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| Syllabus for: (name of class) Political Controversies | |
| Semester & Year: | Spring 2013 |
| Course ID and Section Number: | POLSC 1- E1594 |
| Number of Credits/Units: | 3 |
| Day/Time: | T/Th 10:05-11:30 |
| Location: | FM 104 |
| Instructor's Name: | Emenaker |
| Contact Information: | <i>Office Hours:</i> FM 200E; M/W 11:40-1:05 & T/Th 11:40-105. Phone:707.476.4306 Email:ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu |
| Course Description (catalog description as described in course outline): An introduction to current controversies in U.S. politics. Students will become familiar with contemporary issues, critique different viewpoints, and construct policy solutions while learning about constitutional principles and government institutions. | |
| Student Learning Outcomes (as described in course outline) : At the end of this course students should be able to: 1. Identify and critique major contemporary political issues in American politics. 2. Describe the role of US political institutions in contemporary political problems. 3. Analyze how responses to political issues differ from the local, state, to national level. 4. Construct policy solutions to political problems. | |
| 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. | |
| 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 <i>automatically fail</i> 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 offense, 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. | |
| 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 1: Political Controversies

Spring 2013 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.

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

Office Hours: FM 200E; M/W 11:40-1:05 & T/Th 11:40-105. Please think of me as a resource to help you succeed in this class and in college in general. I am happy to chat about anything going on in this class, politics, or anything 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: American philosopher and social reformer John Dewey argued “a democratic public exist when individuals in society can collectively recognize and sensibly respond to the problems that arise from their interactions with one another.” This class attempts to exercise the skills needed to recognize and respond to political controversies.

The primary goal of the course is to develop critical thinking skills which can contribute to understanding the topics of political discourse in today's media. A second goal is to provide an opportunity for all students to develop, argue, or question their own political philosophies through thoughtful analysis of contemporary controversies. The promotion of a particular viewpoint is not the goal. Rather, the purpose is to examine and understand the reasoning behind opposing stances on political issues.

Please note that the issues covered in the course are, by their nature, controversial, and therefore can arouse deep feelings. In our quest to understand all sides of these hotly contested issues, we need to respect the rights of others to hold and express their beliefs.

Course Description: An introduction to current controversies in U.S. politics. Students will become familiar with contemporary issues, critique different viewpoints, and construct policy solutions while learning about constitutional principles and government institutions.

Course Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Identify and critique major contemporary political issues in American politics.
2. Describe the role of US political institutions in contemporary political problems.
3. Analyze how responses to political issues differ from the local, state, to national level.
4. Construct policy solutions to political problems.

Meeting Times/Locations: T/Th 10:05-11:40 (E1594) Forum (FM) 104. 3 Units.

Text (required): (1) Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Political Issues (17th edition). McKenna & Feingold.
(2) POLSC 1 Course Packet (3) Newspapers, magazines, journals, and news websites

Supplemental readings are listed for most weeks. Additional readings and/or activities will be assigned and handed out in-class or posted on MyCR. It is the student's responsibly to know what readings/activities are assigned. The readings and handouts are intended to help broaden your understanding of classroom discussion.

Instructor Expectations Students should be aware that a considerable amount of reading, web research, and other work will be required to prepare for each class session. It is anticipated that, in order to receive a passing grade, a minimum of 2 to 4 hours will be required to prepare for each class session. Additional time will be needed to prepare for the mid-term and final, to complete homework assignments, to participate in group activities, and complete specific in-class assignments.

At a minimum, students are expected to:

1. Prepare carefully before coming to class. Preparation includes doing the assigned reading, completing any assignments, thinking about the material, and bringing questions and comments to class.
2. Expect that most of the work will be interesting and stimulating, and contribute to making it so.
3. Keep abreast of current events. This includes regularly reading the news section of at least one newspaper.
4. Show up on time. Do not make other appointments during class hours.
5. Turn in all assignments on time.

MyCR-each of you should be certain you know how to use MyCR, and that you can check your MyCR e-mail address. I will be communicating to the class by e-mail and through MyCR with some frequency, and I will assume you check your MyCR e-mail at least every other day. MyCR will be used to send out announcements, post assignments PowerPoints and lecture notes, and to 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, fix it immediately.

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| Grading: | Class Participation & Homework = 200 points | Reading Responses = 160 points |
| | Debate Groups = 50 points | News Responses = 40 points |
| | Mid-Term Exam = 200 points | Second Group Pres. = 75 points |
| | First Group Presentation = 75 points | Final Exam = 200 points |
| | | Total Semester Points = 1,000 |

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| Grading Scale: | A = 930 – 1000 pts | C+ = 750 – 799 pts |
| | A- = 900 – 929 pts | C = 700 – 749 pts |
| | B+ = 866 – 899 pts | D = 600 – 699 pts |
| | B = 830– 865 pts | F = 0 – 599 pts |
| | B- = 800 – 829 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.**

Assignments & Grading:

1. Class participation & Homework is vital for success in this class. I do not accept excuses for missed participation in class; you either participate or you don't. It is obvious that you can't participate if you're not in class. Not only will your participation grade suffer if you don't attend regularly, but I think you'll find your test grades negatively affected. Participation in this course means taking an active role in class discussions, group work, in-class written assignments, and completing all assigned readings, pop quizzes, and other assigned homework. Failing to participate in the beginning and end of all sessions will negatively impact your grade.

If you fail to attend class it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from one of your colleagues.

2. Reading Responses are written pieces to 8 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 one of the assigned readings for that week 1) write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing the author's intended meaning; 2) write 1-2 paragraphs describing your reactions to the quote or theme. *I do not simply want to know what the authors said; I want to know what YOU think about what they said.* A sample Response is 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 8 for the entire semester, you are already allowed to “miss” reading responses for the other 7 weeks. 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 8.

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!!!*

3. News Responses & Presentations are 2 written responses combined with short oral presentations on a hot issue in the news. Your written response will follow the same Reading Response format described above. Your in-class presentation should be a well prepared **2 minute summation** (that includes the title, publication, author and main points of the article) delivered in front of the class. You should come to class well prepared having read the article over several times; do not expect to simply read part of the article, or your written response, to the class. We will do these at the start of class. No more than 4 students can go on any given day. You decide which day you want to present. (You may turn in a news response/presentation and a reading response the same week.)

3. Group Presentations- In groups of 3-5 you will select 2 different topics; your group will provide the class an overview of the readings and lead an in-class discussion, activity and/or debate. You will stay in the same group for both presentations.

(1) Your first topic must be from a reading in the Taking Sides textbook. (2) Your second presentation will be on any political controversy selected by your group. **Your group will select the readings on the topic to assign to the class.** Groups will be finalized around the 4th week of class. A more detailed explanation of these presentations will be provided

4. Debate Groups- There will be three organized debates scheduled during weeks 6, 7, & 8 of the semester. The debate topics focus on: Affirmative Action, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Voting Rights Act. Each of these topics are appearing before the Supreme Court this term. Each debate has a specific question, with a different group taking the pro and con positions. These will not be the same groups of individuals you will be working with for your Group Presentations. More detailed instructions will be handed out around week 4 of the semester.

5. Mid-Term Exam- will be held during week #9 of the course (Wed. March 21). It will start promptly at the beginning of class. It will include multiple choice, identification, as well as short answer, and essay 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. There will be a Mid-Term review the class session 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.

6. 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. Specific directions for the final will be given 4/30.

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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.

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

POLSC 1: Political Controversies
Course Outline & Reading Schedule

- Week #1** (1/15) **Class Discussion:** Course Outline & Goals, Mingle with Colleagues, What is Political Science?
Readings: 1) Course Syllabus (Handout)
2) Sample Reading Response (CP)
3) “The 3 I’s of Political Studies: Institutions, Interests, & Ideology.” (MyCR)
4) “Political Thinking: Becoming a Responsible Citizen” Ch. 1 of We the People 9th ed. (CP) Read to “Politics & Power in America” Section.
5) The American Lie, Preface and pg. 1-7. Benjamin Ginsberg. (CP)
6) “Why are Some Countries Rich,” Plant MoneyBlog (CP)
7) Newspaper-Periodical Survey Assignment (MyCR) (Due 1/22)
8) State of the Union Assignment (MyCR) Due class after speech.
- (1/17) **Class Discussion:** Explain Reading Responses, Describe Political Thinking & Theories in Political Science. Define Cynical Realism. Discuss Civic Literacy.
Readings: 1) “4 Myths on the Constitution,” Sacramento Bee. (CP)
2) Finish “Political Thinking: Becoming a Responsible Citizen.” (CP)
3) Declaration of Independence. (CP)
4) Federalist Papers #51(CP)
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- Week #2** (1/22) **Class Discussion:** **Newspaper-Periodical Survey Assignment Due.** Overview of U.S. Gov.
Readings: 1) The Bill of Rights: Original Meaning & Current Understanding, “Introduction.” Eugene W. Hickok, Jr. (CP)
2) The Constitution and America’s Destiny, David Brian Robertson (CP)
3) Federalist #10 (CP)
- (1/24) **Class Discussion:** Overview of U.S. Gov. (Cont.) The Bill of Rights: Protector of Democracy?
Readings: 1) Fault Lines Ch# 3: Federalism (CP)
2) “Preemption and the Arizona Immigration Law,” SCOTUS BLOG, December 9, 2011, Stephen Wermiel (CP)
3) Current News Article on Federalism Assignment (MyCR) Due 1/29
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- Week #3** (1/29) **Class Discussion:** **Federalism News Article Assignment Due. Library Research.** Federalism.
Readings: 1) Taking Sides. “Should the Courts Seek the ‘Original Meaning’ of the Constitution?” pp. 74-90
2) Debate Guidelines (MyCR)
3) Library Research Assignment (MyCR)
- (1/31) **Class Discussion:** **Taking Sides Issue Report on Original Meaning of Constitution Due.** Separation of Powers. Judicial Review. Discussion on Civil Liberties.
Readings: 1) “A Dissent by Scalia is Criticized as Political,” NY Times, Ethan Bronner, June 28 2012. (CP)
2) Inside Constitutional Law: What Matters & Why, Ch. 8 “Substantive Due Process: Fundamental Rights (CP) Through Section 3 on Abortion.
3) The Bill of Rights: Original Meaning & Current Understanding, “The Bill of Rights and the Doctrine of Incorporation.” Charles Rice (CP)
4) Group Presentation Guidelines (MyCR)
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- Week #4** (2/5) **Class Discussion:** **Library Research Assignment Due.** Explanation of “Right to Privacy.”
Readings: 1) Inside Constitutional Law: What Matters & Why, Ch. 8 “Substantive Due Process: Fundamental Rights (CP) Section 4 Through End.
2) “In Congress’s Paralysis, a Mightier Supreme Court,” NY Times, Aug. 20 2012, Adam Liptak
- (2/7) **Class Discussion:** Group Formation. In-Class Group Assignment on “Right to Privacy.”
Readings: 1) Taking Sides. “Should Abortion be Restricted?” pp. 164-179
2) Abortion Article Assignment

- Week #5** (2/12) **Class Discussion: Taking Sides Issue Report Due: Abortion. Abortion Article Due.**
Readings: 1) Group Presentation Sign-Up Sheets.
 2) “High Court not Final Say on U.S. Law,” Times-Standard. (CP)
 3) Debates. “Gay Rights” Ch. 12 pp. 168-179. (CP)
- (2/14) **Class Discussion: Group Presentations: Topic Selection Finalization.**
Group Presentation Sign-Up Sheets Due via e-mail by Mid-Night.
Readings: 1) Taking Sides. “Is Homosexual Conduct Constitutionally Protected?” (CP)
 2) “Supreme Court Double Header: The Arguments for Gay Marriage Undermine Affirmative Action,” Slate, Dec. 13, 2012. (MyCR)
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- Week #6** (2/19) **Class Discussion: Taking Sides Issue Report: Homosexual Conduct/Sexual Freedom Due.**
Readings: 1) “The Conservative Case for Gay Marriage: Why Same-Sex Marriage is an American Value,” Newsweek, Jan. 9, 2010. Theodore Olson. (CP)
 2) “The Constitutionality of Traditional Marriage,” SCOTUS BLOG, Aug. 24, 2011, John Eastman (CP)
 3) “Same-Sex Couple Sues Federal Government in DOMA Case,” CNN, Dec 7, 2012. (MyCR)
 4) *Perry v. Brown* 9th Circuit Court of Appeals (MyCR)
- (2/21) **Class Discussion: Debate #1: “Should the Federal Courts Overturn CA’s Prop. 8?”**
Readings: 1) Taking Sides: “Does Affirmative Action Advance Racial Equality?”
 2) “Beyond Race for Affirmative Action,” Room for Debate, NY Times Feb 22, 2012. (MyCR)
 3) “Affirmative Action and the Law,” LA Times, Nov. 30, 2012. (MyCR)
 4) “Class-Based v. Race-Based Admissions,” NY Times, Nov. 19, 2012 (MyCR)
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- Week #7** (2/26) **Class Discussion: Taking Sides Issue Report: Affirmative Action in Education**
Readings: 1) “Fisher v. University of Texas: College Admissions Case Made Simple,” SCOTUS BLOG. (MyCR)
 2) “Affirmative Action and the 14th Amendment,” Jost on Justice Blog, Aug. 27, 2012. (MyCR)
 3) “Justices Return to Affirmative Action in Higher Ed,” NPR News, Oct. 10, 2012.(MyCR)
 4) “*Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*: The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment,” The Constitutional Sources Project. (MyCR)
 5) *Fisher v. University of Texas* 5th Circuit Court of Appeals Decision (MyCR)
- (2/28) **Class Discussion: Debate #2: “Does the 14th Amendment Prohibit Texas from Using Race as one Consideration for University Admittance?”**
Readings: 1) *South Carolina v. Katzenbach* (1966) (MyCR)
 2) “Election Reform, Federalism, & the Obligation of Voters,” Policy Analysis, Cato Institute, John Samples. Oct. 23, 2001. (MyCR)
 3) “Has the Voting Rights Act Outlived its Usefulness? In a Word, ‘No,’ ” Legislative Studies Quarterly, Nov. 2009. (MyCR)
 4) “The Preclearance Problem: Is it Time to Retire the Voting Rights Act?” The Economist, Feb. 3, 2011.(MyCR)
 5) “Justice Dept. Cites Race in Halting Law Over Voter ID” NY Times, Dec. 23, 2011. (MyCR)
 6) “Justice Dept. Block Texas on Photo ID for Voting,” NY Times, March 13, 2012. (MyCR)
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- Week #8** (3/5) **Class Discussion: Debate Topic #3: Federalism & the Voting Rights Act**
Readings: 1) “The Other Crucial Civil Rights Case the Supreme Court Will be Ruling On,” ProPublica, Dec. 10, 2012. (MyCR)
 2) “Under the U.S. Supreme Court: Gutting the Voting Rights Act?” UPI, Nov. 18, 2012. (MyCR)
 3) “Is the Voting Rights Act Outdated?” NPR, Dec. 3, 2012. (MyCR)
 4) *Shelby County v. Holder*, 679 F.3d 848.
 5) *NAMUDNO v. Holder* (2009)

- (3/7) **Class Discussion: Debate #3: “Is Congress Allowed to Single-Out Some Jurisdictions for Preclearance of Electoral Laws?”**
Readings: 1) Handout-“Mid-Term Review Guide”
2) “Gays May Diverge from Blacks as Top Court Reshapes Rights,” Bloomberg, Dec. 13, 2012.
3) “Support for Gay Marriage Growing, but US Remains Divided,” NY Times, Dec 7, 2012.
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Spring Break 3/11-3/15

- Week #9** (3/19) **Class Discussion:** Mid-Term Review
Readings: Study for Mid-Term
- (3/21) **Class Discussion: !!!MID-TERM!!!**
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
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- Week #10** (3/26) **Class Discussion:** Group #1 Presentation. Taking Sides Issue Report Due
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
- (3/28) **Class Discussion:** In-Class Group Meetings
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
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- Week #11** (4/2) **Class Discussion:** Group #2 Presentation. Taking Sides Issue Report Due.
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
- (4/4) **Class Discussion:** Group #3 Presentation. Taking Sides Issue Report Due.
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
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- Week #12** (4/9) **Class Discussion:** Group #4 Presentation. Taking Sides Issue Report Due.
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
- (4/11) **Class Discussion:** Group #5 Presentation. Taking Sides Issue Report Due.
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
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- Week #13** (4/16) **Class Discussion:** Summery Paper on first round of Presentations.
Group #1 Presentation
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
- (4/18) **Class Discussion:** Group #2 Presentation
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
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- Week #14** (4/23) **Class Discussion:** Group #3 Presentation.
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
- (4/25) **Class Discussion:** Group #4 Presentation
Readings: TBD by Group Presentations
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- Week #15** (4/30) **Class Discussion:** Group #5 Presentation
Readings: Handout-Study Guide for Final
- (5/2) **Class Discussion: Course Review**

May 6-10 FINALS WEEK