
Political Science 2—American Government**Schedule #** 52097 (MWF 9:00) and 52100 (MWF 12:00)**Term:** Spring 2011**Office phone:** (559) 638-3641, ext. 3798**e-mail:** william.turini@reedleycollege.edu**Instructor:** Mr. Turini**Office:** Forum 7**Office Hours:**

M 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

W 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

F 10:30 – 11:30 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:

- Study both the theory and practice of “democracy.”
- Research the forces and political philosophies that influenced the founding fathers of the United States and the framers of the Constitution.
- Review the role played by the U. S. Constitution in (a) creating our federal system of government, with its subsequent divided responsibilities, and (b) establishing the separation of powers and checks and balances principles at the national level, as well as the implications of such.
- Examine the federal system as a practical device to accommodate—within one government—national and local needs unique to the United States.
- Scrutinize the relationship among the media, public opinion and policy outcomes in the United States.
- Review the strengths and weaknesses of the American two-party system and the effects of so-called “third party” movements.
- Discuss the impact of interest groups on American government and in American politics and of the role of the First Amendment in protecting group activities.
- Evaluate the relationship between the Bill of Rights, the government, and the concept of “civil liberty,” noting that liberty is both the absence of governmental intrusion and the result of a set of guarantees that protect the individual against the excesses of government.
- Assess the idea of civil rights as the rights of all citizens to equal protection of the law, as provided in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution. Students will also explore the development of civil rights, using the evolving civil rights of African-Americans and other groups as examples.
- Become acquainted with the key elements of domestic and foreign policy, and relate how events can dictate our government's priorities.
- Study the structure, roles and powers of California and local governments.

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 a willingness 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:

- Dye, Sparrow, and Field, Politics in the United States, (custom published edition for Reedley College combining Dye and Sparrow, Politics in America, 8th ed. and Field, California Politics and Government Today, 12th ed.)

Recommended:

- Collegiate dictionary
- writer's style manual (includes APA format)
- a reputable newspaper or news magazine
- 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 / Attendance		100 (10%)

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE **950 (100%)**

<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

Writing Assignment (Critical Inquiry and Critical Analysis papers):

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: ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS MUST BE SUBMITTED AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DESIGNATED DUE DATE (5 minutes after class begins will be considered late), AND LATE PROJECTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Participation, Conduct, and Attendance:

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.

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, as will cheating on exams or instances of plagiarism in out-of-class writing assignments.**

- ***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.

Those who wish to 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 SCCC 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.

Attendance:

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.**

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.

Overview of Important Dates:

Administrative:

Last day to drop and receive a refund—Friday, January 21
Last day to drop and avoid a “W”—Friday, January 28
Last day to add— Friday, January 28
Last day to change a class to or from a P/NP grading basis—Friday, February 11
Last day to drop—Friday, March 11

Class:

Extra Credit for Chapter 3 due Monday, January 17
Extra Credit Constitution Workbook due Friday, January 21
CONSTITUTION QUIZ (1st administration)—Friday, January 21
Extra Credit for Chapter 4 due Monday, January 24
EXAMINATION 1—Wednesday, February 02
QUIZ 1—Wednesday, February 09
Extra Credit for Chapter 10 due Wednesday, February 09
Extra Credit for Chapter 11 due Wednesday, February 16
CONSTITUTION QUIZ (2nd administration)—Friday, February 16
Extra Credit for Chapter 12 due Wednesday, February 23
Extra Credit for Chapter 13 due Wednesday, March 02
EXAMINATION 2—Monday, March 07
CRITICAL INQUIRY PAPER due Friday, March 11
QUIZ 2—Monday, March 14
Extra Credit for Chapter 5 due Monday, March 14
Extra Credit for Chapter 8 due Monday, March 21
CONSTITUTION QUIZ (3rd administration)—Wednesday, March 23
Extra Credit for Chapter 6 due Friday, March 25
EXAMINATION 3—Wednesday, March 30
QUIZ 3—Wednesday, April 06
CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER due Friday, April 08
Extra Credit for Chapter 9 due Friday, April 08
EXAMINATION 4—Friday, April 15
QUIZ 4— Friday, April 29
Extra Credit for Chapter 14 due Monday, April 25
Extra Credit for Chapter 15 due Monday, May 09
FINAL EXAMINATION—
 Section 52097 (MWF 9:00) - Monday, May 16, 9:00 a.m.-10:50 a.m.
 Section 52100 (MWF 12:00) - Wednesday, May 18, 1:00 p.m.-2:50 p.m.

Holidays:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—Monday, January 17
President Lincoln Day—Friday, February 18
President Washington Day—Monday, February 21
Spring Break—Monday, April 18 – Friday, April 22