

Syllabus for: US Government & Politics	
Semester & Year:	Fall 2015
Course ID and Section Number:	POLSC 10 E7974
Number of Credits/Units:	3.0
Day/Time:	T /Th 11:40 – 1:05
Location:	AJ 108
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 E7974

T/Th 11:40 – 1:05 AJ 108

Fall 2015

3 Units

Joe Brookshire

joe-brookshire@redwoods.edu

Office hours: before and after 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 is meant by 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 (2014 Election update) Edition,
Authors: Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere. ISBN 978-0-393-26419-7

Note; the previous Brief 13th edition would also be acceptable: ISBN 978-0-393-92246-2

Governing California in the 21st Century, 5th Edition, by Anagnoson, and others, ISBN 978-0-393-93839-5

Both of these texts are published by W.W. Norton and are available as ebooks.

Handouts distributed in class.

Expectations:

1. On-time attendance is expected throughout the semester. Class begins at 11:40 and goes until 1:05. Please observe these times. Students who miss one third of classes will be automatically dropped.
2. Students are expected to take the midterm, the final, and quizzes on the schedule dates. Four 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 DSPP 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: everything that we cover in class. They are short essay, multiple-choice, true/false, identification or a mix of these. The Double Quiz (2X) counts as two. 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 on Tuesdays. Late arrivals will miss the quiz. The two lowest scores (or two missed quizzes) are dropped at the end of the semester.

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

Midterm 25% **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 an essay exam, but also has some of the types of questions that are found on quizzes. **Reserve Thursday, October 15.**

Final Exam 25% **The Final** covers chapters 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 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 Tuesday, December 8 at 10:45** 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: Classes will be held each day as indicated except for November 26. Please take note of any and all changes announced in class or posted on Canvas. The symbols || indicates that day's discussion topic, US indicates American Government text, and *Ca* indicates California text.

Tuesdays	Thursdays
August 25 Overview	August 27 Types of governments, terms
Sept. 1 Quiz US Ch. 1, <i>Ca Chap 1, pages 1-15</i> Constitution	Sept. 3 Constitution, Paper #1 due
Sept. 8 Constitution	Sept. 10 Constitution
Sept. 15 Quiz US Ch. 2; <i>Ca Ch 2, pages 19-40</i> Federalism	Sept. 17 Federalism
Sept. 22 Quiz US Ch. 3; <i>Ca Ch 9, 203-233 + 237-238</i> Congress	Sept. 24 Congress, Paper #2 due
Sept. 29 Quiz US Ch. 5; <i>Ca Ch 5, pages 107-131</i> Ch Executive	Oct. 1 Chief Executives
Oct. 6 Quiz US Ch. 6; <i>Ca Ch 6, pages 135-148</i> Ex. Branch	Oct. 8 Executive Branch
Oct. 13 Public Policy <i>Ca Ch 8 184-195</i> (helpful to read)	Oct. 15 Midterm with US Ch. 7 &; part of US Chap. 13 and <i>Ca Ch 6, pages 148-155</i>
Oct. 20 Civil Liberties	Oct. 22 Civil Rights, Paper #3 due
Oct. 27 Quiz US Ch 4 Judicial Branch	Oct. 29 Judicial Branch
Nov. 3 State courts / Supreme Court	Nov. 5 State courts / Supreme Court
Nov. 10 Quiz US Ch 8, <i>Ca Ch 7, pages 159-175</i> //Public Opinion & Media	Nov. 12 Public Opinion & Media
Nov. 17 Elections	Nov. 19 Elections + Political Parties
Nov. 24 2X Quiz: US Ch 9, <i>Ca Ch 4, 77-81, Ch 3, 60-64</i> US Ch 10, <i>Ca Ch 4, 85-87, 94-103, review 28</i> Parties	Nov. 26 No Class Thanksgiving
Dec. 1 Parties and Interest groups	Dec. 3 Parties and Interest groups
December 8	Final Exam Tuesday 10:45 (with US Ch 11, <i>Ca Ch 4, pages 69-77, 81-85 and US Ch 12, Ca Ch 3 pages 45-60, 65</i>)

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