

Syllabus for: US Government & Politics	
Semester & Year:	Spring 2014
Course ID and Section Number:	POLSC 10 E4981
Number of Credits/Units:	3.0
Day/Time:	T/Th 1:15 – 2:40
Location:	HU 110
Instructor's Name:	Joe Brookshire
Contact Information:	Office location and hours: before and after class Phone: 707 476 3070 Email: joe-brookshire@redwoods.edu
Course Description: The goal of this course is to give students a relevant understanding of how our complex government operates by describing the basic ideas, structure, and influences on our government and how politics work. This course addresses both philosophic roots and the contemporary operation of American national, state, and local governments. 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: 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 Constitutions; 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); and 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.	

US Government & Politics

POLSC 10 E4981

T/Th 1:15 – 2:40 HU 110

Spring 2014

3 Units

Joe Brookshire

joe-brookshire@redwoods.edu

Office hours: before class

Welcome to US Government & Politics, POLSC 10. The goal of this course is to give students a relevant understanding of how our complex government operates by describing the basic ideas, structure, and influences on our government and how politics work. This course addresses both philosophic roots and the contemporary operation of American national, state, and local governments. Specific topics include constitutional development, federal-state relations, and the rights and obligations of citizens under both the federal and the California constitutions. We also explore factors that influence our government: elections, political parties, the media, public opinion, and special interest groups. Students become familiar with policies, domestic and foreign, and how they are made. This course analyzes what, exactly, is American “politics”. We discuss news events and connect them with the foundations, institutions, and political systems of our government.

Outcomes: 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 Constitutions;
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); and
5. Analyze contemporary issues facing California and the US system of government.

Format: The class is a combination of lecture, discussion, and activities.

Texts: American Government: Power & Purpose, Brief 13th Edition,
ISBN **978-0-393-92246-2** Authors: Lowi, Ginsberg, et al.

Governing California in the 21st Century, 4th Edition ISBN **978-0-393-91915-8**

Both texts are published by W.W. Norton. The American Government text is available as an ebook.

Handouts distributed in class

Expectations:

1. On-time attendance is expected throughout the semester. Class begins at 1:15 and goes until 2:40. Please observe these times. Students who miss one third of class time will be automatically dropped. Students may attend only the section in which they are registered.
2. Students are expected to take the midterm, the final, and quizzes on the schedule dates. Three assignments are required which are to be submitted in class before or on their specific dates. Do not submit these by email.
3. 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.
4. US Government & Politics is one of the most engaging classes offered at CR. It is a place where we can get together and discuss American politics. I consider this to be a rare and invaluable opportunity. Therefore, I ask all of us to honor the rights of others and to help maintain our class as a forum for thoughtful, respectful, and courteous true discussion. Inappropriate behavior will result in consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, see (<http://www.redwoods.edu/District/Board/New/Chapter5/Ap5500.pdf>)

Note: students with appropriate paperwork from DSPS should notify the instructor of accommodations they may require. Please do so as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Grading:

1. Frequent Quizzes – 30% Quizzes are based on the texts, lectures, discussions, activities, videos, other readings - in short, everything that we cover in class. They are short essay, identifications, multiple-choice, true/false, or a mix of these. The two lowest scores (or two missed quizzes) are dropped at the end of the semester. There are no make-ups. Let me know in advance if you need to take a quiz early. Quizzes are given at the start of class. Late arrivals will miss the quiz. Double Quizzes (2X) count as two.

2. Exams - 50% -are primarily essay tests. They may include some questions that are of a quiz-like style.

Exam #1 10% The first essay exam focuses on the legislative branches.

Exam #2 20% **The Midterm** covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 13 in the American Government text and sections of the California text. It is similar to Exam #1 in that is an essay exam, but also has some of the types of questions that are found on quizzes. Reserve **Thursday, March 13.**

Final Exam 20% **The Final** covers chapters 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 of the American Government text, sections of Governing California, and discussions held over the course. Its scope is somewhat cumulative; topics and concepts explored throughout the course may be reflected in the essay section. The format is similar to the midterm in that it includes essay writing as well as quiz-like questions. Be absolutely certain to reserve **Thursday, May 15 at 1:00** for our final.

3. Papers – 20% Three papers are assigned and are expected to be submitted in class on or by the scheduled dates. Late submissions lose points. See instructions of each for details.

Scales: This section of US Government & Politics uses the following grading scale:

A = 92 to 100	B+ = 87 to 89.4	C+ = 77 to 79.4	D = 59.5 to 69.4	F = Below 59.5
A- = 89.5 to 91.9	B = 82 to 86.9	C = 72 to 76.9		
	B- = 79.5 to 81.9	C- = 69.5 to 71.9		

Extra Credit – Independent extra credit assignments are not available for this class. However, points earned in activities go toward raising your midterm or final scores.

Schedule: We try to follow the schedule below, however, we may need to make some adjustments during the semester. Classes will be held every day as scheduled. Please take note of any changes announced in class or posted on MyCR. US indicates American Government text, *CA indicates California text.*

Tuesday	Thursday
Jan. 21 Overview	Jan. 23 “Government”
Jan. 28 Quiz US Ch. 1 <i>CA pages 1-14</i> //Constitutions	Jan. 30 Constitutions
Feb. 4 Quiz US Ch. 2; <i>CA Ch 2: 17-33</i> //Federalism	Feb. 6 Federalism Assignment #1 due
Feb. 11 Quiz US Ch. 3; <i>CA Ch 9: 179-199</i> Legislatures	Feb. 13 Legislatures
Feb. 18 Quiz US Ch. 5; <i>CA Ch 5: 97-115</i>	Feb. 20 Exam #1
Feb. 25 Executive Branch	Feb. 27 Executive Branch Assignment #2 due
March 4 Quiz US Ch. 6; <i>CA Ch 6: 119-129</i> Bureaucracy	March 6 Bureaucracy
March 11 Quiz US Ch. 7; <i>CA Ch 6: 130-136</i> Public Policy	March 13 Midterm (w/part of US Ch. 13)
Spring	Break
March 25 Civil Liberties	March 27 Civil Rights
April 1 Court Cases Judicial Branch	April 3 Courts Assignment #3 due
April 8 Judicial Branch	April 10 Judicial Branch
April 15 2X Quiz US chapters 4 & 8; <i>CA Ch 7</i> Opinion	April 17 Media
April 22 Elections	April 24 Elections
April 29 2x Quiz US Chs 9, 10, <i>CA Ch 4:66-93, Ch 3: 50-54</i>	May 1 Political Parties, Interest Groups
May 6 2X Quiz, US Chs 11 & 12, <i>CA Ch 4: 60-66, Ch 3: 37-50</i>	May 8 Foreign Policy
	May 15 Final 1:00-3:00 (includes US Ch 14)

Thank you for your presence, your interest, and your contributions to this class.