

PM

Chaminade University  
~~Winter 1999~~  
 July 9 - September 10, 1999

COURSE: POL 21120<sup>60</sup> American Politics & Government  
 TIME: W 1730-2140  
 INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Louise Kubo  
 COMMUNICATION: 545-2725 (between 9-5)  
 email: kubo@hawaii.edu  
 TEXTBOOK: Burns, Peltason, Cronin, Magleby  
*Government by the People*

#### 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

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: February 10.

Final: March 23.

### SCHEDULE

- Jul 9            Introductions  
                  Video: *Rage for Democracy*
- Jul 16            The Constitution. Chapters 1-2  
                  Video: *Equality and the Individual*  
                  Discussion Question: 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?
- Jul 23            Rights and Liberties. Chapters 3-4  
                  Video: *Murder in Texas*  
                  Discussion Question: Write a constitutional amendment for a right that does not currently exist (legally) in the US.
- July 30            Culture and identity. Chapters 5-6.  
                  Video: *When Democracy Works; A Class Divided*  
                  Discussion Question: Is there a relationship between ideology and identity?
- Aug. 6            Midterm  
                  Video: *Democracy in a Different Voice*

- Aug. 13      Elections. Chapters 7-8  
Video: *Controlling Interest*  
Discussion Question: On page 233, the text states that in 1992, 7 out of 10 Americans believed George Bush lied about the Iran-Contra affair and implies that this contributed to his losing the election. However, after being impeached for perjury and obstruction of justice, a Gallup poll showed President Clinton as the most admired man in the US. How would you explain this?
- Aug 20      Media. Chapter 9  
Video: *The Public Mind: Illusions of News*  
Discussion Question: Does the media reflect or direct public opinion? What are the consequences on democratic process?
- Aug 27      Institutions. Chapters 10-13  
Video: *To Protect Mother Earth*  
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"?
- Sep 3      Domestic and foreign policy. Chapters 14-15  
Video: *Triumph of Evil*  
Discussion Question: Should women be allowed to serve in combat?
- Sep 10      Final exam

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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 else do you do besides school? (work/play/family/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?