – Fall 2012

- Week 1 **Political, for Sure; But Is It Science?**
(8-27) *Government as a Social Institution: Democracy? For What?*
Introductions; Class mechanics; How to read
- (8-29) *Political Philosophy, Deep Questions*
- Katznelson et al, Ch. 1, Democracy's Challenge (1-21)
 - Kaskla, Introduction (1-13)
- Week 2 **The Founding, the Constitution, and Federalism**
(9-3) LABOR DAY – no class
How Does Democracy Evolve? How Do We Maintain and Extend It?
- Katznelson et al, Ch. 2, Capitalism & Democracy (28-59)
 - Kaskla, Ch. 1, Capitalism, Inequality, & the Limits of Democracy (15-28)
 - MacKenzie, Ch. 1, Introduction (1-4)
- HW: **Outline Katznelson** et al, Ch. 2
- (9-5) *Who Were the Founders of the United States?* Case Study: The Gold Rush Constitution
- Week 3 **Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**
(9-10) *Speech and Assembly, Race and War; Citizen Rights and the PATRIOT Act*
- outside reading (to be announced)
 - MacKenzie, Ch. 2, The Framers (5-12) and Ch. 3, Jackson et al (13-29)
 - Heinberg, Introduction
- HW: **NA #1 due** (“objective” news article)
- (9-12) *Which Are More Important, Civil Rights or Civil Liberties?*
- Week 4 **Political Economy**
(9-17) *From Feudalism to Corporate Capitalism*
- Katznelson et al, Ch. 3, History of American Political Economy (64-89)
 - Heinberg,
 - Kaskla, Ch. 2, Elite Politics (31-39)
- (9-19) *How “Extreme” Is Today’s Market Capitalism?*
HW: **submit three possible topics for essay**
- Week 5 **Are They Real Parties? Democratic Elections?**
(9-24) *One Person, One Vote: How to Achieve an Ideal*
- Katznelson et al, Ch. 4 (partial), Parties, Elections (95-125)
 - Heinberg,
- HW: **NA #2 due** (editorials and opinion columns)
- (9-26) *Third Parties, Social Movements, and Reform*

- Week 6 **How Do We, the People, Know? Who Tells Us?**
 (10-1) *Where Do You Get Political Information, and Why Is It Reliable?*
 - Katznelson et al, Ch. 4 (partial), Public Opinion (125-129)
 - outside reading (to be announced)
 - Heinberg,
- (10-3) *Media Consolidation and Proliferation*
 HW: **Essay topic due**
- Week 7 **How Do Politicians Know? To Whom Do They Listen?**
 (10-8) *Is Public Opinion the Chicken or the Egg?*
 - Katznelson et al, Ch. 5, Interest Groups & Social Movements (134-169)
 - Heinberg,
 - Kaskla, Ch. 4, Gaining Political Access: Parties, Campaigns, Elections (56-71)
 HW: **NA #3 due** (analytical article #1)
- (10-10) *The Role of Business in Government*
- Week 8 **Congress: Representing the People?**
 (10-15) *Ceding Power: The War Powers Act and Signing Statements*
 - Katznelson et al, Ch. 7, The Congress (210-246)
 - Kaskla, Ch. 5, The Legislative Process (74-86)
 - Heinberg,
- (10-17) **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
- Week 9 **The Executive: The Presidency and The Bureaucracy**
 (10-22) *The Presidency - A Unitary Executive?*
 - Katznelson et al, Ch. 6, The Presidency (175-210)
 - Kaskla, Ch. 6, The Governor (89-103)
 - Heinberg,
- (10-24) *The Bureaucracy: Is Regulation a Dead Weight or a Tool for Democracy?*
 HW: **NR #4 due** (analytical article #2)
- Week 10 **The Judiciary: The Federal Courts System**
 (10-29) *How Is "Constitutionality" Determined?*
 - Katznelson et al, Ch. 8, The Courts (246-285)
 - Kaskla, Ch. 7, The Dual System of Justice (105-114)
 - MacKenzie, Ch. 4, The Presidentialists, Domestic (17-31)
- (10-31) *What Is Your Favorite Supreme Court Case?*
 HW: **Essay outline due**

Week 11 **Economic Policy: Should Government Mitigate the “Markets?”**

(11-5) *Is the GDP a False Economic Measure?*

- Katznelson et al, Ch. 9, Economic Policy (287-316)
- MacKenzie, Ch. 5, Domestic & Global (31-34) and Ch. 6, Global (35-42)

(11-7) *The Role of Regulation in a Democracy*

Week 12 **Social Policy: Creating a Society, or Favoring a Class?**

(11-12) VETERANS DAY – NO CLASS

The Welfare State as a Response to Industrial Capitalism

- Katznelson et al, Ch. 10, Social Policy (319-349)

(11-14) *What Safety Net?*

HW: **ESSAY DUE**

Week 13 **Foreign Policy: The U.S. Government Overseas**

(11-19) *Why Does the U.S. Extend Its Influence Abroad?*

- Katznelson et al, Ch. 11, Foreign Policy (350-178)
- MacKenzie, Ch. 7, Will & Pleasure (43-48) and Ch.8, Signing Statements (49-54)

HW: **NR #5 due** (news on the Internet)

(11-21) *Globalization and Its Discontents*

Week 14 **Democracy and Capitalism**

(11-26) *The Political Economy of the Post-Industrial State*

- Katznelson et al, Ch. 12, Democracy’s Character and Future (382-392)
- outside reading (to be announced)
- MacKenzie, Ch. 9, Theory & Consequence (55-62)

(11-28) *Democracy and Globalization*

Week 15 **California: Local Government and Finance**

(12-3) *Cali in the Twenty-First Century*

- Kaskla, Ch. 3, The Historical Development of Elite Politics (42-53)
- Kaskla, Ch. 8, Local Governments (117-126)
- Kaskla, Ch. 9, “The Chronic”: California’s Permanent Budget Crisis (128-138)

HW: **NR #6 due** (extended political argument)

(12-5) Final Exam Review

Week 16 **Synthesis and Wrap-up**

(12-10) *Do Progressive Reforms Work in California Today?*

- Kaskla, Conclusions (141-145)

(12-12) **FINAL EXAMINATION**

Additional Information

Special Arrangements:

Part of my job is to make your learning experience as positive and fruitful as possible. DSPS students and other students requiring special arrangements in the classroom, for taking exams, or for studying are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible in order to make the best use of instructional opportunities. If you are entitled to special accommodations for testing, please notify me at least 72 hours before the exam date.

Examinations:

You must attend examinations on the date indicated in the syllabus, unless you have made special arrangements for alternative testing ahead of time.

Important Dates:

September 7, 2012 – last day to drop a class, receive a refund, and have no record on your transcript

November 2, 2012 – last day to drop and have a “W” (withdrawn) appear your transcript.

Attendance:

Attendance in class is mandatory. The success of this course, not only for you but for all of us, depends upon you being here. We will discuss concepts and complete activities in class that you will not be able to make up. Please do not deprive yourself and the rest of us from benefiting from your presence. Attendance is a major part of the 10% of your grade identified as “Participation.” If you do have to miss class for an emergency, *you are responsible* for getting the information which you missed from other students or from me.

Reading:

Reading must be completed on the day listed in the syllabus. Come to class prepared to discuss the reading. Lectures and class activities are based on the assumption that everyone is familiar with the material assigned.

General Classroom Behavior:

Learning is cooperative enterprise; you will benefit most and enjoy the class more by participating rather than sitting passively. Listen carefully; talk when you have something to contribute to the discussion at hand; listen attentively when your colleagues are speaking. Do not come to class stoned, drunk, or otherwise chemically compromised. Ask questions and give constructive criticism. This class includes some difficult concepts – if you have a question, others probably do as well, so be the one speak up.

This class includes some controversial ideas, and participation may often include enthusiastic and/or passionate expression. Give and take is important, but you must listen openly and respond respectfully to the views of others; advocate strongly if you wish, but intimidation, yelling, or profanity are unacceptable.

Inappropriate behaviors include: walking in late; packing or unpacking noisily; side conversations; leaving the classroom early; doing work not related to this course.

Office Hours:

Office hours are there for your benefit. Please come by my office if you need help with class, but please also drop in to introduce yourself, brainstorm topic ideas, discuss your educational goals and interests, or pass the time between classes.