

Syllabus for POLSC 10: US GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Course Information

Semester & Year: Spring 2021

Course ID & Section #: POLSC 10 (V0445; V0446; V0448; V0449)

Instructor's name: Dr. Ryan Emenaker

Course units: 3

Instructor Contact Information

Office hours: By appointment Online via email or Zoom.

Phone number: use email

Email address: ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu

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 *(from course outline of record)*

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.

Accessibility

College of the Redwoods is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability-related services and accommodations, please contact your instructor or [Disability Services and Programs for Students](#) (DSPS). Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS based on their campus location:

- Eureka: 707-476-4280, student services building, 1st floor
- Del Norte: 707-465-2324, main building near library
- Klamath-Trinity: 530-625-4821 Ext 103

During COVID19—DSPS will email approved accommodations for distance education classes to your instructor. In the case of face-to-face instruction, please present your written accommodation request to your instructor at least one week before the needed accommodation so that necessary arrangements can be made. Last minute arrangements or post-test adjustments usually cannot be accommodated.

Admissions deadlines & enrollment policies

Spring 2021 Dates

- *Classes begin: 1/16/21*
- *MLK Jr. Birthday (all campuses closed): 1/18/21*
- *Last day to add a class: 1/22/21*
- *Last day to drop without a W and receive a refund: 1/29/21*
- *Census date: 2/01/21 or 20% into class duration*
- *Last day to petition to file P/NP option: 2/12/21*
- *Lincoln's Birthday (all campuses closed): 2/12/21*
- *President's Day (all campuses closed): 2/15/21*
- *Last day to petition to graduate or apply for certificate: 3/04/21*
- *Spring Break (no classes): 3/15/21 – 3/20/21*
- *Last day for student-initiated W (no refund): 4/02/21*
- *Last day for faculty-initiated W (no refund): 4/02/21*
- *Final examinations: 5/08/21 – 5/14/21*
- *Semester ends: 5/14/21*
- *Grades available for transcript release: approximately 5/31/21*

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](#).

POLSC 10: US Government & Politics

Spring 2021 Course Syllabus

Even though you can follow the Modules in Canvas, you should review the syllabus often

Professor: Ryan Emenaker -- ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu --

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.

I. 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 Major Quiz, for the Midterm, and for the Final. You will also use these readings, along with the textbook, for Reading Responses. **You should take detailed notes on these articles; if you do not do this, you will find it very hard to answer the questions that are posed in** quizzes, exams, and Discussion Forums.

3) Additional readings and/or activities will be assigned through Canvas.

II. Instructor Expectations & Student Requirements

Your will need to dedicate at least as much (but probably more) time as you would to a face-to-face class.

Conscientiousness, attention to details, and reading and writing skills are critical for success.

- carefully watch video lectures, read textbook chapters and take notes
- complete online Reading Analysis Papers requiring the submission of documents
- participate in weekly online discussions and complete weekly quizzes
- complete Exams such as Midterm and Final through Canvas

Expect to put in about 7-9 hours-per-week for this class. Additional time will be needed to study for exams.

If you fail to keep up with Discussion Posts, Quizzes or Reading Analysis Papers you may be dropped from this class.

Computer Skills: Online courses require adequate computer skills. You must be able to:

- navigate the course Learning Management System (Canvas)
- receive and respond to your CR email
- download and upload files to Canvas, and
- use a word processor (such as Microsoft Word)

It is your responsibility to meet the technological demands of the course.

Technology Requirements: You should have high-speed internet (such as broadband) service from cable, DSL, or satellite providers which you can reliable access for the duration of the course. Anticipate problems with your computer and internet access (including power outages) by not waiting until the last minute to submit assignments. It is your responsibility to meet the class deadlines.

Portable Devices vs. Computers: Although you can use late-model portable devices (such as Android or iOS phones & tablets) for some things, you should plan on doing the majority of your work (especially essays) from a reasonably late-model notebook or desktop computer. *Do NOT plan to participate in this class solely from a portable device.* If you do decide to use your portable device for *some* class work, use the free Canvas app (“Canvas by Instructure”) available in iTunes (for iOS) and the Google Play Store (for Android). Your experience with Canvas will be a lot better using the app.

Proctored Exams: There are no proctored exams for this course, but there are a few quizzes and exams (such as the Final and the Midterm) which must be taken on a specific day.

Course Availability: The course will be available on CR’s Canvas system beginning on the first day of classes. On or after that date, you must login to Canvas at <https://redwoods.instructure.com> to enter our “classroom.”

Login instructions for Canvas:

1. Open your web browser and go to <https://redwoods.instructure.com>
2. Your Username is the same as your **Webadvisor User ID** (first initial + lastname + last 3 digits of your student ID number.) Your initial password is your 6-digit birthdate (mmddyy).
3. Once logged in, on top left side of the screen there is a drop down menu of your Courses.

Student Resources: There are instructions on how to log in to Canvas, the basics of using Canvas, and additional support for taking an online course at College of the Redwoods at <http://redwoods.edu/online/>

Confirm your presence in the online classroom: Log in to Canvas and post in the “Introductory Discussion Post” Forum no later than 11:59pm on 1/24/21 to confirm your presence in the online classroom. Doing so will confirm your enrollment and avoid being dropped as a “no show.”

Faculty Initiated Drop: Note that students may be dropped from the class for inactivity and insufficient participation in the class (i.e. not taking exams, not submitting course work, etc.).

Grading:	Discussion Posts/Quizzes & Class Participation	= 250 points
	Major Quiz (Week 5)	= 50 points
	Mid-Term Exam (Week 9)	= 250 points
	8 Reading Analysis Papers	= 200 points
	Final Exam	= 250 points
	Total Semester Points	= 1,000

Grading Scale:

A	= 940 – 1000 pts
A-	= 900 – 939 pts
B+	= 870 – 899 pts
B	= 830– 869 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.

Assignments & Grading:

1. Discussion Posts/Quizzes & Class Participation total 25% of your final grade and are vital for your success in this class. I do not accept excuses for late Discussion Posts or Quizzes you simply miss those points. If you only miss a Post here or there, or if you only miss 1 quiz, you will still be able to pass the class, but if you miss too many, you will be unable to earn the points necessary to pass. There are a total of 25 Discussion Forums throughout the semester, each worth 5 points. I will give you full credit for 3 of them (so you can miss 3 without any penalty to your grade). You will lose 5 points for everyone you miss beyond those 3.

The following criteria will be used in this course to determine the points earned by a Discussion Post. Note that earning the full 5-points requires serious analysis, evaluation of the required readings, thus earning a full 5-points should not be expected as the default grade but the grade given when fully earned.

Points	Definition
5	Substantially exceeds the minimal requirements. The Post demonstrates critical analysis and deep creative thinking by providing an accurate breakdown and a thoughtful evaluation of one or more of the readings for that class session. The Post is of professional quality, it is free of errors, and it indicates a deep reflection on the material.
4	Exceeds minimum requirements. The Post clearly demonstrates an understanding of one or more of the readings for that class session. It displays some critical analysis and some creative thinking (even if the analysis is not as outstanding as it could be) and the Post is mostly accurate in its breakdown of the author's argument while also providing some evaluation of that argument. Further, the writing is well organized, and thoughts are expressed clearly. No major errors in writing style or mechanics.
3	Satisfactorily meets the minimum requirements. The Post clearly demonstrates the acquisition of knowledge, and that the student has completed the readings and comprehended most of the author's argument. There is little attempt to evaluate the author's work, or the evaluation that is attempted is untethered to the argument made by the author. The Post may contain some minor errors, and rough grammar which may hinder the clarity of expression.
2	Unsatisfactory attempt to achieve the minimum requirements. The Post indicates some knowledge of the reading, but there is minimal summation and evaluation of the required readings and some of that summation and evaluation is inaccurate. There may be frequent serious errors in grammar and comprehension.
1	Unacceptable attempt to achieve the minimum requirements. The Post does not demonstrate knowledge of any of the required readings for that class. And summation or evaluation of the require readings is lacking or almost wholly inaccurate. The writing may lack coherence or relevance.

2. Reading Analyses are written pieces to 8 of the required readings. Do not attempt to summarize the entire chapter or article. Instead, (1) pick a quote, theme, or idea from one of the assigned readings for that week then (2) write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing the author's intended meaning and (3) 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 Sample Analysis so you can avoid making these mistakes.

You must be analyzing readings assigned from that week. 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 8 for the entire semester, you are already allowed to "miss" Reading Analyses for 7 weeks. If you miss more than that--no matter the reason--then you do not deserve full credit for this portion of the class. I will grade your first 8 (not your best 8) and extra credit will not be given for turning in more than 8.

These writings are designed to get you thinking about the readings we do throughout the semester, they reinforce Lectures and Discussions and sharpen your analytical skills. *Each response piece should be at least one double-spaced typed page (approx. 300-450 words). It must be submitted through Canvas as a Word Doc. No late or e-mailed analysis pieces will be accepted!!! You must have at least one turned in by Sunday, Feb. 7 or I may drop you from the course; however, you should feel free to turn one in before this.*

A similar criterion to the one used for Discussion Forum Posts is used to grade Reading Analysis Papers. Earning a full 25 requires serious analysis, evaluation of the required readings, thus earning a full 25-points on a Reading Analysis should not be expected as the default grade, but only the grade earned by outstanding Analysis papers.

3. Midterm Exam, will be held during week #9 (Thursday March 25th). You must take the exam between 9am and 9pm. It will take approximately 1.5 hours. It may include true/false, multiple choice, identification, as well as short and long answer questions. Make-up exams (this includes the Midterm exam, the Major Quiz) are not allowed except under the most exceptional circumstances, and are allowed only 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. The Major Quiz, scheduled Week #5 (Thursday Feb. 18th will follow the same similar procedures, but it will take closer to 45 mins to complete.

4. Final Exam, will be Wed. May 12. The format will be substantially similar to the Midterm but it will be slightly longer.

**Course Outline, Readings, and Due Dates Subject to Change at
Instructor's Discretion
(Changes will be announced via Canvas)**

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

Week 1 [Jan 19-24]

- (1.1) What is Politics? Does Political Knowledge Matter?
- 1) Course Syllabus & Reading Outline. *Make sure to read thoroughly.*
 - 2) "Sample Reading Analysis" & "Mistakes that Drive Me Crazy" (Canvas)
- (1.2) Declaration of Independence & Chapter 1 of Current Debates: What are unalienable rights? Why do people form governments? Where does the legitimate power of government come from? What are the 4 I's?
- 1) Introduction and Chapter 1 in *Current Debates*
 - 2) The Declaration of Independence (in *Current Debates* but also posted on Canvas)
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Week 2 [Jan. 25- 31]

- (2.1) Democracy: How is democracy defined? What Makes U.S. Political Culture Unique?
- 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) "Noam Chomsky on Democracy" (Canvas)
 - 4) Last Semester's Review Guide for Major Quiz (Canvas)
- (2.2) What was The Articles of Confederation?
- 1) Ch. 2 in *By the People*
 - 2) Ch. 2 in *Current Debates*
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Week 3 [Feb. 1-7]

- (3.1) The US Constitution: Why was it written? Who was excluded? What structures did it establish?
- 1) Ch. 3 from *By the People* (first half of Chapter)
 - 2) "The Conversation: 4 Myths about the Constitution," in *Current Debates*
- (3.2) US Constitution Con't; Would it Pass? Why did the Anti-Federalists Oppose it? Does it Serve as a model for Other Countries?
- 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.

Must have at least one Reading Analysis turned in by this week

Week 4 [Feb. 8-14]

- (4.1) Separation of Powers or Shared Powers? How can each branch check the other two?
- 1) Finish Reading the rest of Ch. 3 in *Current Debates*.
- (4.2) Federalism: How can there be More than One Sovereign? What are the Dilemmas & Advantages of Federalism?
- 1) Ch. 4 in *By the People*
 - 2) Ch. 4 in *Current Debates*. The George Annas Article, "Jumping Frogs, Endangered Toads & California's Medical Marijuana Law," can be difficult, but it is an important piece.
 - 3) Review for Major Quiz.
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Week 5 [Feb. 15-21]

Major Quiz (Thursday, Feb. 18)

Week 6 [Feb. 22-28]

(6.1) Legislative Branch: What are the powers of Congress? How is law made?

- 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)

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

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

(7.1) Executive Branch: How has the presidency grown? What constrains the president?

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

(7.2) Executive Branch: How should we judge the power of the president/presidency?

- 1) Ch. 14 from *Current Debates*
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Week 8 [March 8-14]

(8.1) Judicial Branch: What is the role of an "undemocratic Court" in a democratic society? Do we have an imperial judiciary?

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

(8.2) Judicial Branch-- How do judges interpret the law and Constitution?

- 1) Ch. 16 in *Current Debates*
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Spring Break March 15-19

Week 9 [March 22-28]

(9.1) Prepare for Mid-Term

- 1) Official Midterm Review Guide (Canvas)

Midterm (Thursday, March 25)

Week 10 [March 29-April 4]

(10.1) Political Participation: How do people participate & how has access to the vote expanded?

- 1) Ch. 8 in *By the People*

(10.2) Political Participation: How do people participate & how has access to the vote expanded?

- 1) Ch. 8 in *Current Debates*

Week 11 [April 5-11]

(11.1) Campaigns & Elections: How does the Electoral College work? Why is it unlikely to change?

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

(11.2) Elections: Why do people vote the way they do?

- 1) Ch. 10 in *Current Debates*
 - 2) Last Semester's Final Review Guide (Canvas)
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Week 12 [April 12-18]

(12) Political Parties: What do parties do? What impacts do they have?

- 1) Ch. 11 in *By the People*
 - 2) Ch. 11 in *Current Debates*
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Week 13 [April 19-25]

(13.1) Civil Liberties: What Liberties do we have? How do liberties differ from rights?

- 1) Ch. 5 in *By the People*
- 2) Ch. 5 in *Current Debates*

(13.2) The Struggle for Civil Rights: Those that have occurred & those that will.

- 1) Ch. 6 in *By the People*
 - 2) Ch. 6 in *Current Debates*
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Week 14 [April 26-May2]

(14) Public Opinion & Polling: Does public opinion influence policy? Should it?

- 1) Ch. 7 in *By the People*
 - 2) Ch. 7 in *Current Debates*
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Week 15 [May 3-9]

(15.1) Media & Politics: What role does the media play in politics

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

(15.2) **Course Review**

- 1) Study Guide for Final (Canvas)

Final Wednesday, May 12

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