
Political Science 2—American Government
Schedule # 52050
Term: Fall 2011
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Instructor: Mr. Turini
Office: Forum 7
Office Hours:
M 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
W 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
F 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to this nation's governmental institutions and political processes. It will have four major foci. First, we will be examining the theoretical and constitutional basis of the American political system. Second, we will examine the institutional structure of our national government--Congress, the Executive, and the Supreme Court. Third (to be divided into two sections), we will be focusing on how Americans seek to translate their political aspirations and beliefs into governmental policy--the meaning of elections, the significance of political parties and interest groups, and the role of public opinion in our political system as "policy inputs," and what these factors mean to the character of foreign and domestic policy. Finally, we will review significant controversies that have contributed to our fundamental legal character (civil liberties and civil rights).

As specified in Reedley College's course outline of record for this class, in the process of completing this course, students will:

- Recognize the Constitutional processes and principles as they occur in modern U.S. and California politics,
- Identify the key elements in the formation of public policy, and relate how events can dictate governmental priorities, and
- Identify the impact of the media and public opinion in regard to elections, voting, and the development of public policy in the United States in California.

My goal in teaching this course is to help you develop some of the tools you can use, if you so choose, to play an active role in the politics of your day. What I expect from you (and what you will need to benefit from this course) is not necessarily a wealth of prior knowledge or experience in politics, but an open mind willing to look at familiar things in new ways, to question the assumptions that everyone else seems to blindly accept, and to be determined and persistent enough to think your way through your own conclusions.

Texts / Readings:

Required:

- Barbour and Wright, Keeping The Republic, 5th ed.
- Van Vechtin, California Politics: A Primer

Recommended:

- Collegiate dictionary
- a reputable newspaper or news magazine
- Writer's style manual (includes APA format)
- recommendations may be announced

Basis for Evaluation:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points Per Assignment</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
4 California Quizzes	25	100 (11%)
1 U.S. Constitution Quiz	50	50 (5%)
4 Examinations	100	400 (42%)
1 Final Examination	150	150 (16%)
Critical Inquiry Paper	75	75 (8%)
Critical Analysis Paper	75	75 (8%)
Participation / Conduct		100 (10%)
<u>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE</u>		<u>950 (100%)</u>

<u>Point Range</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
950 – 855	100 – 90%	A
854 – 760	89 – 80%	B
759 – 665	79 – 70%	C
664 – 570	69 – 60%	D
569 and below	59% and below	F

California Quizzes:

Students will take four quizzes on California politics throughout the term. All students will need a **Scantron form 815** for all quizzes. Quizzes will consist of 10-15 multiple-choice questions taken from either lecture material or from the California portion of your textbook.

Each quiz will cover the following material:

QUIZ 1: The California Constitution, and California Intergovernmental Relations

QUIZ 2: California Governmental Institutions (the Legislature, the Plural Executive, and the Judiciary)

QUIZ 3: Policy “Inputs”—The Electorate as Players (Public Opinion, Voting and Elections, and Mass Media)

QUIZ 4: Policy “Inputs”—Non-Institutional Players (Political Parties and Interest Groups)

U.S. Constitution Quiz:

Students will be required to take a quiz covering the content of the Constitution of the United States of America. A worksheet/study guide will be provided to help in preparing for this quiz. All students will need a **Scantron form 882** for this quiz. Versions of this quiz can be taken up to three (3) times.

Examinations:

There will be four 100-point examinations and a 150-point final examination. All students will need either a **Scantron form 886-E OR a “Blue Book”** for all examinations. In all cases, you will be given a choice in terms of the format of the examination. You may take examinations in any of the following formats:

1) all multiple choice (approximately 50 questions),

2) multiple choice and essay questions (approximately 30 multiple choice questions and 1 essay), or

3) all writing (approximately 6 term identifications, 3 short answer questions, and 1 essay).

Further instructions will be given as the first examination draws nearer.

MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS WILL ONLY BE GIVEN UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Some official verification of the need to miss the exam will be required before a make-up exam is approved. If approved, a make-up examination **must be completed within one week** of the original date of administration.

For testing purposes, topics will be divided into the following groups:

EXAM 1: Introductory material, The Constitution, and Federalism

EXAM 2: American Institutions (Congress, The Executive and the Bureaucracy, and the Judiciary)

EXAM 3: Policy "Inputs"—"Ideology, Participation, and Voting," and Mass Media

EXAM 4: Policy "Inputs"—"Pluralism" (Political Parties and Interest Groups)

FINAL EXAMINATION: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Research Project:

There will be two papers due in this class worth 75 points each. Students MUST submit both papers to be considered for credit on either assignment.

For the Critical Inquiry paper, students are to visit the California Secretary of State's web site, choose one initiative that is currently in circulation, write a summary of that initiative, and submit at least THREE questions regarding the proposal. For example, you may pick a particular provision and ask exactly how that might impact other, related areas of California government.

For the Critical Analysis paper, students are to build upon their Critical Inquiry papers by (a) refining their summaries, and (b) answering the questions posed in the earlier paper.

All submitted projects MUST include a "works cited" page noting the materials used to derive the responses. All citations must be formatted according to American Psychological Association (APA) specifications. When submitted, these materials should be typed in 10 or 12-point font, double spaced, and have 1" margins. Students must use complete sentences and paragraphs in response to all questions. These materials will be graded *primarily* on content and completeness; however, a portion of your grade will be based on grammar, spelling, and presentation. **PLEASE NOTE: PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DESIGNATED DUE DATE (5 minutes after class begins will be considered late), AND LATE MATERIALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Participation / Conduct:

Participation:

An important part of the course is student participation. Everyone is strongly encouraged to ask questions and offer input regarding the subject matter at hand and current events related to that subject matter. At a minimum, a good way to ensure your ability to participate effectively in class discussions would be to take five to ten minutes prior to the class beginning and review your notes from the previous class. In addition, I reserve the right to call on students to respond to questions posed in class, so you should always be ready to answer. Attendance is obviously one measure of participation, and you will not do well in the course if you regularly miss class. Perfect attendance is best, and more than six hours of absences is too many. **Be advised that it is the policy of this community college district that an instructor may drop a student who has missed more than two weeks of instruction in a full term class.**

Conduct:

A guaranteed way to lower your grade is to conduct yourself in an inappropriate manner in the classroom. **Inappropriate behavior such as reading, talking, sleeping, writing letters, text messaging, etc., during class, or failure to treat everyone in the classroom with respect will affect your grade negatively.** Those who practice such inappropriate behavior will likely be asked to leave the classroom, pursuant to California state law and the State Center Community College District's Student Code of Conduct policy (California Education Code 76030-76033 and SCCCD Board Policy 5410, respectively). **Cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, and all other miscellaneous electronic devices are to be turned OFF during class.** Not only is a ringing cell phone distracting, disruptive, and annoying, it is rude and disrespectful. If it is imperative that your phone remain "on," please inform me prior to the start of class. If I agree that your situation requires that your phone remain "on," I will likely ask that you set your phone to "vibrate." **On the days of exams, no technological devices will be allowed to be on.** Failure to follow these instructions may lead to suspension from my class.

Cheating or instances of plagiarism are the most severe of conduct violations.

- **Cheating** is defined as "the willful and intentional practice of fraudulent and deceptive acts for the purposes of improving a grade or obtaining course credit." Cheating is NOT limited to examinations only.

It includes any act in which you engage for the purposes of obtaining unearned academic credit. For further discussion of this concept, please refer to the Reedley College Catalog.

- **Plagiarism** is defined as “fraudulently representing someone else’s writing or other scholarly material as your own.” In other words, plagiarism is when you try to receive credit for someone else’s work, including, but not limited to, any source you use for a paper or submitting a fellow student’s homework while representing it as your own work. For further discussion of this concept, please refer to the Reedley College Catalog.

As these are the most severe of conduct violations, they will be met with the most extreme of consequences. Any student caught in one of these activities will (a) receive a 0 on the assignment/examination in question, (b) sacrifice **all** participation/conduct points available in this class, and (c) will not be eligible to earn any extra credit in the class. **In short, such actions will be met with a penalty potentially in excess of 300 points—over three full letter grades—in the course.**

Reading Assignments:

All reading assignments should be COMPLETED by the assigned date. This will facilitate your learning of the course material as well as your ability to participate in class discussions. **Keep in mind, the readings and the lectures are intended to complement, not replace, one another.** Some material covered in the lectures will not be covered in the text: conversely, information in the text may not be addressed directly in class. In a testing situation, you will be responsible for all assigned materials. If you have questions on **any** of the material, ASK!!! I want to help you learn about American politics and government, but your questions may not be answered unless you ask them. Also, **always** expect to answer questions in class based upon the assigned readings for that day.

Extra Credit Assignment:

STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE TO EARN EXTRA CREDIT POINTS ONLY AFTER (1) DOWNLOADING A COPY OF THE SYLLABUS, AND (2) PASSING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION QUIZ.

For your first extra credit opportunity, you may submit your completed U.S. Constitution workbook/study guide on the date indicated below for a possible 10 extra credit points.

In addition, there will be a running extra credit assignment in this class for those students interested. Students will have the opportunity to earn 1 point of extra credit for each chapter outline they submit based on the assigned readings from the chapters that relate to the national government. While that may not seem significant on the surface, consider the following: we will cover 14 “chapters” of material this semester, which means you will have the opportunity to earn 13 points of extra credit (only 12 points because I will distribute sample materials based on the first chapter as an example; however, this still equates to over two full grades on any one examination). All extra credit materials are **DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE SPECIFIED DEADLINE.** There will be **no exceptions**, and **NO LATE EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), please notify me immediately. All reasonable requests for assistance will be considered, and efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.