

Syllabus for: (name of class)	
Semester & Year:	Fall 2014
Course ID and Section Number:	PSCI 10 E5928
Number of Credits/Units:	3
Day/Time:	TTh 11:40-1:05
Location:	HU 110
Instructor's Name:	Guy Aronoff
Contact Information:	Office location and hours: by appointment Phone: 826-3117 Email: guy-aronoff@redwoods.edu
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. Successful completion of this course satisfies the State of California's American Institutions requirement in American and California government. This requirement exists because a basic familiarity with the structure, history and nature of American government represents the foundation of good citizenship.	
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. 	
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.

College of the Redwoods

PSCI 10 E5928: American Government

Fall 2014

HU 110 TTh 11:40 – 1:05pm

Prof. Guy Aronoff

Humboldt State University

Founder’s Hall 150

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Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

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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.

The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the structures, functions, and processes of American government. We will explore the philosophical and historical roots of American politics, the three branches of government, and various political institutions like the media and political parties. While readings and lecture are an important component of this course, emphasis will also be placed on discussion and debate. I will cover the basic materials during the first half of most class sessions, while the second half will be reserved for discussions of class materials and current events or other class activities.

Required Book and Readings:

Benjamin Ginsberg. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics. 9th Edition (2013) Essentials Edition*

Seminar readings are available through the course MyCR site. In addition to the course readings, students are expected to keep abreast of current events, which will be incorporated into the course exams.

Course Requirements:

1) Exams: There will be a midterm and a comprehensive final exam in this course. In addition, there will be several unannounced pop quizzes. The multiple-choice questions will draw on lectures, class discussions, and course readings from the entire semester. *You will need approximately five 815 Scantron forms, two 882 Scantron forms, and a number two pencil for the exams which are available at the bookstore.*

2) Seminars: Seminars are forums in which issues are raised and explored, but not necessarily resolved; they require you to think, to practice the skills of analysis and synthesis, and by doing so, possibly leave with more and better ideas than the ones with which you came. Seminars are at the intellectual heart of modern education and go beyond the sharing of facts and probe the depths of the subject matter at hand. Approximately every week this semester you will participate in class discussion on major issues in American government. To facilitate the discussion you will be **required to bring five relevant questions** each week based on each reading which will be turned in at the end of class. You will be graded on your ability to discuss each topic, provide thoughtful support and/or criticism of other participants while citing from documents and texts used in this class, and your own outside reading. **At least once during the semester you will be required to lead the class discussion on the topic of your choosing and submit a short paper (2-3 pages in length) highlighting your analysis.** A sign-up sheet will be provided in class. A handout describing the methodology of critiquing is located on MyCR. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

3) Supreme Court Analysis: Select one of the cases below and write a short paper (between four and five pages) clearly identifying the case, summarizing the major arguments, analyzing the majority decision, minority dissent and evaluating its impact at the time of the decision, and today. Be sure to include relevant footnotes and annotated bibliography. **Your paper will be due on 27 November.**

Schenck v. U.S., 1919 1st Amendment

Buck v. Bell, 1927 Due Process, 14th Amendment

Brown v. Board of Education, 1954 14th Amendment

Engel v. Vitale, 1962 1st Amendment

Gideon v. Wainwright, 1963 6th Amendment

Griswold v. Connecticut, 1965 9th Amendment

Miranda v. Arizona, 1966 6th Amendment

Sheppard v. Maxwell, 1966 6th Amendment

Tinker v. Des Moines, 1969 1st Amendment

Furman v. Georgia, 1972 8th Amendment

Roe v. Wade, 1973 9th Amendment

Texas v. Johnson, 1989 1st Amendment

Kyllo v. U.S., 2001 4th Amendment

Lawrence v. Texas, 2003 9th Amendment

D.C. v. Heller, 2008 2nd Amendment

Arizona v. United States, 2012

US Dept. of Health and Human Services et al v. Florida, 2012

Alternative Film Analysis: Choose one of the films used in class, e.g. Bulworth, The Candidate, Compulsion, Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, People v. Larry Flynt, 1776, Wag the Dog and write a short paper. A separate handout will be posted on MyCr highlighting the requirements.

4) Road to 2014 Assignment: National/California General Election

In this group assignment students will select one of the candidates running for office or review one of the state initiatives on the November 4th ballot. You will be completing a thorough analysis of the campaign, and present it in class the week before the election. A separate handout will be posted on MyCr that will highlight the requirements.

Attendance: *You are expected to attend classes regularly, and be on time.* I take roll regularly; if you miss more than five classes expect to fail. Active participation is required for this course. Participation includes discussion of the assigned readings and other points that are raised in class. Keep in mind that the most interesting and exciting classes are a result of your willingness to share your own views! Your participation grade is based on the quality of your comments. You earn a “C” for basic description or summary of material, a “B” for showing an understanding of arguments and their implications, and an “A” for critically analyzing material on a regular basis. You are encouraged to remain informed of local, state, national and world events by watching news stations, listening to radio or reading newspapers. Furthermore, you are encouraged to bring stories to class to discuss, both as a means of keeping your classmates informed and of supplementing your participation grade. *You are responsible for obtaining any notes or assignments from classes you may have missed.*

A Note on Written Work: All written assignments submitted for this course must be printed in 12 point Times Roman font in MLA or APA format, single or double-spaced. ***Papers must include citations*** (direct quotes or paraphrasing) from relevant articles, and be properly cited. An annotated bibliography is required. I expect that you will proofread your work before submitting it to me, and ideally you will have someone else proof it as well. I will drop any paper one-letter grade for errors in excess of two errors per page (grammatical, improper citation, etc.).

GRADING: I use a traditional grading scale:

97 – 100%	A+	87 – 89%	B+	77 – 79%	C+	67 – 69%	D+
94 – 96%	A	84 – 86%	B	74 – 79%	C	60 - 66%	D
90 – 93%	A-	80 - 83%	B-	70 – 73%	C-	below 60%	F

To pass the course you must complete all of the assignments and attend class regularly. For purposes of grading, assignments will be ***weighted approximately*** as follows:

Seminar Discussion/Paper/Questions	100 points
Supreme Court Case or Film Analysis	100 points
Road to 2014 Paper	100 points
Midterm/Quizzes	100 points

Late Assignments will be penalized at a rate of one letter grade per week. After two weeks the grade for any late submission will automatically be 'F'. All assignments are due in class on the due date listed in the syllabus. Make up exams will not be scheduled without a valid medical excuse. If you have scheduling problems with any due dates, please contact me well before the assignment or exam is due.

Appeals: I am happy to speak with you about marks earned on a particular assignment. Before coming to discuss a grade, however, I request that you: (1) take 24 hours to read my comments before approaching me to discuss the mark; (2) write a detailed explanation of your question, including the specific reason(s) why you think your mark should be changed; and (3) submit your written response to me, and make an appointment with me to discuss the grade. Under no circumstances will I discuss grades over e-mail or telephone.

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In consideration of your fellow students, please turn off mobile phones before entering the classroom. If you absolutely must arrive late or leave early, please enter or leave quietly and sit near the door to minimize the disruption to your colleagues.

Support: CR offers excellent resources to help you succeed in your academic endeavors.

These include the Library, Computer Labs, Computer Help Desk, Academic Support Center, Learning Center, and Writing Center. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them!

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Preliminary Course Schedule: (subject to change)

Week 1 (26/28 August)

Topic: Course Introduction

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 1

Ancillary: Machiavelli, The Prince, Film: Monty Python & Search for the Holy Grail

Special Topics: Government Diary

Week 2 (2/4 September)

Topic: Evolution of Government

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 1

Seminar Topic #1: Is There Too Much Democracy in the World?

Ancillary: The Great Dictator (excerpts)

Week 3 (9/11 September)

Topic: American Beginnings

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 2

Seminar Topic #2: Were the Founding Fathers democratic reformers?

Ancillary: Film: 1776 (excerpts)

Special Topics: Articles of Confederation, Constitution

Week 4 (16/18 September)

Topic: Federalism & Separation of Powers

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 3

Seminar Topic #3: Has Federalism Worked?

Ancillary: Video Clips

Special Topics: State's Rights, Block Grants, Gridlock

Week 5 (23/25 September)

Topic: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 4

Seminar Topic #4: How has the struggle over rights affected Americans?

Ancillary: Films: A Time for Justice, Gideon's Trumpet (Special Circumstances Excerpt)

Special Topics: 14th Amendment

Week 6 (30 September/2 October)

Topic: Public Opinion and the Media

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapters 5, 6

Seminar Topic #5: Is the Media biased?

Ancillary: Smallest Political Quiz: Are you Left or Right?, Bork & Public Option Ads

Special Topics: polling

Week 7 (7/9 October)

Topic: Political Parties

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 7

Seminar Topic #6: Why have 3rd parties never firmly established themselves in the US?

Ancillary: Campaign Ads

Special Topics: Propaganda

Week 8 (14/16 October)

Topic: Elections

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 7

Seminar Topic #7: Should there be term limits for Congress?

Ancillary: Films: The Candidate, Bulworth (excerpt), JibJab Videos

Special Topics: PACs, Direct Election, Fusion Parties, Proportional Representation

Week 9 (21/23 October) Road to 2010 Presentations

Topic: Interest Groups

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 8

Seminar Topic #8: Should There be any limits to Speech?

Ancillary: Federalist #10, Eisenhower 1960 Speech, Film: Unprecedented

Special Topics: Lobbying

Week 10 (28/30 October)

Topic: Congress

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 9

Seminar Topic #9: Is Congress Broken?

Ancillary: Film: Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (excerpt)

Special Topics: Legislative Process

Week 11 (4/6 November)

Topic: The President

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 10

Seminar Topic #10: Should Presidents Be Allowed Executive Privilege?

Ancillary: Film: Wag the Dog (excerpt), Presidential Moments

Special Topics: Electoral College, Executive Privilege, Signing Statements

Week 12 (11/13 November)

Topic: The Executive Branch, Foreign Policy

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapters 11, 14

Seminar Topic #11: What kind of power should a wartime President have?

Ancillary: Bureaucracy Videos, State Department Video

Week 13 (18/20 November)

Topic: American Court System

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 12

Seminar Topic #12: What role should the Supreme Court play in our democracy?

Ancillary: Laws of Hammurabi & Medieval Laws, Film: People v. Larry Flynt (excerpt)

Special Topics: Key Court Decisions

Week 14 (25 November) Supreme Court or Film Analysis due

Topic: American Court System

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapter 12

Seminar Topic #13: Should the US have the death penalty?

Ancillary: Film: Compulsion

Special Topics: Robert's Court, 2010-2011 Docket

Week 15 (2/4 December) Final Review

Topic: American Public Policy

Text: Ginsberg, We the People, Chapters 13

Seminar Topic #14: Should all American have a right to health care?

Ancillary: Film: Capitalism: A Love Story (excerpts)

Special Topics: Nationalization v. Privatization

Week 16 Final Exam December 9 @ 10:45am