

Page

Chaminade University
Winter 1999
January 11 - March 10, 1999
1/13 -
3/17

COURSE: POL 21120 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
NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994

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

- Feb. 24 Media. Chapter 9
 Video: *The 30-second President*
 Discussion Question: Does the media reflect or direct public opinion?
 What are the consequences on democratic process?
- Mar 3 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"?
- Mar 10 Domestic and foreign policy. Chapters 14-15
 Video: *High Crimes and Misdemeanors*
 Discussion Question: Should women be allowed to serve in combat?
- Mar 17 Final exam

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?

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~~ 17.

SCHEDULE

- Jan 13 Introductions
 Video: *Rage for Democracy*
- Jan 20 The Constitution. Chapters 1-2
 Video: *Reborn in America*
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?
- Jan 27 Rights and Liberties. Chapters 3-4
 Video: *And Justice for All?*
Discussion Question: Write a constitutional amendment for a right that does not currently exist (legally) in the US.
- Feb 3 Culture and identity. Chapters 5-6.
 Video: *Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill*
Discussion Question: Is there a relationship between ideology and identity?
- Feb. 10 Midterm
 Video: *Democracy in a Different Voice*
- Feb. 17 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?