

WE '00

PM

Chaminade University  
Winter 2000  
January 15- March 18, 2000

COURSE: POL 211 American Politics & Government  
TIME: Saturday 12:30 - 4:30 pm  
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?

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 12.

Final: March 18.

### SCHEDULE

- Jan 15      Introductions  
Video: *Rage for Democracy*
- Jan 22      The Constitution. Chapters 1-2  
Video: *The Supreme Court's Holy Battles*  
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 29      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.
- Feb 5        Culture and identity. Chapters 5-6.  
Video: *When Democracy Works; A Class Divided*  
Discussion Question: Describe your personal identity and ideology. Is there a relationship between the two? In other words, does *who* you are affect what you believe?
- Feb 12      Midterm  
Video: *Democracy in a Different Voice*
- Feb 19      Elections. Chapters 7-8  
Video: *Controlling Interest*  
Discussion Question:
- Feb 26      Media. Chapter 9  
Video: *The Public Mind: Illussions of News*  
Discussion Question: Last November, thousands gathered in Seattle to protest against the World Trade Organization (WTO). Compare coverage of the events of that week from a conservative/pro-business publication like Fortune magazine <[www.pathfinder.com/fortune](http://www.pathfinder.com/fortune)> or Business Week <[www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com)> with that from a liberal/progressive one like the Nation <[www.thenation.org](http://www.thenation.org)> or the Progressive <[www.progressive.org](http://www.progressive.org)>.

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- Mar 4            Institutions. Chapters 10-12  
                  Video: *To Protect Mother Earth*  
                  Discussion Question: Go to [www.wmenvote.org](http://www.wmenvote.org) and compare your  
                  opinions with the voting records of your congressional representative.  
                  Are your views being represented?
- Mar 11           Domestic and foreign policy. Chapters 14-15  
                  Video: *Triumph of Evil*  
                  Discussion Question: Should women be allowed to serve in combat?
- Mar 18           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?