

<b>Syllabus for: US Government &amp; Politics</b>	
<b>Semester &amp; Year:</b>	Fall 2015
<b>Course ID and Section Number:</b>	POLSC-10-D8485
<b>Number of Credits/Units:</b>	3.0
<b>Day/Time:</b>	M/W 2:05 – 3:30
<b>Location:</b>	DM 29
<b>Instructor's Name:</b>	Will Meriwether
<b>Contact Information:</b>	Office location and hours: M/W 3:30- 4:30 T/TH 10:00-11:00 Building E Room 3 Phone: 707-465-2370 Email: william-meriwether@redwoods.edu
<b>Course Description (catalog description as described in course outline):</b>	
<p>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.</p>	
<b>Student Learning Outcomes (as described in course outline) :</b> Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the history and philosophy of the Constitution, politics, and government in the US;</li> <li>2. Identify the major provisions of the California and US Constitutions;</li> <li>3. Compare the three branches of California and US Government, and related political institutions;</li> <li>4. Outline the relationship between the states and national government (ie. federalism); and</li> <li>5. Analyze contemporary issues facing California and the US system of government.</li> </ol>	
<b>Special accommodations:</b> 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.	
<b>Academic Misconduct:</b> 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.

## US Government & Politics Fall 2015 3 Units

Will Meriwether

POLSC-10-D8485

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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: Understanding American Politics and Government 2012 Election Edition, John J.

Coleman and Kenneth M. Goldstein, Pearson Publishing. ISBN: 978-0205950041

Guide to California Government, League of Women Voters of California Education Fund; 15 edition. 978-0963246516

Grading:

4 Exams: 100 pts. Each	400 pts.
1 research paper 100 pts.	100 pts
1 persuasion paper 100 pts.	100 pts.
Class Discussion 50 pts.	50 pts.

Weekly News summaries 10 pts. Each      150 pts.

**Total: 800 pts**

**Exams:** There will be four exams that cover multiple chapters and themes. These exams will include multiple choice and essay based questions and will involve questions from the textbook, classroom lecture, and reading assignments given during class. Exams will be given over Blackboard.

### **Research Paper:**

In addition to class participation, quizzes, and exams, a research paper is also required. The research paper should be 6-8 pages in length, typed, double spaced, with a cover page and works cited page (not counted in the page length requirement), using APA citations. A minimum of 6 scholarly sources outside of the textbook are required. The research paper should discuss the history of one public policy issue currently being discussed at the national level, and the impact that the policy decision will have on competing interests. For example Social Security reform on those currently elderly and those that will draw Social Security in the future. Examples of topics include immigration, healthcare, same-sex marriage, foreign policy, etc.

### **Persuasion Paper:**

The United States Constitution has a built in mechanism for change, the Amendment process. Currently politicians and groups are discussing altering the Constitution to declare that artificial entities such as businesses are not people as well as the right of Congress to limit campaign spending. A draft proposal can be viewed here:

<https://movetoamend.org/wethepeopleamendment>

In 3-4 pages, typed, double spaced, Times New Roman size 12 font, attempt to persuade your state legislator into accepting the proposed Amendment or rejecting the proposed amendment either in full or only portions of the Amendment. A minimum of 4 scholarly sources outside of the textbook are required. Some examples would be the proposed Amendment itself, the Supreme Court opinion Citizens United v. FEC, and OpenSecrets.org.

### **Weekly News Summaries:**

Each week students will summarize an article pertaining to American Politics and how it influences the current debate on that subject. You can use information from past article summaries if you want to focus on one topic throughout the semester. Each week students will have to use a different media source for the articles. Some weeks it will be your choice and other weeks it will be my pick. My goal for these assignments is to identify the differences between legitimate news organizations and blogs which pose as news organizations but often use only one or two lines of news and then the rest use only their opinion.

Week 1: NY Times [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)

Week 2: Washington Post [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com)

Week 3: The Economist [economist.com](http://economist.com)

Week 4: The Atlantic [theatlantic.com](http://theatlantic.com)

Week 5: CNN [cnn.com](http://cnn.com)

Week 6: Fox News [foxnews.com](http://foxnews.com)

Week 7: Al-Jazeera America [america.aljazeera.com](http://america.aljazeera.com)

Week 8: BBC [bbcnews.com](http://bbcnews.com)

Week 9: Time [time.com](http://time.com)

Week 10: Reuters [reuters.com](http://reuters.com)

Week 11-Week 15 You can pick your own news organization. If you go to [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com) and scroll all the way to the bottom of the page there is a list of news organizations to give you some ideas of which to use if you can't think of any on your own. I would also encourage you to find a website that depicts itself as a news website but is merely used for partisan gain and highlight how the organization spins the article for at least one of the weeks.

### **Class Discussion:**

Students will also be graded on class participation. Participation is not judged by merely showing up to class but taking an active role in discussions and debates.

### **Expectations:**

1. Show up to class on time and be prepared to participate in the lecture and discussion that day.
2. Be courteous not only to myself but to your fellow classmates. One can disagree and debate without it becoming personal.
3. Late assignments will not be accepted. There is one exception to this rule, I understand that life happens and I will offer a one day grace period for one assignment for the entire course. I am giving you the due dates for each assignment in the syllabus so you can plan accordingly.
4. No cheating, plagiarism, etc. View the school policy on academic misconduct.
5. Challenge yourself. One of the hardest things in the world to do is admit when one is wrong (I am guilty of this myself), but in order to learn we have to accept that we don't know everything and some of our preconceived ideas may be wrong. Just as I intend to challenge you, I ask that if you feel I am wrong you have the right to challenge me but just as I will bring facts to my discussions if you think that I am wrong bring with you facts from reputable sources not emotions.

### **Schedule**

Week 1	24-Aug	Introduction
	26-Aug	US Chapter 1
Week 2	31-Aug	US Chapter 2
	2-Sep	US Chapter 3
Week 3	7-Sep	Labor Day No School
	9-Sep	US Chapter 3
Week 4	14-Sep	US Chapter 4/Exam 1
	16-Sep	US Chapter 7
Week 5	21-Sep	US Chapter 7
	23-Sep	US Chapter 8 CA 1
Week 6	28-Sep	US Chapter 9 CA 3
	30-Sep	US Chapter 10
Week 7	5-Oct	US Chapter 10
	7-Oct	US Chapter 11
Week 8	12-Oct	US Chapter 11/Exam 2
	14-Oct	US Chapter 12
Week 9	19-Oct	US Chapter 12
	21-Oct	US Chapter 13 CA 5
Week 10	26-Oct	US Chapter 13
	28-Oct	US Chapter 14 CA 4
Week 11	2-Nov	US Chapter 14
	4-Nov	US Chapter 15 CA 6
Week 12	9-Nov	Veterans Day No School
	11-Nov	US Chapter 15/ Persuasion Paper Due
Week 13	16-Nov	US Chapter 16
	18-Nov	US Chapter 16/ Exam 3
Week 14	23-Nov	US Chapter 5
	25-Nov	US Chapter 6
Week 15	30-Nov	US Chapter 17 CA 10 & 11/ Research Paper Due
	2-Dec	US Chapter 18
Finals Week		Exam 4