

FE '00  
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Chaminade University  
Winter 2000  
October 4 - December 6, 2000

COURSE: POL 211<sup>60</sup> American Politics & Government  
TIME: Wednesday 16:45 - 20:55  
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Louise Kubo  
COMMUNICATION: 956-3687  
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?

This semester will focus on the upcoming presidential election and how the candidates and the process support or subvert these ideas.

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: November 8

Final: December 6

## SCHEDULE

NOTE: The text has a companion web site at:  
<http://cw.prenhall.com/bookbind/pubbooks/burns/>  
Select a chapter, and choose "Internet Research" for links to more information on that topic.

Oct. 4      Introductions  
Video: *30-second President*

Oct. 11     Media and the Presidency  
Chapters 9 and 11

Web:  
<http://political.adcritic.com/>  
View political ads online

<http://political.adcritic.com/>  
Political ads online

[http://www.pbs.org/pov/ad/ads/toolkit\\_list.html](http://www.pbs.org/pov/ad/ads/toolkit_list.html)  
Ad Watchers Toolkit

<http://washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/campaigns/adwatch2000.htm>  
Washington Post  
Advertising analysis

Video: Presidential debate

Discussion Question: To what extent do political ads support and/or undermine the role that the media play in a democracy?

Oct. 18 Equal Justice/Ideology  
Chapters 4 and 5  
Web: [www.womenvote.org](http://www.womenvote.org)  
[www.govote.com](http://www.govote.com)  
[www.speakout.com/votematch/default.asp](http://www.speakout.com/votematch/default.asp)

Video: *Murder in Texas*

**Discussion Question:** Define your political ideology based on the political philosophies described in chapter 5 and on the profile you created on the web. Explain your position on a specific issue (education, gun control, health care, taxes, etc.) in terms of your ideological beliefs.

Oct. 25 Constitutional Democracy/Federalism/First Amendment Rights  
Chapter 1 pp 1-8; 18-22. Chapters 2 and 3

Web: Findlaw First Amendment  
<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/data/constitution/amendment01/>

<http://www.aclj.org/>  
American Center for Law and Justice  
(Religious freedom)

<http://www.eff.org/>  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
Freedom of expression/privacy on the Internet

Video: *The Supreme Court's Holy Battles*

**Discussion Question:** On page 2-3 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?

Nov. 1 Political Parties/Elections  
Chapters 7 and 8

Web: <http://www.opensecrets.org/>  
Campaign contributions by candidate, donor, state, soft money

<http://www.publiccampaign.org/>  
Public financing for campaigns

<http://www.cato.org/dailys/10-10-96.html>  
End contribution limits

<http://www.politics1.com/parties.htm>  
Directory of US Political parties

Video: *Rage for Democracy*

**Discussion Question:** Is campaign finance reform needed? Why or why not? If yes, what changes should be made?

- Nov. 8 Midterm  
Post-election discussion  
Web: <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/>  
CNN exit polls
- Nov. 15 Congress. Chapter 10  
  
Web: [www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Political/ProportionalRep.html](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Political/ProportionalRep.html)  
Proportional Representation  
  
Video: *Democracy in a Different Voice*  
  
Discussion Question: Who won and why?
- Nov. 22 Domestic Policy  
Chapter 14  
  
Web: [http://ethics.acusd.edu/death\\_penalty.html](http://ethics.acusd.edu/death_penalty.html)  
Punishment and the Death Penalty  
  
<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/>  
Death Penalty Information Center  
  
<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/links/dplinks.htm>  
Death Penalty Links  
  
Discussion Question: Should the death penalty be abolished?
- Nov. 29 Foreign Policy  
Chapter 15  
Video: *Triumph of Evil*  
  
Web:  
<http://www.undelete.org/military.html>  
Women's Military History  
  
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Troy/3825/country/militarywoman/milwoman.htm>  
Women in the Military  
  
<http://www.fas.org/man/crs/92-008.htm>  
Women in the Armed Forces  
  
<http://www.nonline.com/procon/html/conWinC.htm>  
Women in Combat: Con  
  
Discussion Question: Should women be allowed to serve in combat?
- Dec. 6 Final exam