

Syllabus

POLSC 10: US Government & Politics

Course Information

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| Spring 2020 | |
| POLSC 10- E8075 | |
| Instructor: | Ryan Emenaker |
| Meeting Times: | M/W 10:05-11:30 (E8075) |
| Meeting Location: | CA 109 (E8075); |
| 3 Units | |

Instructor Contact Information

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| Office location: HU 108F |
| Office hours: M-Th 12:00-1:00 |
| Phone number: 476-4306 |
| Email address: ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu |

Required Materials

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| Textbook Title, Author, ISBN: On Main Syllabus |
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Catalog Description

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.

Course 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 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.

Evaluation & Grading Policy

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| On Main Syllabus |
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Special accommodations statement

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 accommodations, please see me or contact [Disability Services and Programs for Students](#). Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS based on their campus location:

- Eureka: 707-476-4280, student services building, 1st floor

Academic dishonesty

In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. In cases involving academic dishonesty, determination of the grade and of the student's status in the course is left primarily to the discretion of the faculty member. In such cases, where the instructor determines that a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment and/or exam and may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct ([AP 5500](#)) is available on the College of the Redwoods website. 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 website](#).

Disruptive behavior

Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include, but is not limited to: unwarranted interruptions; failure to adhere to instructor's directions; vulgar or obscene language; slurs or other forms of intimidation; and physically or verbally abusive behavior. In such cases where the instructor determines that a student has disrupted the educational process, a disruptive student may be temporarily removed from class. In addition, the student may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct ([AP 5500](#)) is available on the College of the Redwoods website. 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 website](#).

Emergency procedures / RAVE

College of the Redwoods has implemented an emergency alert system called Everbridge. In the event of an emergency on campus you will receive an alert through your personal email and/or phones. Registration is not necessary in order to receive emergency alerts. Check to make sure your contact information is up-to-date by logging into WebAdvisor <https://webadvisor.redwoods.edu> and selecting 'Students' then 'Academic Profile' then 'Current Information Update.'

Please contact Public Safety at 707-476-4112 or security@redwoods.edu if you have any questions. For more information see the [Redwoods Public Safety Page](#).

In an emergency that requires an evacuation of the building anywhere in the District:

- Be aware of all marked exits from your area and building
- Once outside, move to the nearest evacuation point outside your building
- Keep streets and walkways clear for emergency vehicles and personnel

Do not leave campus, unless it has been deemed safe by the campus authorities.

Student Support Services

The following online resources are available to support your success as a student:

- [CR-Online](#) (Comprehensive information for online students)
- [Library Articles & Databases](#)
- [Canvas help and tutorials](#)
- [Online Student Handbook](#)

[Counseling and Advising](#) offers academic support and includes academic advising and educational planning

Learning Resource Center includes the following resources for students

- [Academic Support Center](#) for instructional support, tutoring, learning resources, and proctored exams.

POLSC 10: US Government & Politics

Spring 2020 Course Syllabus

Bring your syllabus to each class session. The syllabus will orient you to the day's activities, 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 12-1:00. 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 a 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: (1) how 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 CA 109 (Section E8075) 3 Units

Text (required):

1) By the People: Debating American Government by Morone and Kersh **4th Edition** (Oxford University Press; 2017) ISBN **978-0-19-092871-1** is a traditional textbook. This is the **Full Edition**, not the Brief one.

2) Current Debates in American Government by Emenaker and Morone **2nd Edition** (Oxford University Press; 2015) ISBN **978-0190862053** is a collection of readings I have compiled. These readings will be critical to your success in this class. You will be asked questions from these articles for classwork, 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 take detailed notes on these articles, and you should bring your notes and the book to class. If you do not do this, you will find it very hard to answer the questions that are posed in class.**

3) Additional readings and/or activities will be assigned through Canvas and/or handed out in class.

Instructor Expectations 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 written 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.

If you miss class often, you may be dropped. "Excessive absences" is defined as missing more than 3 classes in a semester which equates to more than 10% of the total class sessions.

Canvas- Be certain that you know how to use Canvas, and that you are able to check your College of the Redwoods (CR) e-mail. I will be communicating to the class by e-mail, and through Canvas, with some frequency; **I will assume you check your CR e-mail at least once a day.** Canvas 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 Canvas, or are not receiving messages from me, do not wait to fix this.

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| Grading: | Class Participation & Homework | = 200 points |
| | Quiz | = 50 points |
| | Mid-Term Exam | = 250 points |
| | Reading Responses | = 250 points |
| | Final Exam | = 250 points |
| | Total Semester Points | = 1,000 |

Grading Scale:

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| A | = 930 – 1000 pts |
| A- | = 900 – 929 pts |
| B+ | = 866 – 899 pts |
| B | = 830– 865 pts |
| B- | = 800 – 829 pts |
| C+ | = 750 – 799 pts |
| C | = 700 – 749 pts |
| D | = 600 – 699 pts |
| F | = 0 – 599 pts |

***An "incomplete" grade will not be given except under extraordinary circumstances.
A worksheet will be provided to out to help you compute your class grade.***

Assignments & Grading:

1. Class Participation & Homework is 20% 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 Canvas. 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 Analyses 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 analysis is included on Canvas; 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 analysing 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 Analyses 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 analysis pieces will be accepted!!! You must have at least one turned in by Wednesday, February 5;* however, you should feel free to turn one in before this.

3. Midterm Exam, will be held during **week #10 (April 1st)**. 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 (this includes the mid-term exam, the quiz and any other quizzes or exams that are assigned) 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 on Canvas; 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. **The Quiz, scheduled for Monday 2/24, will follow the same similar procedures.**

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 Instructor's Discretion
(Changes will be announced in class and/or on Canvas)

POLSC 10: US Government & Politics Course Outline & Reading Schedule

Week 1

(1/20) Day 1: **NO CLASS**

(1/22) Day 2: Course Outline. Why are you in this class? What are the ground rules? What do we know/not know?

- 1) Course Syllabus & Reading Outline. *Make sure to read thoroughly.*
- 2) Introduction and Chapter 1 in *Current Debates*
- 3) The Declaration of Independence (in *Current Debates* but also posted on Canvas)
- 4) "Sample Reading Analysis" & "How to Write a 5 Paragraph Essay" (Canvas)
- 5) Student Information & Contract Form (Canvas) (**Due 2/5** or earlier, or dropped from class!)

Week 2

(1/27) Day 1: Declaration of Independence: What are unalienable rights? Why do people form governments? Where does the legitimate power of government come from?

- 1) Preface and Ch. 1 in *By the People*
- 2) "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" Frederick Douglass in *Current Debates* p. 15-17.
- 3) Last Semester's Quiz Review Guide (Canvas)

(1/29) Day 2: Democracy: How is democracy defined?

- 1) Handout- "Noam Chomsky on Democracy."
- 2) Ch. 2 in *By the People*
- 3) Ch. 2 in *Current Debates*
- 4) Group Constitutional Scavenger Hunt Assignment Posted (Canvas)

Week 3

(2/3) Day 1: Would you form a government if you lived in the "original condition"? What was The Articles of Confederation?

- 1) Ch. 3 from *By the People* (first half of Chapter)
- 2) "The Conversation: 4 Myths about the Constitution," in *Current Debates*

(2/5) Day 2: **Must have at least one Reading Analysis turned in.**

Student Information & Contract Form Due.

US Constitution: Why was it written? Who was excluded? What structures did it establish?

- 1) Ch. 3 from *By the People* (second half of Chapter)
- 2) "The Constitution as a Model: An American Illusion" by Robert Dahl in *Current Debates* p. 30-40
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.

Week 4

(2/10) Day 1: US Constitution Con't.

- 1) Ch. 3 in *Current Debates*
- 2) State-Action Assignment (Canvas)

(2/12) Day 2: **Group Constitutional Scavenger Hunt Due.** Separation of Powers: What are the powers of the 3 branches of government? How can each branch check the other two?

- 1) Ch. 4 in *By the People*
- 2) Ch. 4 in *Current Debates*

Week 5

(2/17) Day 1: **NO CLASS**

(2/19) Day 2: **State-Action Assignment Due.** Federalism: Why did the Framers establish federalism? What does it mean for us today?

- 1) Review for Quiz
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Week 6

(2/24) Day 1: **Quiz!!**

- 1) Ch. 13 from *By the People*
- 2) "Smaller States Find Outsize Clout in Senate," from *Current Debates* p. 227-233.
- 3) Enumerated Powers of Congress (Canvas)

(2/26) Day 2: Legislative Branch: What are the powers of Congress? How is law made?

- 1) Ch. 13 from *Current Debates*
 - 2) Last Semester's Midterm Review Guide (Canvas)
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Week 7

(3/2) Day 1: Legislative Branch: What influences decision making? How well does Congress represent the people?

- 1) Ch. 14 from *By the People*

(3/4) Day 2: Finish Legislative Branch. Start Executive Branch: How has the presidency grown? What constrains the president?

- 1) Ch. 14 from *By the People*
 - 2) Start Ch. 14 from *Current Debates*
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Week 8

(3/9) Day 1: Executive Branch

- 1) Finish Ch. 14 from *Current Debates*

(3/11) Day 2: Finish Executive Branch. Start Judicial Branch.

- 1) Ch. 16 from *By the People*
 - 2) "Why States and Localities are Watching Lower Courts," in *Current Debates* p. 291-293.
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Spring Break March 16-20

Week 9

(3/23) Day 1: Judicial Branch: What is the role of an undemocratic Court in a democratic society? Do we have an imperial judiciary?

- 1) Ch. 16 in *Current Debates*

(3/25) Day 2: Judicial Branch-- How do judges interpret the law and Constitution?

- 1) Official Mid-Term Review Guide (Canvas)
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Week 10

(3/30) Day 1: **Mid-Term Review**

- 1) Study for Mid-Term

(4/1) Day 2: **!!!MID-TERM!!!**

- 1) Ch. 5 in *By the People*

- 2) Ch. 5 in *Current Debates*
- 3) Last Semester's Final Review Guide (Canvas)

Week 11

(4/6) Day 1: Civil Liberties: What rights and liberties do we have?

- 1) Ch. 6 in *By the People*
- 2) Ch. 6 in *Current Debates*

(4/8) Day 2: The Struggle for Civil Rights: Those that have occurred & those that will.

- 1) Ch. 8 in *By the People*
 - 2) Ch. 8 in *Current Debates*
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Week 12

(4/13) Day 1: Political Participation: How do people participate & how has access to the vote expanded?

- 1) Ch. 10 in *By the People*
- 2) "A President by Popular Vote," in *Current Debates* p. 179-180

(4/15) Day 2: Campaigns & Elections: How does the Electoral College work? Why is it unlikely to change?

- 1) Ch. 10 in *Current Debates*
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Week 13

(4/20) Day 1: Elections: Why do people vote the way they do?

- 1) Ch. 11 in *By the People*
- 2) Ch. 11 in *Current Debates*

(4/22) Day 2: Political Parties: What do parties do? What impacts do they have?

- 1) Ch. 7 in *By the People*
- 2) Ch. 7 in *Current Debates*

Week 14

(4/27) Day 1: Public Opinion & Polling: Should public opinion influence policy?

- 1) Ch. 9 in *By the People*
- 2) Ch. 9 in *Current Debates*

(4/29) Day 2: Media: What role does the media play in politics?

Week 15:

(5/4) Day 1: **Course Review**

- 1) Study Guide for Final (Canvas)

(5/6) Day 2: PREP FOR FINAL

May 11-15 FINALS WEEK

Course Outline, Readings and Due Dates Subject to Change at Instructors Discretion