Syllabus, POLS 200, American Political System – HYBRID

PLEASE CAREFULLY READ ALL COMPONENTS OF THIS SYLLABUS

Introduction & Course Description
This course introduces students to the United States Political System including political institutions and political behavior of individuals in the U.S. We examine the philosophical principles informing the U.S. constitution, federalism, major governmental institutions, the links between citizens and government, and civil rights and civil liberties and also cover California state and local government as well. Given that this is a Midterm election year, our studies heavily focus on the links between electioneering and governing in US politics.

Three major thematic explorations unite our course content: citizenship, democratic ideals, and the legitimate exercise of power. Among the broad questions we will address are:

- What do the ideals of liberty, equality, and democracy mean in the context of the nation’s political system?
- How do the Constitutional framework and the system of federalism reflect the tensions among these core American values?
- What does American democracy require of its citizens and what do her citizens require of their government?
- How has each of our major political institutions – the Congress, the Presidency, and the Supreme Court - exercised power in distinctive ways?
- How has the expansion of American citizenship, democratic practice, and federal power changed our nation’s political system?
- Have we gone too far from our founding principles or have we effectively adapted our political system to protect those principles in the modern world?

While we will not be able to answer any of these questions definitively, we raise them as guides for our study of U.S. and California political systems. To facilitate that study, the course is organized into three sections, each covering several different chapters from your textbooks: 1). The Constitutional Framework; 2). Democracy in America; 3). Governing Institutions in our Democracy.

This course satisfies code requirements in the United States Constitution and California state & local government. The course also satisfies GE Category D4, US Constitution and State and Local Government, SSU General Education.

Learning Objectives
1. Understand the major tenets of the United States Constitution, including civil rights and civil liberties;
2. Understand the major institutions of the U.S. government, including CA state & local governments;
3. Understand the links between citizens and their government;
4. Understand federalism and the interaction between national and state governments;
5. Develop oral and written communication skills; reinforce critical thinking skills;
6. Develop information competency through use of a variety of sources to access course material.
Dropping and Adding
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops is available at: http://www.sonoma.edu/ar/registration/addclasses.shtml. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

Spring 2018 registration information is available at: http://web.sonoma.edu/registration/

Academic Integrity
Students should know that the University’s Cheating and Plagiarism policy is available at: http://www.sonoma.edu/policies/cheating-and-plagiarism. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at Sonoma State University and the University’s policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified.

Campus Policy on Disability Access for Students
If you are a student with a disability and you think you may require accommodations, please register with the campus office of Disability Services for Students (DSS), located in Salazar Hall - Room 1049, Phone: (707) 664-2677, TTY/TDD: (707) 664-2958. DSS will provide you with written confirmation of your verified disability and authorize recommended accommodations. This authorization must be presented to the Instructor before any accommodations can be made. The policy can be found at: http://www.sonoma.edu/policies/disability-access-students

Emergency Evacuation
If you are a student with a disability and think you may require assistance evacuating a building in the event of a disaster, you should inform your Instructor and TA about the type of assistance you require. We should discuss specific needs and the type of precautions that should be made in advance of such an event (i.e. assigning a buddy to guide you down the stairway). You are encouraged to take advantage of these preventative measures as soon as possible and contact the DSS office if other classroom accommodations are needed.

SSU Writing Center
The SSU Writing Center is located in Schulz 1103. The Writing Center helps SSU students, faculty, and staff members (as well as members of the wider community) become better writers and produce better written documents. The Writing Center URL is: http://web.sonoma.edu/writingcenter/

Required Reading
Students will contract directly with Pearson College Learning and the REVEL platform as our textbook & for testing (exam) materials.

Pearson REVEL Registration Instructions – Our Textbooks & Class Materials

1. Visit this link to access the Textbooks: https://console.pearson.com/enrollment/jjgeiu

2. You can either: sign in with an existing Pearson username and password OR create a new Pearson account if this is your first Pearson digital product.

3. Choose our course under ‘My Courses’ and choose an access option: “purchase access online.”
4. What you should know:

- You will be accessing TWO textbooks – Shea, et al., per American Politics (“Living Democracy”); and also a California Politics textbook (“California Politics” by Mona Field).

- Bookmark https://console.pearson.com to easily access your materials.

- Download the free mobile app using the instructions at this link: https://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/students/mobile-app/

- Pearson recommends using the latest version of Chrome, Firefox, or Safari with this digital product.

- Contact technical support if you need help by visiting this link: https://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/educators/support/technical-support/

Additional Course Material Ideas: Given that this course is a hybrid learning format, you can also reference “open source” textbooks, freely available to students as part of the “CSU Affordable Learning Solutions” initiative. Thus, you can consult for additional study, the following:


For additional information on CA politics, see http://www.sonoma.edu/polisci/ca-exam/


*If there are any additional readings that are needed per the course schedule or when appropriate given external events and conditions, these will be referenced and/or provided via Moodle.*

Course Requirements

This is a hybrid online class. There are FOUR on-campus meetings, called “Town Halls.” The first meeting is an Orientation meeting to address students’ questions about the course, to meet your T.A., and is held on Friday, 26 January, 2018, 0900-11:00 am Schroeder Hall. **YOU MUST ATTEND THIS FIRST SESSION.**

After this Orientation meeting there are THREE additional on-campus meetings that all students need to attend. **NOTE THAT ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN by your TA, so check-in with your TA!!**

The Midterms and the Final Exam consist of multiple choice, identification questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, analysis of specific political events and campaigns. The Final Exam is cumulative and comprehensive.

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<tr>
<th>Assignments &amp; Weight of Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Three Town Hall! Reflections Papers</td>
<td>18% (6% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm I Exam (23 February)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm II Exam (06 April)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam (18 May)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance – 4 On Campus Mtgs &amp; Quizzes (1/26; 2/02; 2/09; 2/16 all 9-11:40 am)</td>
<td>12% (3% each)</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Course Policies – Please read carefully…

QUESTIONS? Email is the best way to contact the Instructor & Your Graduate TA… Instructor’s Email: david.mccuan@sonoma.edu

Graduate T.A., Antoni Fajardo: antonif11@yahoo.com

Graduate T.A., Matt Wells: matt.n.wells@gmail.com

ASSIGNED GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (GTA)

Graduate T.A., Antoni Fajardo has students with last names: A - L
Graduate T.A.: Matt Wells has students with last names: M-Z

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for class and remain in the classroom while class is in session. Cell phones, pagers, computers and other electronic devices should be turned off during class unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. No recording of class sessions is allowed unless permission is obtained ahead of time from the Instructor.

Reflection Papers (18% total; 6% each) Over the course of the semester, students will complete THREE reflection papers (3-4) pages in length. The papers will be based on course readings and the Town Hall / Class meetings. These papers are due ONE WEEK AFTER your TOWN HALL (by the following Friday at noon, via email to your T.A.). Late assignments of these Reflection Papers are not accepted.

Students will complete THREE short Reflection papers from our on-campus Town Hall meetings which examine issues related to class lectures and our course materials. A prompt and criteria for these papers will be posted via Moodle. You will email your Reflection papers directly to your TA. The Reflection Papers are due WITHIN ONE WEEK of the session of your attendance in class. For example, if you attend class on Friday, 09 February, your short paper is due by noon on Friday, 16 February.

Written assignments in this course are to be typed, double-spaced, with the pages numbered. Margins should be 1” on the top, bottom, and left-hand side of the page, and 1 ½” on the right-hand side. A 12- point font should be used (this syllabus is typed with a 12-point font). Where appropriate, documentation of sources is required. Please note that the Political Science Department requires the use of the Chicago (also called Turabian) citation format. This is the style presented in Kate Turabian’s, A Manual for Writers, 7th Edition. It is strongly recommended that you purchase a copy of this manual especially if you are a Political Science major.

The Plagiarism Policy

The SSU policy statement on cheating and plagiarism is detailed and informs students of potential consequences. Here is the link to the campus policy: https://www.sonoma.edu/uaaffairs/policies/cheating_plagiarism.html

The “Excuses” Policy (Extensions, Make-up exams, etc.)

Extensions and make-up exams are only allowed in consultation with the Instructor. Only the Instructor can grant an extension per University policy. You must have a documented reason (i.e. medical reason, extenuating personal circumstances, etc.) for not being able to take an exam or turn in a graded assignment at the scheduled time. You will need to provide supporting documentation to be granted a make-up, extension, etc. After you provide this information and evidence, a decision will be made regarding a make-up, extension, etc. Let me repeat - late assignments and exam makeups are only allowed in rare, documented cases of illness or personal emergency
and discussed in advance with the Instructor. We all know that unforeseen circumstances and tragedies arise, but we are not interested in dogs that eat assignments or other events that occur.

The “Respect” Policy

Finally, a course of this nature in a university setting is designed to encourage the frank and open exchange of ideas. Understanding differing opinions is at the core of learning to think in a critical manner. The best approach is one where you are intellectually curious and we will foster an environment in which this process can flourish where students are expected to treat colleagues and their opinions with respect.

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for class and remain in the classroom while class is in session. Cell phones, pagers, computers and other electronic devices should be turned off during class unless otherwise indicated. No recording of class sessions is allowed unless permission is obtained ahead of time.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change, Revision as Needed)

Week 1
Friday, 26 January – SCHROEDER HALL, IN-CLASS MEETING #1
First Day of Class; Course Introduction & Overview; Textbook & Syllabus Discussion; TA Introductions

Week 2 – SCHROEDER HALL, IN-CLASS MEETING #2
Friday, 02 February
Theories of Government & Representation; “Models” of Politics; Intro to Constitutional Principles
Reading: Shea, et al., Chapters 1 & 2; ALSO read Federalist #10, #51 (available online at: https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers)

Week 3 – FIRST REFLECTION PAPER DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL TO YOUR T.A.
Friday, 09 February – SCHROEDER HALL, IN-CLASS MEETING #3
The Constitution Redux; Federalism; The Federal Judiciary
Reading: Shea, Chapter 3; Chapter 9

Week 4 – SECOND REFLECTION PAPER DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL TO YOUR T.A.
Friday, 16 February – SCHROEDER HALL, IN-CLASS MEETING #4
Civil Liberties; Civil Rights; Continue with Federal Judiciary & the Courts / Judicial Decision-making
Reading: Shea, Chapters 4 & 5; Review Chapter 9

Week 5 – MIDTERM #1 AND THIRD REFLECTION PAPER BOTH DUE BY NOON
Friday, 23 February
Midterm #1, Scheduled, online, for today. Worth 20% of the Final Course Grade.

Week 6 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS
Friday, 02 March
Reading: Congress & Legislative Politics
Reading: Shea, Chapter 6

Week 7 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS
Friday, 09 March
Public Opinion; Political Socialization; The News Media and the Internet
Reading: Shea, Chapters 10 & 11; Review Chapter 13
Week 8 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS  
Friday, 16 March  
Interest Groups; Elections & Campaigns; Voting & Pol Participation  
Reading: Shea, Chapters 12 & 13; Review Chapters 10 & 11

Week 9  
Friday, 23 – NO CLASS, SSU SPRING BREAK

Week 10  
Friday, 30 March – SSU Holiday, Cesar Chavez’s Birthday, State Holiday

Week 11 – MIDTERM #2 DUE BY NOON  
Friday, 06 April  
Midterm #2, Scheduled, online, for today.   Worth 20% of the Final Course Grade

Week 12 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS  
Friday, 13 April  
The Presidency & Presidential Politics  
Reading: Shea, Chapter 7; Review Chapter 6

Week 13 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS  
Friday, 20 April  
Creation, Implementation, & Evaluation of Public Policy; Budgetary Politics; Coalition-Building; Restraints; Reform; & Incrementalism  
Reading: Shea, Chapters 8, 14 & 15; Review Chapters 6 & 7

Week 14 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS  
Friday, 27 April  
Politics in the Golden State?; The Politics of Fiscal Governance & DD: The Case of CA  
Reading: Field (CA Politics text, bundled with our Amer Govt text), ALL Chapters

Week 15 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS  
Friday, 04 May  
Course Wrap-Up of Materials, Including CA Politics & Governance / Class Evaluations & Final Exam Review  
Reading: Field (CA Politics text, bundled with our Amer Govt text), ALL Chapters; Shea, ALL Chapters

Week 16 – ONLINE READING OF COURSE MATERIALS  
Friday, 11 May  
Review ALL Course Materials AND Past Midterm Exam Materials

Week 17  
WEDNESDAY, 18 MAY  
Final Exam per the University Schedule, Friday, 11 am to 1 pm, ONLINE