

Syllabus for: (name of class) U.S. Government and Politics	
Semester & Year:	Spring 2014
Course ID and Section Number:	POLSC 10- 4978; POLSC 10-4979
Number of Credits/Units:	3
Day/Time: Location:	MW 10:05-11:30; MW 1:15-2:40 HU 110
Instructor's Name:	Emenaker
Contact Information:	Email:ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu; OFFICE: HU 108F
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. 	
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 10: US Government & Politics Fall 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.

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

Office Hours: HU108F; M/W 12:00-1:00 & T/Th 10:00-11:00 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 Introduction: Ideally, you would leave this class able to remember the particulars about U.S. government years from now. Realistically, you should be able to apply the 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 you can support your opinion in a political debate with friends or family, this course will have succeeded in empowering you.

In this class significant attention will be given to thinking about questions with no clear answer, especially the issues of how: (1) democratic is American politics and (2) 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	10:05-11:30	HU 110	(Section E4978)	3 Units.
M/W	1:15-2:40	HU 110	(Section E4979)	3 Units.

Text (required):

1) By the People: Debating American Government by Monrone and Kersh (Oxford University Press) is a traditional textbook. You will need to bring this text with you to most class sessions.

2) POLSC 10 Course Packet is a collection of readings I have compiled. You will notice on the online version of the syllabus that some readings are hyperlinks; you will click on this links and read the articles. For the articles listed in the syllabus that are not hyperlinks you will notice that there is a (CP) listed next to them. This stands for Course Packet. These articles are posted in a folder in the Resources section of MyCR labeled Course Packet. These readings will be critical to your success in this class. You will be asked questions from these articles for class work, for the quiz, for the Midterm, and for the Final. You will also use these readings, along with the textbook, for Reading Responses. You will want to print out all of these articles, take detailed notes on them, and bring them to class. If you do not do this, you will find it very hard to answer the questions that I pose to you in class.

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 3 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. Expect to put in about 9 hours per week for this class.

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; I 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 = 300 points	Reading Responses = 250 points
	Quiz = 50 points	
	Mid-Term Exam = 200 points	In-Class Final Exam = 200 points
		Total Semester Points = 1,000

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 30 % of your final grade and vital for your 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, 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, ask a colleague if you may copy theirs. I encourage everyone to exchange contact information with at least two others for these purposes.

2. Reading Responses are written pieces to 10 of the required readings. Do not attempt to summarize the entire chapter or article. Instead, pick a quote, theme, or idea from one of the assigned readings for that week then (1) write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing the author's intended meaning and (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 reading response is included in the Course Packet Folder; please read this sample a couple of times to get a sense of what I expect. Also read the section labeled "Mistakes that Drive Me Crazy" at the end of the article titled "How to Write a 5 Paragraph Essay."

You must be responding to readings assigned from the previous two class sessions. 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 4 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 Monday February 10; however, you should feel free to turn one in before this.*

3. Midterm Exam will be held during week #10 of the course (Wednesday 4/2). 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 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 circumstance; and (3) schedule a time to take the exam within 72 hours of the original exam. The Midterm 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 some time to do a review for the Midterm the class before the exam.

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 Midterm.

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** (1/22) **Class Discussion:** Course Outline: Why are you in this class? What are the ground rules? What do we know/not know?
- Readings:**
- 1) Course Syllabus & Reading Outline. *Make sure to read thoroughly.*
 - 2) All Readings for 1/22 in Course Packet (CP)
 - 3) [“Why are some countries Rich and Others Poor?”](#) Davidson, NPR NEWS.
 - 4) The Declaration of Independence (CP)
 - 5) Sample Reading Response (CP)
 - 6) Student Information & Contract Form (MyCR) (Due 2/3 or dropped from class!)
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- Week #2** (1/27) **Class Discussion:** Declaration of Independence: What are unalienable rights? Why do people form governments? Where does the legitimate power of government come from?

- Readings:**
- 1) Preface and Ch. 1 from Text
 - 2) [“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”](#) Frederick Douglass
 - 3) Last Semester’s Quiz Review Guide (CP)
 - 4) News Survey Assignment Posted (MyCR)

- (1/29) **Class Discussion:** Democracy: How is democracy defined?

- Readings:**
- 1) Handout- “Noam Chomsky on Democracy.”
 - 2) Ch. 2 from Text
 - 3) [“Some Truths are not Self-Evident,”](#) Howard Zinn
 - 4) [“Fred Korematsu, 86, Dies.”](#)
 - 5) Group Citizenship Test (MyCR)
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- Week #3** (2/3) **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.

- Readings:**
- 1) Ch. 3 from Text p. 60-75.
 - 2) “4 Myths about the Constitution.” Sacramento Bee (CP)
 - 3) Group Constitution Scavenger Hunt Exercise (MyCR)

- (2/5) **Class Discussion:** **Group Citizenship Test Due.**
What does citizenship mean? US Constitution: Why was it written? Who was excluded? What structures of did it establish?

- Readings:**
- 1) Ch. 3 from Text p. 75-105.
 - 2) [How Democratic is the American Constitution?](#) Ch. 3 “The Constitution as a Model: An American Illusion” Robert Dahl (CP) *This may be the most difficult reading of the semester; however, I also think it is the most important. Make sure to give yourself enough time to read this article slowly, and enough time to read it more than once.*
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- Week #4** (2/10) **Class Discussion:** **Must have at least one Reading Response turned in.**
US Constitution Continued

- Readings:**
- 1) [“In Congress’s Paralysis, a Mightier Supreme Court,”](#) NY Times, Aug. 20, 2012, Adam Liptak
 - 2) [“Supreme Court Appears Divided in Cross Case”](#) NPR News
 - 3) [“Let’s Give Up on the Constitution,”](#) Seidman, Dec. 30 2012, NY Times

- (2/12) **Class Discussion:** Separation of Powers: What are the powers of the 3 branches of government? How can each branch check the other two?

- Readings:**
- 1) Ch. 4 from Text
 - 2) “Jumping Frogs, Endangered Toads, and Ca’s Marijuana Law,” Annas.
 - 3) [“From State to State, Varied Responses to the Issue of Gun Violence,”](#) Cooper, NY Times, Feb. 3, 2013.
 - 4) [“Leery of Washington, Alaska Feasts on Its Dollars,”](#) NY Times.

Week #5 (2/17)

No Class

(2/19)

Class Discussion: Group Constitutional Scavenger Hunt Due

Federalism: Why did the founders establish federalism? What does it mean for us today?

Readings: Review for Quiz

Week #6 (2/24)

Class Discussion: Quiz!!

Constitutional Summation

Readings: 1) Ch. 13 from Text

2) ["Smaller States Find Outsize Clout Growing in Senate," Liptak, NY Times.](#)

3) Enumerated Powers of Congress & Legislative Branch Assignment (MyCR)

GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS

(2/26)

Class Discussion: Legislative Branch: What are the powers of Congress? How is law made?

Readings: 1) ["Cuts Hit Home for Boehner, Cantor," POLITICO](#)

2) ["Would the U.S. be Better off With a Parliament," NPR NEWS Ari Shapiro](#)

3) Last Semester's Midterm Review Guide (CP)

Week #7 (3/3)

Class Discussion: Legislative Assignment Due.

Legislative Branch: What influences decision making? How well does Congress represent the people?

Readings: 1) Ch. 14 from Text

2) ["What if Senators represented people by income..."](#)

3) ["Congress and Country: Behold the Differences," Sam Roberts.](#)

(3/5)

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](#)

2) ["Obama Turning to Executive Power to Get What he Wants," McClatchy News, Anita Kumar, March 19, 2013.](#)

Week #8 (3/10)

Class Discussion: Executive Branch

Readings: 1) Ch. 16 from Text

2) ["Why Obama \(And Any President\) Fails To Meet Expectations," NPR](#)

(3/12)

Class Discussion: Finish Executive Branch. Start Judicial Branch.

Readings: 1) ["Why States and Localities are Watching Lower Courts" Governing Magazine.](#)

2) ["Federal Court Strikes Down California Same Sex Marriage Ban" PEW.](#)

Spring Break

Week #9 (3/24)

Class Discussion: Judicial Branch: What is the role of an undemocratically appointed Court in a democratic society? Do we have an imperial judiciary?

Readings: 1) "Should the Courts Seek the 'Original Meaning'?" (CP)

2) Judicial Branch Assignment (MyCR)

(3/26)

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](#)

4) ["Crush Videos: A Constructive Dialogue"](#)

- Week #10** (3/31) **Class Discussion: Judicial Assignment Due.**
Mid-Term Review
Readings: Study for Mid-Term
- (4/2) **Class Discussion: !!!MID-TERM!!!**
Readings: 1) Ch. 10 from Text
2) Last Semester's Final Review Guide (CP)
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POLITICAL FORCES

- Week #11** (4/7) **Class Discussion:** Elections: How has access to the vote expanded?
Readings: 1) ["Justice Department Blocks Texas on Photo ID for Voting,"](#) NY Times
2) ["Portland, Maine, Weighs Letting Noncitizens Vote"](#)
3) ["How Maps Helped Republicans Keep an Edge in the House,"](#) NY Times.
- (4/9) **Class Discussion:** Elections: How does the Electoral College work? Why is it unlikely to change?
Readings: 1) ["A President by Popular Vote,"](#) LA Times
2) "Is Low Turnout a Problem?" (CP)
3) Political Parties Assignment (MyCR)
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- Week #12** (4/14) **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"](#)
3) ["Can Activist Win by Losing?"](#) Congress.org
4) Polling Assignment (MyCR)
- (4/16) **Class Discussion: Political Parties Assignment Due.**
Political Parties: What do parties do? What impacts do they have? Should their role be expanded?
Readings: 1) Ch. 8 from Text
2) "Dysfunction: Maybe it's What the Voters Want," Sac Bee (CP)
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- Week # 13** (4/21) **Class Discussion: Polling Assignment Due.**
Public Opinion & Polling: How much does public opinion influence policy? How much should it?
Readings: 1) Ch. 9 from Text
2) ["The Perils of Polling,"](#) Benjamin Ginsberg
- (4/23) **Class Discussion:** Video: [Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky & the Media.](#)
Readings: Handout- Manufacturing Consent Video Questions.
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- Week #14** (4/28) **Class Discussion: Manufacturing Consent Assignment Due.**
Media: What role does the media play in politics?
Readings: 1) Ch. 6 from Text
2) "A History of the Civil Rights Movement" (CP)
3) "Did Brown Matter?" Cass Sunstein (CP)
- (4/30) **Class Discussion:** The Struggle for Civil Rights: Those that have occurred & those that will.
Readings: 1) ["What We Want,"](#) Stokely Carmichael (CP)
2) [Feminism is for Everybody](#) "Feminist Politics: Where We Stand," bell hooks (CP)
3) ["Despite New Law Gender Salary Gap Persist,"](#)
4) ["Not Legal, Not Leaving,"](#) Jose Antonio Vargas, June 25, 2012, Time.

Week #15 (5/5) **Class Discussion:** Civil Rights/Civil Liberties: What rights and liberties do we have?

Readings: 1) Ch. 5 from Text
2) "An Issue of Sovereignty" Josh Lohmer (CP)
3) Study Guide for Final (MyCR)

(5/7) **Class Discussion:** Civil liberties & Tribal-Federal Relations. Semester Summary.

MAY 12-16 FINALS WEEK