

FD99
PM

Chaminade University
Fall 1999
August 31 - December 9, 1999

COURSE: POL 211 American Politics & Government
TIME: T/TH 8:00am - 9:20 am
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Louise Kubo
COMMUNICATION: 956-3687
email: kubo@hawaii.edu
TEXTBOOK: Burns, Peltason, Cronin, Magleby
Government by the People, 2nd ed.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the American political system through a review of the Constitution, branches of government, electoral process, and the role of the media.

The assumption here is that politics is continually evolving and in a "state of becoming." What are the ideals and political philosophies upon which American politics were founded? What are some of the inherent contradictions in those foundations? How have those ideals been challenged and those contradictions resolved?

Course Objectives

- to obtain an overview of American political institutions, their roles and functions.
- to interrogate the purpose and objectives of governing and of concepts such as democracy, security, and freedom.
- to develop a critical perspective by which our understanding of politics is expanded.
- to promote critical thinking skills through discussion and student writings.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

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| Attendance and participation: | 20% |
| Discussion questions: | 20% |
| Midterm | 30% |
| Final | 30% |

A=90 -100% B=80-89% C=70-79% D=60-69% F=59% and below

Attendance/Participation: 20% of final grade

Class sessions are an opportunity for you to ask questions regarding the assigned readings as well as to have discussions which take us beyond what we have read. Participation includes both listening and speaking. Excesses or profound lacks in either will have a negative impact on this portion of your grade.

Discussion questions: 20% of final grade.

Together with the reading assignments for each week, there is a question for you to consider. Your answer should be approximately 1 to 2 typewritten pages (double-spaced). They are due in class and will provide the basis for class discussion. Since most of these questions involve expressing your opinion, these will be graded on a credit/no credit basis.

Midterm and Final: 30% of final grade each. These will be a combination of objective questions (definitions, identification) and short essay-type answers.

Midterm: October 14.

SCHEDULE

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| Aug 31 | Introductions |
| Sept 2 | Video: <i>Reborn in America</i> |
| Sept 7 | The Constitution. Chap. 1 <u>Discussion Question:</u> On page 2 there are 4 concepts listed as the "essence of democratic values." Which of these do you believe are or are not practiced in America? What else would you add to the list? |
| Sept 9 | Constitutional amendments |
| Sept. 14 | Federalism. Chap. 2 <u>Discussion Question:</u> Define federalism. Do you think that currently the balance of power between the federal government and the states is as it should be or needs to be changed? Give an example to illustrate your statement. |
| Sept. 16 | Video: <i>The Supreme Court's Holy Battles</i> |
| Sept. 21 | First Amendment Rights. Chap. 3 |
| Sept. 23 | Equal Justice under the Law. Chap. 4 <u>Discussion Question:</u> What are some things which get in the way of equal justice? |
| Sept. 28 | Video: <i>Murder in Texas</i> |
| Sept. 30 | Political Culture and Ideology. Chap. 5 <u>Discussion Question:</u> Is there a relationship between ideology and identity? |

- Oct. 5 Video: *A Class Divided*
- Oct. 7 The American Political Landscape. Chap. 6
Midterm review
- Oct. 12 Video: *Rage for Democracy*
- Oct. 14 Midterm
- Oct. 19 Political Parties and Interest Groups. Chap. 7
- Oct. 21 Video: *Democracy in a Different Voice*
- Oct. 26 Public Opinion and Elections. Chap. 8
Discussion Question: Write a job description for the office of President
of the United States.
- Oct. 28 Media. Chap. 9
Video: *30-second President*
- Nov. 2 Discussion Question: Does the media reflect or direct public opinion?
What are the consequences on democratic process?
- Nov. 4 Congress. Chap. 10
Discussion Question: Go to www.womenvote.org and compare your
opinions with the voting records of your congressional representative.
Are your views being represented?
- Nov. 9 The Presidency. Chap. 11
Nov. 11 Veterans Day - no class
- Nov. 16 Judiciary. Chap. 12
Discussion Question: Much of the debate around the same-sex marriage
question was focused around the role of the courts in interpreting the
Constitution and the will of the people. Do the courts have too much
power or are they a necessary safeguard against the "tyranny of the
majority"?
- Nov. 18 Bureaucracy. Chap. 13
- Nov. 23 Video: *To Protect Mother Earth*
Nov. 25 Thanksgiving - no class

- Nov. 30 Domestic Policy. Chap. 14
Discussion Question: Who is better able to provide social services, the federal government or state governments?
- Dec. 2 Foreign and Defense Policy. Chap. 15
Video: *Triumph of Evil*
- Dec. 7 Final exam review
- Dec. 9 Wrap-up

Please answer the following on the index card.

1. Your full name, including the name you like to be called (if different).
2. Your phone number(s) and email address if available. Not likely to be needed, but just in case.
3. Your educational objectives.
4. What is your class standing (freshman, sophomore, etc.)?
5. What other related courses have you taken?
6. Why did you take this course?
7. Do you have any specific areas of interest in regards to this course?