

Syllabus for: Polsc 10 - United States Government & Politics, Online	
Semester & Year:	Fall 2013
Course ID and Section Number:	Polsc 10a; V3791
Number of Credits/Units:	3
Day/Time: Location:	Online
Instructor's Name:	Tobias Green
Contact Information:	Office location and hours: CRMC 106b; Mon/Wed 1:00-3:00 Phone: 707-962-2682 Email: toby-green@redwoods.edu
Course Description: 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: 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. 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 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.	
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.	

United States Political Institutions

Political Science 10, Online – Fall 2013

Syllabus

Instructor: Tobias Green

Email: toby-green@redwoods.edu

Office phone and voicemail: 707-962-2682

Physical Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-3:00

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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.

Textbooks:

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

Edgar Kaskla, *California Politics: The Fault Lines of Power, Wealth, & Diversity* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007)
ISBN 978-0-87289-276-7

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

Richard Heinberg, *Powerdown* (New Society Publishers, 2004)
ISBN 0-86571-510-6

Occasional readings – obtain from class website

Textbooks can be purchased at the CR bookstores in Eureka, Mendocino, and Crescent City, or by phone (707-476-4130). Phone orders have no charge for shipping and handling, but must be paid for by credit card at the time of order. Both new and used copies can be obtained from commercial websites as well.

Movies:

You are required to watch and review three movies during the semester (see titles in Movie section of Class Format below); you should must consider these as **visual texts**, to be obtained and paid for just like the written texts listed above. All are available through Netflix and other major online movie rental services. They may also be available at a video rental store near you, though some are often not available at mainstream rental stores. Be aware that you must arrange to get these films in a timely manner. They can be rented for little cost in comparison to your written material for this class; if you cannot get them locally, you can get a one month subscription to a mail order movie rental service at little cost.

Objectives and Outcomes:

Students will develop a strong understanding of the complex democratic process in the United States and in California. They will be able 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. Discuss the history of politics and government in the United States.
2. Discuss the philosophical underpinnings of the Constitution and the US government.
3. Identify the major provisions of the California and US Constitution.
4. Compare the three branches of California and US Government, and related political institutions.
5. Outline the relationship between the states and national government (i.e. federalism).
6. Analyze contemporary issues facing California and the US system of government.

Class Format:

Scheduling and Deadlines:

Students who take classes online have a wide variety of scheduling concerns regarding school, work, and family obligations. In order to allow maximum flexibility, the “week” for this class is actually nine days long; all work, including Quizzes, Discussions, and Assignments, will be posted by 9:00 am each Saturday, and the deadline for all of each week’s work is 11:55 pm the next Sunday.

Quizzes: There are three textbooks, and the readings provide the basic information for this course. Each week there will be brief quiz of ten true/false and multiple choice items based on the reading. This quiz will be timed, so you **MUST** do the reading before taking the quiz – you will not have time to look up the answers.

Discussion Forum: After reading, it is essential to understand how the information fits together and what its larger significance may be. Discussing this material with your fellow students, asking questions, and contributing ideas are vital to learning. In this course, discussion will take place via the MyCR computer platform. There is a discussion forum available through the class homepage on MyCR. The instructor will furnish a prompt based on the theme for the week. Each student must make an initial posting in response to the prompt, and then make at least two responses to other students’ postings. You must address the readings, concepts, and other student’s ideas seriously and substantively – no credit will be given for superficial responses.

YOU **MUST** make your **FIRST POSTING** by Wednesday evening; you must complete your next two responses by 10:00 a.m. on Sunday. Your postings will be graded by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Please express your ideas and opinions freely and strongly, though you must be courteous and respectful in your language. Grading will be based on the substance of your postings and the degree to which they reflect an understanding of the readings for the week. Be bold; the instructor will not grade your contributions based on agreement or disagreement with your opinions, but the quality of your ideas and arguments.

Information Analyses: Five times during the semester each student will submit a review of an article from a major information or news source. Most articles will be supplied by the instructor. These exercises are intended to help you become more knowledgeable about and involved in current affairs, and to help you learn to analyze news sources critically. Material for evaluation will include “objective” news articles, editorials, and analytical print articles; the instructor will furnish you with a structure for these exercises. Each Review will address a major national or state political issue.

Essay/Review: Based on the overview of political institutions and the in-depth study of oil in relation to policy, write an essay of ten to fifteen pages which 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 sources and one secondary source in addition to material from the class to develop your argument. Use the last part of your essay to suggest institutional changes or reforms which would increase citizen participation.

We will spend time during the semester developing thesis statements (arguments), exploring sources of information, and reviewing the use of footnotes.

Movies: Students will be required to view four movies during the semester and write a review of each in response to specific prompts. These movies, in the order in which you will view them, are:

The End of Suburbia (2004, Gregory Greene director) – due Week 4

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939, Frank Capra director) – due Week 6

Wag the Dog (1997, Barry Levinson, director) – due Week 10

All the President's Men (1976, Alan J. Pakula, director) – due Week 14

Examinations: There will be one midterm and one final examination. Each will include an essay question, two short answer questions, and ten questions chosen at random from the weekly quizzes. These exams will be timed as they would be in a classroom setting, so you should have your resources in order before you take them.

Benefits: Writing these assignments 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 raw 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.

Student Commitment:

Your commitment will require at least as much time as you would dedicate to a traditional class. A typical three credit hour class requires about nine hours of your time per week. You must read text material carefully, participate in online discussions, complete weekly quizzes, write and submit papers and the essay, and take the midterm and final examinations. Self-discipline, attention to detail, and skills in reading and writing are critical for succeeding online.

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.

Online Behavior: Learning is a cooperative enterprise; you will benefit most and enjoy the class more by participating fully. When working online, you should be fully attentive and alert. This class includes some difficult concepts – if you have a question, others probably do as well, so be the one to 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 or profanity are unacceptable.

Grading:

Weekly Quizzes – 10% (graded weekly)

Online Discussion Forum – 15% (graded weekly)

Information Analyses – 20%

Movie Reviews – 10%

Essay – 15%

Examinations – 30% (15% each)

Computer Issues:

Online courses require adequate computer skills. You should be able to navigate websites, open and download files, use a word processor, and be able to convert files into Rich Text Format. You should be able to submit files to Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility to meet the technological demands of the course.

Most computers and internet providers are adequate. Broadband services such as cable, DSL, or satellite will make your online experience easier. You need to have reliable access to the internet at least twice a week for fifteen weeks.

Important Dates:

September 6, 2013– last day to drop a class, receive a refund, and have no record on your transcript
November 1, 2013 – last day to drop and have a “W” (withdrawn) appear your transcript.

Contacting the Instructor:

The best way to contact the instructor is through the email function of the class MyCR Sakai site or through your normal email program to the email address at the top of the Syllabus (to ensure quick communication, it is best to send messages to BOTH addresses). I will respond within 48-72 hours.

I will be in my office during Office Hours at the top of the Syllabus. You can speak with me directly during those times (keep in mind that I may be on the phone, so leave a message and I will get back to you quickly). You may also leave a message on my voicemail any time at the same number.

COURSE SCHEDULE

United States Political Institutions

Fall 2013

Week 1 – August 24 -September 1

<i>Topic:</i>	Political, for Sure; But Is It Science?
<i>Theme:</i>	Deep Questions: Political Philosophy
<i>Reading:</i>	Derek Jensen and Wendell Berry readings – from website Katznelson et al, Ch. 1, Democracy's Challenge (1-21) Kaskla, Introduction (1-13) (how to read a textbook)
<i>Discussion Forums:</i>	1. Jensen/Berry: The Big Picture 2. What Is the Nature of Democracy?
<i>Assessment:</i>	participation in Discussion Forum
<i>Research:</i>	evaluate websites: Peak Oil
<i>Essay Preparation:</i>	review textbooks for possible essay topics
<i>Assignments Due:</i>	Submit two ¶ overview report on Katznelson textbook

Week 2 – August 31 - September 8

<i>Topic:</i>	The Founding, the Constitution, and Federalism
<i>Theme:</i>	Who Were the Founders of the United States?
<i>Reading:</i>	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)
<i>Discussion Forums:</i>	1. Katznelson #1: Tensions in U.S. Democracy 2. Kaskla #1: Democracy in California
<i>Assessment:</i>	Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum
<i>Research:</i>	find two websites on course-relevant topics of interest to you
<i>Essay Preparation:</i>	review Essay Writing Guide
<i>Assignments Due:</i>	Submit two ¶s on websites, using effective topic sentences

Week 3 – September 7 - September 15

<i>Topic:</i>	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
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Theme: **Speech and Assembly: Citizen Rights and the PATRIOT Act**

Reading: outside reading (to be announced)
MacKenzie, Ch. 2, The Framers (5-12) and Ch. 3, Jackson et al (13-29)
Heinberg, Introduction, 1-15

Discussion Forums: 1. **Which Are More Important, Civil Rights or Civil Liberties?**
2. MacKenzie #1: **Introducing Unitary Executive Theory**
3. Heinberg #1: **Introducing the Peak Oil Issue**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum

Research: find two websites about Peak Oil

Essay Preparation: Primary/Secondary Source description and exercise

Assignments Due: **Submit two ¶s on websites and Heinberg**, using effective topic sentences and three footnotes
Submit Information Analysis #1 (“objective” news article)

Week 4 – September 14 -September 22

Topic: **Political Economy**

Theme: **From Feudalism to Corporate Capitalism**

Reading: Katznelson et al, Ch. 3, History of American Political Economy (64-89)
Heinberg, Ch. 1, The End of Cheap Energy (17-54)
Kaskla, Ch. 2, Elite Politics (31-39)

Discussion Forums: 1. Katznelson #2: **How “Extreme” Is Today’s Market Capitalism?**
2. Kaskla #2: **Elite Politics in California**
3. Heinberg #2: **Consequences of Peak Oil**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum

Research:

Essay Preparation: submit three possible topics for essay

Assignments Due: **Submit Movie Review #1 – The End of Suburbia**

Week 5 – September 21-September 29

Topic: **Are They Real Parties? Democratic Elections?**

Themes: **Third Parties and Reform Movements**
One Person, One Vote: How to Achieve an Ideal

Reading: Katznelson et al, Ch. 4 (partial), Parties, Elections (95-125)
Heinberg, Ch. 2, Last One Standing, 55-86

Discussion Forums: 1. Katznelson #3: **Are Parties Relevant to Policy-making?**
2. Katznelson #4: **Do Elections Really Express the Will of the People?**
3. Heinberg #3: **Last One Standing**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum

Research:

Essay Preparation:

Assignments Due: **Information Analysis #2 due (editorials and opinion columns)**

Week 6 – September 28 -October 6

Topic: **How Do We, the People, Know? Who Tells Us?**

Theme: **Media Consolidation and Proliferation**

Reading: Katznelson et al, Ch. 4 (partial), Public Opinion (125-129)
outside reading (to be announced)
Heinberg, Ch. 3, Powerdown, 87-115

Discussion Forum: 1. **Where Do You Get Political Information, and Why Is It Reliable?**
2. Heinberg #4: **Power Down**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum

Research:

Essay Preparation: **Essay topic due**

Assignments Due: **Movie Review #2 due – Mr. Smith Goes To Washington**

Week 7 – October 5 - October 13

Topic: **How Do Politicians Know? To Whom Do They Listen?**

Theme: **The Role of Business in Government, the Power of Social Movements**

Reading: Katznelson et al, Ch. 5, Interest Groups & Social Movements (134-169)
Heinberg, Ch. 4, Waiting for the Magic Elixir (117-137)
Kaskla, Ch. 4, Gaining Political Access: Parties, Campaigns, Elections (56-71)

Discussion Forums: 1. **Social Movements and Oil Policy**
2. Heinberg #5: **Magic Elixir**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forums

Research:

Essay Preparation: work on essay thesis statement

Assignments Due: **Information Analysis #3 due (analytical article #1)**

Week 8 – October 12 - October 20

Topic: **Congress: Representing the People?**

Theme: **Ceding Power: The War Powers Act and Signing Statements**

Reading: Katznelson *et al*, Introduction to Political Institutions (171-174)
Katznelson *et al*, Ch. 7, The Congress (210-246)
Kaskla, Ch. 5, The Legislative Process (74-86)
Heinberg, Ch. 5, Building Lifeboats(139-161)

Discussion Forums: 1. Katznelson #5: **Should Congress Take a Back Seat?**
2. Heinberg #6: **Building Lifeboats**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum

Research:

Essay Preparation: **Essay Thesis Statement due**

Assignments Due: **MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE**

Week 9 – October 19 - October 27

Topics: **The Executive: the Presidency – Unitary or Balanced?**
The Bureaucracy – Dead Weight or a Tool for Democracy?

Themes: **The Unitary Executive**
The Role of Regulation in a Democracy

Reading: Katznelson *et al*, Ch. 6, The Presidency (175-210)
Kaskla, Ch. 6, The Governor (89-103)
Heinberg, Ch. 6, Our Choice, 163-186

Discussion Forums: 1. Katznelson #6: **What Kind of Leadership?**
2. Katznelson #7: **Expertise or Politics, Facts or Ideology?**
3. Heinberg #7: **Our Choices**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum; Response Paper #2

Research:

Essay Preparation:

Assignments Due: **Information Analysis #4 due (analytical article #2)**

Week 10 – October 26 - November 3

- Topic:* **The Judiciary: The Federal Courts System**
- Theme:* **How Is “Constitutionality” Determined?**
- Reading:* 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)
- Discussion Forum:* 1. Katznelson #8: **What Is Your Favorite Supreme Court Case?**
2. MacKenzie #2: **Phase I, The Presidentialists**
- Assessment:* Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum
- Research:*
- Essay Preparation:* **Essay outline due**
- Assignments Due:* **Movie Review #3 due – Wag the Dog**

Week 11 – November 2 - November 10

- Topic:* **Domestic Economic Policy**
- Theme:* **Is the GDP a False Economic Measure?**
- Reading:* Katznelson et al, Ch. 9, Economic Policy (287-316)
MacKenzie, Ch. 5, Domestic & Global (31-34) and Ch. 6, Global (35-42)
- Discussion Forum:* 1. Katznelson #9: **Should Government Mitigate the “Markets?”**
2. MacKenzie #3: **Phase 2, The Globalists**
- Assessment:* Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum
- Research:*
- Essay Preparation:* **Essay introduction and conclusion due**
- Assignments Due:*

Week 12 – November 9 - November 17

- Topic:* **Domestic Social Policy: Creating a Society, or Favoring a Class?**
- Themes:* **The Welfare State as a Response to Industrial Capitalism**
- Reading:* Katznelson et al, Ch. 10, Social Policy (319-349)
MacKenzie, Ch. 7, Will & Pleasure (43-48) and Ch.8, Signing Statements (49-54)

Discussion Forums: 1. Katznelson #10: **Should Government Mitigate Social Effects?**
2. MacKenzie #4: **The Use of Signing Statements**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum; Essay

Research:

Essay Preparation: final rewrite

Assignments Due: **ESSAY DUE**

Week 13 – November 16 - November 24

Topic: **Foreign Policy: The U.S. Government Overseas**

Theme: **Globalization and U.S. Influence Abroad?**

Reading: Katznelson et al, Ch. 11, Foreign Policy (350-178)
MacKenzie, Ch. 9, Theory & Consequence (55-62)

Discussion Forum: 1. Katznelson #11: **Energy and U.S. Foreign Policy**
2. MacKenzie #5: **The Unitary Executive and Balanced Government**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum

Research:

Assignments Due: **Information Analysis #5 due (news on the Internet)**

Week 14 – November 23 - December 1

Topic: **Democracy and Capitalism Today**

Theme: **The Political Economy of the Post-Industrial State**

Reading: Katznelson et al, Ch. 12, Democracy's Character and Future (382-391)
Cornel West, Introduction to *Democracy Matters*

Discussion Forum: **Democracy and Globalization**

Assessment: Weekly Quiz; participation in Discussion Forum; Response Paper #3

Research:

Assignments Due: **Movie Review #4 due – All the President's Men**

Week 15 – November 30 - December 8

Topic: **California: State Government Roundup**

Theme: **Politics in Cali: Multiethnic Powerhouse**
Reading: 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)
Discussion Forum: **Do Progressive Reforms Work in California Today?**
Assessment:
Research:
Assignments Due: **Information Analysis #6 due (extended political argument)**

Week 16 – December 7 - December 14

Topic: **Synthesis and Wrap-up**
Theme: Reflecting on the Nature of Democracy
Reading: Kaskla: Conclusions (141-145)
Discussion Forum:
Assessment: **FINAL EXAMINATION – DUE FRIDAY, December 16**