

## Course Information

**Semester & Year: Spring 2023**

Course ID & Section #: **POLSC 10 (E4629)**

Instructor's name: **Ryan Emenaker, Ph.D.**

Course units: 3

## Instructor Contact Information

Office location: Online only

Office hours: By appointment Online via email or Zoom.

Phone number: use email or Canvas Messenger

Email address: [ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu](mailto: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, 1<sup>st</sup> floor

If you are taking online classes 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.

## Student Support

Good information and clear communication about your needs will help you be successful. Please let your instructor know about any specific challenges or technology limitations that might affect your participation in class. College of the Redwoods wants every student to be successful.

## 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](#).

## Inclusive Language in the Classroom

College of the Redwoods aspires to create a learning environment in which all people feel comfortable in contributing their perspectives to classroom discussions. It therefore encourages instructors and students to use language that is inclusive and respectful.

## Setting Your Preferred Name in Canvas

Students have the ability to have an alternate first name and pronouns to appear in Canvas. Contact [Admissions & Records](#) to request a change to your preferred first name and pronoun. Your Preferred Name will only be listed in Canvas. This does not change your legal name in our records. See the [Student Information Update form](#).

## Canvas Information

If using Canvas, include navigation instructions, tech support information, what Canvas is used for, and your expectation for how regularly students should check Canvas for your class.

Log into Canvas at <https://redwoods.instructure.com>

Password is your 8 digit birth date

For tech help, email [its@redwoods.edu](mailto:its@redwoods.edu) or call 707-476-4160

Canvas Help for students: <https://webapps.redwoods.edu/tutorial/>

Canvas online orientation workshop: [Canvas Student Orientation Course \(instructure.com\)](#)

## 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](#) offers assistance to students in need of professional counseling services such as crisis counseling.

Learning Resource Center includes the following resources for students

- [Academic Support Center](#) for instructional support, tutoring, learning resources, and proctored exams. Includes the Math Lab & Drop-in Writing Center
- [Library Services](#) to promote information literacy and provide organized information resources.
- [Multicultural & Diversity Center](#)
- [Academic Support Center](#) for instructional support, tutoring, learning resources, and proctored exams. Includes the Math Lab & Drop-in Writing Center
- [Library Services](#) to promote information literacy and provide organized information resources.
- [Multicultural & Diversity Center](#)

# POLSC 10: US Government & Politics

## Spring 2023 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](mailto:ryan-emenaker@redwoods.edu) -- Or Canvas Messenger

*Office Hours:* By appointment Online via email, Canvas Messenger, or Zoom Canvas Messenger. 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 11:40-1:05 SC204 (Section E4629) 3 Units

### **Text (required):**

1) By the People: Debating American Government by Morone and Kersh, 5th Edition (Oxford University Press; 2021) **ISBN 978-0-19-754010-7** is a traditional textbook. This is the Full Edition, not the Brief one.

2) Current Debates in American Government by Emenaker and Morone **3<sup>rd</sup> Edition** (Oxford University Press; 2022) **ISBN 978-0-19-753429-8** 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.

<b>Grading:</b>	Class Participation & Homework	= 100 points
	Quiz	= 100 points
	Mid-Term Exam	= 300 points
	Reading Responses	= 200 points
	Final Exam	= 300 points
	<b>Total Semester Points</b>	<b>= 1,000</b>

**Grading Scale:**

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: listening to lectures, 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 responses to 8 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, analysis 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 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. 300-500 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 February 5<sup>th</sup> or I may drop you from the course;** however, you should feel free to turn one in before this.*

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.

The following criteria will be used in this course to determine the points earned by a Reading Analysis Paper. Note that earning the full 25-points requires serious analysis, evaluation of the required readings, thus earning a full 25-points should not be expected as the default grade but the grade given when fully earned.

Points	Definition
23-25	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.

- 20-22 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.
- 17-19 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.
- 13-16 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.
- 0-12 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 required readings is lacking or almost wholly inaccurate. The writing may lack coherence or relevance.

3. Midterm Exam, will be held during **week #10 (March 29)**. The midterm must be taken between 11:00am and 2pm through Canvas on the day it is scheduled. You may use the computers in any CR computer lab, or at your home. It will take approximately one class session. You may not collaborate with others on and tests or quizzes. The exams and quizzes 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, and the Final) 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 at the end of Week #5 (Sunday Feb. 19)** will follow the same similar procedures to the Midterm, but it will take closer to 45 mins to complete.

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; this will most likely be done through Canvas just like the Midterm and Major Quiz. 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

(1/16) Day 1: No Class

(1/18) Day 2: Course Outline. Why are you in this class? What are the ground rules? What do we know/not know?

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### Week 2

(1/23) Day 1: NO CLASS

(1/25) Day 2: Declaration of Independence: What are unalienable rights? Why do people form governments? Where does the legitimate power of government come from?

- 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" & "Mistakes that Drive Me Crazy" (Canvas)
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### Week 3

(1/30) Day 1: Democracy: How is democracy defined?

- 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. 18-20.
- 3) Last Semester's Quiz Review Guide (Canvas)

(2/1) Day 2: **Must have at least one Reading Analysis turned in by end of week.**

What was The Articles of Confederation?

- 1) Handout- "Noam Chomsky on Democracy."
  - 2) Ch. 2 in *By the People*
  - 3) Ch. 2 in *Current Debates*
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### Week 4

(2/6) Day 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* p. 34-6.

(2/8) Day 2: US Constitution Con't.

- 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. 36-46  
*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.*
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### Week 5

(2/13) Day 1: Separation of Powers: What are the powers of the 3 branches of government? How can each branch check the other two?

- 1) The rest of Ch. 3 in *Current Debates*

(2/15) Day 2: Federalism: Why did the Framers establish federalism? What does it mean for us today?

- 1) Review for Quiz
- 2) Ch. 4 in *By the People*
- 3) Ch. 4 in *Current Debates*

**Sunday, Feb. 19th Major Quiz** (taken through Canvas)



## Week 6

(2/20) Day 1: NO CLASS

(2/22) Day 2: Legislative Branch: What are the powers of Congress? How is law made?

- 1) Ch. 13 from *By the People*
  - 2) Enumerated Powers of Congress (Canvas)
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## Week 7

(2/27) Day 1: 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)

(3/1) Day 2: Finish Legislative Branch. Start Executive Branch: How has the presidency grown? What constrains the president?

- 1) Start Ch. 14 from *By the People*
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## Week 8

(3/6) Day 1: Executive Branch

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

(3/8) Day 2: Finish Executive Branch. Start Judicial Branch.

- 1) Finish Ch. 14 from *Current Debates*
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**Spring Break March 13-18**

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## Week 9

(3/20) 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 from *By the People*

(3/22) Day 2: Judicial Branch-- How do judges interpret the law and Constitution?

- 1) Ch. 16 in *Current Debates*
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## Week 10

(3/27) Day 1: **Mid-Term Review**

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

(3/29) Day 2: **!!!MID-TERM!!!**

- 1) No readings; study for Midterm



## Week 11

(4/3) Day 1: Civil Liberties: What rights and liberties do we have?

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

(4/5) Day 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 12

(4/10) Day 1: Political Participation: How do people participate & how has access to the vote expanded?

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

(4/12) Day 2: Campaigns & Elections: How does the Electoral College work? Why is it unlikely to change?

- 1) Ch. 10 in *By the People*
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## Week 13

(4/17) Day 1 Elections: Why do people vote the way they do?

- 1) Ch. 10 in *Current Debates*

(4/19) Day 2: 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 14

(4/24) Day 1: Public Opinion & Polling: Should public opinion influence policy?

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

(4/26) Day 2: Media & Politics: What role does the media play in politics

- 1) Ch. 9 in *By the People*
  - 2) Ch. 9 in *Current Debates*
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## Week 15

(5/1) Day 1: **Course Review/PREP FOR FINAL**

- 1) Study Guide for Final (Canvas)

(5/3) Day 2: **Course Review/PREP FOR FINAL**

**May 6-12 FINALS WEEK**  
**Course Outline, Readings and Due Dates Subject to Change at Instructors Discretion**