CABRILLO COLLEGE

Course Syllabus

COURSE: Political Science 001, American Government
PREREQUISITES: None
INSTRUCTOR: Doctor Sondra L. Ricar
EXTENSION: VOICEMAIL IS NOT CHECKED!!!
OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Wednesday 11-12 404B
email: Sricarphd@aol.com or soricar@cabrillo.edu


This is available from the campus bookstore or online at National Digital Book Company. It is not acceptable to use the earlier, first edition of this book.

You will also need three “green books” from the bookstore for your exams.
COURSE OVERVIEW
This is an introductory course in American political science. We will endeavor to learn about the Constitution and some of the founding principles of American government. One of the main concerns of this class will be the way in which the government is affecting our lives today, why, and what we can do about it. We will look at some of the mistakes made by our government in the past. Our job here is not to be judgmental; we are going to try to understand why our government has acted in such a manner, not condemn it for doing so. I ask only that you come to class with an open mind, prepared to learn, and willing to explore issues from many points of view. It is important to respect other’s opinions, particularly if you wish them to respect yours.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
You are responsible for reading the assigned readings for this course. The online textbook chapters are your main source. Although we will not discuss all the material covered in the online textbook, you are responsible for reading it. You will also have a reader to read. The online textbook and reader will be the basis for your assignments. The required reader is available for purchase in the campus bookstore. There may also be handouts for you to read. I expect you to read a good newspaper regularly so that you are aware of current events. You can read the newspaper online or in paper form. The Santa Cruz Sentinel does not qualify as a good newspaper. You will have two in-class exams and a final exam. They will be essay format. You are expected to attend class on a regular basis. If you decide you do not wish to continue in this course, it is your responsibility to drop. However, once you have missed a total of two class days, the college deems you as having excessive absences and I will drop you. For the purposes of attendance, two late appearances or leaving early will count as one day’s absence.
LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
1. Demonstrate understanding of the structures, interactions, and functioning of the various levels of government in the United States.
2. Synthesize knowledge and analysis of political events and concepts to construct a personal political viewpoint.
3. Write critical, analytical essays that link theoretical arguments, empirical evidence and political events.
4. Analyze the dynamics of making public policy in the United States.

CLASSROOM DECORUM
The proper atmosphere is important for learning. Therefore, while not wanting to infringe on individuality or individual freedoms, there are some ground rules that we should all respect, in order to facilitate learning for everyone. For one hour and twenty minutes twice a week you will ignore the rest of the world and focus on political science. Your phone is to be put away the moment you walk into the class. It is to be turned off. If you cannot be away from your phone for 80 minutes then you need to think about whether or not traditional schooling is for you. If your phone goes off, I will answer it for you. The first time I catch you texting I will ask you to leave the class for the day, which will count as an absence. You can survive without texting for one hour and twenty minutes. Likewise, ipods and other listening devices are prohibited during class time. I do not allow the use of computers during class time unless you have paperwork from DESP mandating their use. Learn to manage your time so that you are not doing homework for other classes in my class. Please do not bring children to class. Please dress appropriately for a college classroom. Any behavior that will be disruptive for the other students will result in my asking you to leave the class. I will reserve the right to ask a student who does not adhere to these rules of conduct to leave the class. If I ask you to leave, please do so immediately. Do not argue.

CODE OF CONDUCT
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the student code of conduct in the college catalog. I expect you to adhere to that code of conduct. Students who do not adhere to that code will be asked to leave the class. If you experience harassment or threatening behavior from any student in this class, please let me know so that I can take action to remedy the situation. Likewise, if I feel that you are harassing me or any person in class, I will take action to have you removed from the class. I take cheating seriously. Any incident of cheating will result in a zero on that assignment and be reported to the Dean of Student Services. I may also expel you from the class. I expect you to behave like a responsible adult. If you disagree with me or another student, you can disagree without threatening or hostile behavior. If you disagree with a grade or any of my policies, I am willing to discuss the issue in the appropriate venue: via email or in my office hours. I will not use class time to discuss issues of this nature.
**SPECIAL NEEDS**

All students needing accommodations should inform me ASAP. Veterans may qualify for accommodations. Wounded warriors may have acquired injuries which through the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) entitles them the use of accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for students with verified disabilities. To determine if you qualify or need assistance with an accommodation, please contact Disabled Student Services, Room 810 479-6379, or the Learning Skills Program, Room 1073, 479-6220. Education should be open and available to everyone. Students with special needs due to either "visible" or "invisible" disabilities are encouraged to see me. I will need verification of your needs from the appropriate college facility and their recommendations for accommodating your needs. I believe physical problems should not hinder your education and would like to do whatever I can to make all students comfortable in my class.

**BASIS FOR GRADE**

Your work will be evaluated on a straight point system, with the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Exams**

You will have two exams during the semester and a final exam at the end of the semester. They will consist of two essay questions, one short (500 words) and one long (1000 words). The questions will require you to use the facts that you have learned in class and apply them through analysis. The questions will relate to the topics we have most recently been studying. The exams will be graded according to the following matrix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand Facts</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address question asked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply facts to the issue involved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop analysis and personal view</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets minimum word count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You must bring a blank green book to class the day of the exam. You will exchange your green book with me and receive the exam at that time. If you have anything written in the green book a different student will receive it. You must also bring a writing instrument, either a pencil or a blue or black pen. Be advised there is no pencil sharpener in the classroom. If you have a cell phone on your person during the test you will receive an automatic failing grade on the test.

**Make Up Work**

I will only allow for make-up of a missed exam with a written documentation from the
hospital indicating your admittance to the hospital or that of a first degree relative (parent, spouse, sibling, or child). Any make-up of a missed exam is at my convenience.

Extra Credit
It is important that each student be judged on the same body of work. Therefore, there will be no extra credit in this class. You will be judged solely on the basis of the work outlined in this syllabus.

Passing the Class
There is a belief that if you enroll, pay the fees, show up on the first day, and attempt some of the assignments, you will pass the class. You are “entitled” to a passing grade because you enrolled and paid the fees. You can only pass this class if you average 70%. Appeals to my better nature, tales of how failing the class will affect your financial aid, phone calls or emails from parents or grandparents, crying or threatening will not change the fact that in order to pass the class you must complete the work to an acceptable standard. I will not change my policies when it has become apparent that you will not be able to pass due to having missed too much work.

By staying in this class you are agreeing to undertake all of the work outlined in this syllabus. Be sure you are aware of the workload and adjust your schedule accordingly.

READING SCHEDULE
You should plan on doing each day’s readings before coming to class. Then you will better understand the lectures and discussions that day and have any questions answered. In general, each week you will have a chapter from the reader and a chapter from the textbook to read. The calendar is as follows:
Week 1: Aug. 27: Introduction
Week 2: Sept. 3: Monday Holiday, Constitution
Week 3: Sept. 10: Federalism
Week 4: Sept. 17: Civil Liberties
Week 5: Sept. 24: Civil Rights Wednesday Exam One
Week 6: Oct. 1: Public Opinion and Socialization
Week 7: Oct. 8: Mon. Interest Groups Wed. Political Parties
Week 8: Oct. 15: Campaigns and Elections
Week 9: Oct. 22: Media Wednesday Exam Two
Week 10: Oct. 29: Congress
Week 11: Nov. 5: Presidency
Week 12: Nov. 12: Monday holiday Veteran’s Day Wednesday Bureaucracy
Nov. 17 last day to drop a class!
Week 13: Nov. 19: Judiciary
Thanksgiving begins after class Wed.!
Week 14: Nov. 26: Domestic Policy
Week 15: Dec. 3: Defense and Foreign Policy
State law and college policy mandate that the final exam be taken on the assigned date and time. I will not under any circumstances change the time you can take your final. Do not ask.

Section 73311 (8am class) Monday Dec. 12, 7-9:50 am
Section 73312 (9:30 class) Wednesday Dec. 14, 7-9:50 am