February 2013
Political Science 155-27: American Government
Town Hall Meeting
Spring 2013

Instructor: Ellie Clifford Ertle
Email: ertle@csuchico.edu
Office Hours: Butte 707A Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays 12-1pm and by appt.

Teaching Assistant (TA):
Penelope Benitez
Email: penelopebenitez@hotmail.com
Office Hours: Monday from 10a-11a (Butte 707B)

Required Course Reading
• Additional reading placed on Blackboard Learn– be sure to check regularly.

Additional materials
• Folders: Each student is expected to keep a folder, which will contain:
  • All graded weekly assignments
  • All graded Town Hall assignments
  • Advocacy paperwork

Evaluation of Student Proficiency Student Choice
Students can choose one of the following evaluation pathways for the course and sign up on BBLearn on or before March 1, 2013. Students will have one opportunity to change their grading pathway, during the week following the Town Hall Meeting (April 29-May 3). These will be your only opportunities to choose a pathway, please be aware of dates/deadlines.

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Course Description: University Requirements

“An investigation of who gets What, When, and How in national, state, and local politics. Also includes principles of American governmental institutions, federal systems, congress, president, and courts. Fulfills California state graduation and credential requirements for the American Constitution.

- Connection to GE Mission Statement:
  - POLS 155 prepares students for continual learning and the application of knowledge to a career as well as a personal life by teaching students how government works, explaining the values and responsibilities of democratic citizenship, and by helping students identify routes to political change. The course provides students with the fundamental tools necessary to be effective civically engaged individuals by identifying the paths and practicing the methods of political change at the national, state, and local levels.
- Student Learning Outcomes:
  - POLS 155 fosters the value of Personal and Social Responsibility by identifying the shared and separate roles of individual and communal responsibility. By explaining how government works, the necessity of personal involvement to make democratic government work well, and both the formal and informal routes for effecting political change, this course emphasizes the opportunities and responsibilities of being a member of a political community.

Class Description:
This is a class about political engagement. Throughout the course there will be an emphasis on the awareness of individuals as agents of socio-political change, and the tools needed to navigate the change process. During the semester we will look at the various components of American Government, and the process by which change is made. The process involves individuals and groups identifying problems and working toward solutions. It requires proactivity, creativity, interaction and tenacity. The course will require the same.

The student chooses a university education. My role is to ensure that you are provided the opportunity and access to learn course concepts, and analyze and apply the information that you absorb through your reading, research and advocacy work. Your role is to engage in order to get what you need and want from the course.

Beyond the final grade, success in this class is determined by your ability to understand the power and responsibility you hold as a member of a democratic society. As unique individuals and adults, you have the ability to identify how best to assess whether you are “getting it”. Therefore, this course will provide openness and flexibility within the ethical responsibility of my role as instructor to the university and field of study to ensure that all course content has academic integrity and conforms to the generally published course description.

This course is part of the Political Science Department’s Town Hall Meeting program. Students will work throughout the semester on a policy issue relating to the political question “What is possible”. Ongoing coursework and assignments will help students to research their policy issue, and better understand the issue within a political context. On Wednesday, April 24 at 5:45pm students will attend a required Town Hall Meeting. During this meeting, you will have a chance to present your research on a policy issue, discuss your issue with other students and community members, and begin to prepare an impact statement outlining a possible “next step” for yourself and others.

Students will also spend some time with an agency, organization, individual or other political actor to advocate for a policy position. The Town Hall Meeting course is designed to help participants to better understand their role in American government and the political process. The program will help you engage on issues of importance to you, and give you the tools to be a more engaged and effective part of the democratic process.

Format of Class: The “flipped” classroom
- Each student is responsible for reading the required text and additional information posted on Blackboard before class each week.
- Class time will be devoted to assessing student understanding of course concepts and applying them in various ways (group work, activities, IRAs, etc.)
- We will begin each class promptly; you should be on time to prevent loss of class participation points. Assigned work will not be accepted after class begins.
- Reminder: for every hour of class instruction, students are expected to spend at least 2 hours outside of class reading, working on assignments, and studying. Therefore, this course is designed with the assumption that you will spend at least 6 hours per week on outside activities for this course.

Individual Reading Assessment (IRA) (Quiz): Each week you will complete a reading assessment on the reading assigned prior to review in class. The IRAs are located on Blackboard (you can find them in “assessments” or the
weekly learning module). IRAs are posted one week before they are due on Wednesday at 5pm, and are open until Wednesday at 9am.

**Application Assignments (AA):** Application assignments will vary, and focus on current events and the application of course concepts. *All sources used in these assignments should come from list of recommended sources* (see last page of syllabus). A rubric (posted in the BBlearn weekly content folder) will provide specific direction for assignments. Students will work in groups to provide peer feedback and choose one assignment for group grade. All students in the group who submit a complete assignment with their group will receive the group grade. Incomplete assignments will not receive credit. The graded assignment will get an additional point (for a maximum of 10 points). Summaries and feedback will be integral to Town Hall success.

**Citations:** All assignments will require the use of APSA citations (both in-text parenthetical AND a reference page). Please refer to the “Citation Help” folder on BBLearn for tips and a full style guide.

**Class Discussion:** I strongly encourage you to ask questions about the readings and lectures in class. Do not feel as if you should already know certain things. You are here to learn and often the best way to do that is to ask questions! We will be discussing a wide range of topics in this class, many of which you may have strong feelings about. Sometimes you will disagree with a classmate; sometimes you will disagree with me. Please feel free to express your opinions; the political process is about discussion. Much of the process is about dissention. I only ask that you air your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner, and will expect you to hold me to the same standard.

**Office Hours:** I will be available during regularly scheduled office hours—see top of syllabus. I am also happy to meet for an appointment. The best way to schedule appointments is by email with advance notice. I check my email once a day, be sure to think ahead when setting appointments or asking questions about syllabus or assignments.

**Absence Policy:** I firmly believe that you will get out of this class what you choose to put into it, and that it is your choice how best to prioritize your attendance. I do not take regular attendance. Please do not attend if you feel that you cannot be a fully engaged member of class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the information that you missed. However, as this is a class about democracy and engagement, participation is an integral part of this course. I do not accept late work.

**Participation:** TBA based on class discussion

**Extra Credit Opportunities:**
- Additional IRAs:
  - You may miss two IRAs without penalty; if you complete all 12 of them, the last two will count as extra credit.
- Additional Application Assignments:
  - You may miss one AA without penalty; if you complete all 6 of them, the last one will count as extra credit.
- “Political Voice”:
  - How do people make themselves heard in our democracy? Students may post up to two examples of someone using their “voice” on the discussion board for extra credit. Students must follow the question prompt to receive credit. Student must post and present in class for credit. Students will have 2 chances to present. If you are absent both times that you are called, you will not receive credit for political voice. All PV must be posted by Monday, May 13 at 9am.
Special Accommodations: If you have a learning difference that requires accommodation, please let me know after you contact the Office Disabled Student Services (DSS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. DSS office is now in the Student Services Center on the first floor. The DSS phone number is 898-5959 V/TDD or Fax 898-4411. Visit the DSS Web site at http://www.csuchico.edu/dss/

Academic Integrity: This class will be conducted in accordance with the college Student Code of Conduct and Standards of Academic Honesty. In other words, Students are expected to complete their own work. Academic dishonesty will result in a zero on the assignment and formal charges with Student Judicial Affairs www.csuchico.edu/sjd/discipline/honesty.html. I reserve the right to submit papers turned in for this class to Turnitin.com to test for plagiarism. See college catalogue for more detail www.csuchico.edu/catalog/cat03/req/polic_reg.html

Disclaimer: From time to time this syllabus may need to be amended. Students will be notified of syllabus changes during a regularly scheduled class.

Recommended News Sources: (you must use these sources for weekly assignments AND Town Hall assignments, unless otherwise approved by instructor or TA)

Newspapers:
New York Times Washington Post Sacramento Bee
Chico News and Review Christian Science Monitor Los Angeles Times

Magazines:
Time Newsweek The Economist
Atlantic Monthly National Journal CQ Weekly Report

Other News Sources:
NPR.org www.bbc.co.uk/news/ (PBS)
Factcheck.org News Hour with Jim Leher

* NOTE: you do not have to pay for these articles. They are available on our library’s website or the Internet for free. See the library’s Town Hall Meeting site: http://libguides.csuchico.edu/pols155.