Spring Semester - 2013

Dr. Stoddard will be teaching two sections of Political Science 102; Tuesday, 7 pm SSW 1500 and Monday 4 pm PG 242

POLITICAL SCIENCE 102
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN AND CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Dr. Mike Stoddard

Office Hours: Tues., 6 pm; Mon..., 3 pm, my office and by appt.

You may reach Dr. Stoddard by e mail: usddoc@aol.com or by phone: 619 466 8262.

Required Books:
Wilson, James Q., AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Korey, John, CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

Optional Books

Stoddard, Mike, WAR—From the Caves to the Towers to Hell
Stoddard, Mike, GOVERNMENT

Magstadt, Thomas, AN EMPIRE IF YOU CAN KEEP IT
Gergen, David, EYEWITNESS TO POWER
Stoessinger, John, WHY NATIONS GO TO WAR
Sharonsky, Natan, THE CASE FOR FREEDOM
Sabato, Larry, AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Your instructor will provide you with additional suggested readings throughout the semester. It is strongly suggested that you develop your own bibliography for future work in political science. Please note that your required texts have very useful bibliographies.

Webpage: Please note that Dr. Stoddard's web page is www.docstoddard.com. Students will find a great deal of useful information on the webpage. All lectures are outlined and reviews for examinations are provided. Several maps and charts are presented which will be helpful to our discussions. Your instructor will also keep you informed about class activities on the University Blackboard System.
All grades will be posted by scores on the University Gradebook. Announcements and links to articles you may need will be posted frequently. Students should make it a habit of checking the website and their University email regularly.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND TESTS

All assigned reading should be finished before each class.

THE AMERICAN IDEOLOGY

Jan. 22

Introduction/Class Procedures
Introduction/American Government and Politics

- Enduring Questions
- Meanings of Democracy
- Major Problems of the American Democracy

Reading: Wilson, Chapter 1

Jan. 28, 29

Constitutionalism

- The Articles of Confederation
- The Constitutional Convention
- The Constitution and Democracy

Reading: Wilson, Chapter 2

Feb. 4, 5

: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- The Bill of Rights
- Crime and Due Process
- Terrorism and the Impact on Civil Liberties

Reading: Wilson, Chapter 3

Feb. 11, 12

Federalism
- The Case for and Against Federalism
- The Division of Powers
- Fiscal Federalism
- Federal Aid and Federal Power

Reading: Wilson, Chapter 4

Feb. 18, 19

: Public Opinion and the Media

- The Origins of Political Attitudes
- Political Ideology
- The Impact of the Media

Reading: Wilson, Chapter 5, 6, 7

US POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Feb. 25, 26

: Political Parties and Interest Groups

- Republicans vs. Democrats
- The History of the Two Party System
- Interest Groups and Their Influence

Guest Lecturer: Mike McCann, Deputy District Attorney, San Diego County

March 4, 5

Campaigns and Elections

- The History of American Political Campaigns
- Voting History
- Campaigns of the Future

Quiz 1, Wilson, Chapters 1-7

March 11, 12

Congress

- The Organization of Congress
- The Powers of Congress
- Congressional vs. Parliamentary Government
Reading: Wilson, Chapter 8

Guest Lecturer: Dr. George Bergstrom, the Oxford Study Abroad Programme

Quiz 2, Map Test/Europe and the Middle (including the EU and NATO)

March 18, 19

The Presidency

-The History of the American Presidency
-The Powers of the Presidency
-The Modern Presidency

Reading: Wilson, Chapter 9

Midterm Examination

March 25, 26

The Federal Judiciary

-The Power of the Judiciary
-The Constitution and the Court
-Major Court Decisions
-The Originalists vs. the Progressives

Reading: Wilson, Chapter 11

CALIFORNIA

APRIL 1-5 SPRING VACATION

April 8, 9

California Politics and Government

-American Federalism: the Case of California
-Direct Democracy?
-Political Behavior in California

Quiz 3, Wilson, Chapters Wilson, Chapters 8, 9, 10

Reading: Korey, Chapters 1-5

April 15, 16
Political Institutions in California

- Executive Politics
- Legislative Politics
- The Power of the Judiciary

Reading: Korey, Chapters 6-10

ISSUES BEFORE THE NATION

April 22, 23

American Foreign Policy Since World War II and The War on Terror

- Historical Review
- The Totalitarian Threat
- The Cold War
- International Relations since Sept. 11

Reading: WAR, Stoddard, entire

April 29, 30

Making Foreign and Military Policy

- Rebuilding Nations
- Military Policy and Terrorism
- The New American Military

Quiz 4, Korey, entire

Quiz 5, Wilson, Chapters 10-15

May 6, 7

The Future of US Politics

- Campaigns 2010 and 2012
- More Democracy for America?
- More Democracy for the World?

Review for Final

- Term Paper Due

Final Essay Examination, see University schedule for final exams
May 14, 14

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to analyze one of the most powerful and fascinating political systems in the world—the American democracy. Politics may be understood, at the most general level, to be that process which involves "Who Gets What, When, and How." Political Science 102 will attempt to explain how politics is played-out in America.

Section 1 will evaluate the ideas of the modern American system such as nationalism, constitutionalism, federalism, individualism, pluralism, and welfarism. The most important premise concerning this endeavor is that the US does not function well, indeed may not be able to function at all, without integrating political ideas. Considerable emphasis will be given to the most integrating American political doctrines: the doctrine of the separation of powers, the doctrine of the division of powers, and the doctrine of judicial review.

Section 2 will review the most important US political institutions such as the Presidency, the Congress, the Courts, and the States. It will be assumed that American political institutions are legitimate although not always efficient.

Section 3 will attempt to highlight important contemporary issues including politics and elections in California. Considerable emphasis will be placed on US foreign policy and the global war on terror.

The organizing theme of this class is contemporary democracy. For the first time in world history, a majority of nations now use competitive elections as a means of selecting leaders. The US was the first modern nation to adopt democratic principles. Yet the meaning of these principles and their relevance within the present US regime remain subjects of intense debate. Thus we will address topics such as: the justifications for democracy, how democracies limit power, the prospects for greater democratization, and the role of democratic nations in the world.

Finally, it should be remembered that the topics for this course are controversial and contested. Students will encounter authors who are supportive and who are critical of fundamental US principles and practices. Often there will be no right answer to the questions posed. The purpose of the course is to present those questions clearly, to indicate some of the answers systematically, and to help students to define and justify their own personal position, free of established predisposition or ideological prejudice.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Utilize basic approaches, perspectives, theories, and models of political science to analyze political life.
2. Define, explain, and illustrate by contemporary examples various theories of democratic government, addressing its origins, evolution, justification, institutions, processes, and effects.
3. Analyze and assess the founding documents of the US government, including its basic principles and the controversies over those principles.
4. Compare and contrast the essential features of the US government with those of other advanced democracies. Special attention should be given to the politics and institutions of the United Kingdom.
5. Analyze the meaning of citizenship in the contemporary world, including the rights, duties, and obligations of the citizen.
6. Analyze the effect of increasing globalization on the democratic nation state, focusing upon the role of the US government.
7. Analyze the nature of global threats to democratic states.
8. Exercise skills in critical thinking, close reading of texts, verbal and written communication, note-taking, and problem-solving.

EXAMINATIONS/PAPERS

There will be a midterm, a final examination, and several quizzes. Most of the quizzes will involve multiple-choice questions designed to test the reading assignments. The midterm and final examinations will involve essay questions designed to test general comprehension. All grading procedures will be explained during the first class session.

There will be a possible 1000 points allocated to the examinations. Grades will be designated by the following distribution: 800 to 1000, A; 700-800, B range; 600-700, C range; below 600, C- and below.

All students must complete one short paper (two double spaced pages). There will be several class discussions on how college-level terms papers should be written. Term papers should impart information, frame and support an argument, use critical thinking, make logical assumptions, derive sound conclusions from evidence, and display a college-level use of language, grammar, and rhetorical structure. All term papers must be presubmitted via turnitin.com.

Term papers must involve one of the following four topics. Students should use an argumentative essay format. Please note the following questions as general guides for the term papers.

Topic 1: The Global War on Terror--Question: Why did the US invade Iraq and Afghanistan? What is the strongest case for these invasions; what is the strongest case against the invasions? Should the US continue the current War policy or pursue a major departure?

Topic 2: The National Health Care Bill. Review the nature of the national health care legislation recently passed by Congress. Review the various political forces lined up for and against the bill. Do you think the Republicans will succeed in their efforts to repeal the new legislation?
Topic 3: Immigration. What is the nature of the President's call for a major reform of US Immigration policy? Is there a problem with immigration? How should it be reformed?

Topic 4: Presidential Power. David Gergen argues that the US Presidency has become too dominant in its competition with Congress. Do you agree? Why? Should the Presidency be reformed? If so, in what ways?

All students will be invited to visit the USS Ronald Reagan during the fourth Saturday of the semester.

All students will be invited to visit the Superior Court of San Diego County to observe a criminal trial during the sixth week of the semester.

FUNDAMENTAL COURSE PRINCIPLES

Attendance is required. Students are expected to be on time. Students are expected to have read, understood, and thought about the assigned readings for each session. Please turn off cell phones.

Remember, the classroom is a formal and polite setting. Please treat other students with respect and courtesy, even when you disagree with them.

Current events will be used as examples throughout the course. Students are strongly urged to regularly read the New York Times or the Los Angeles Times.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Attached to your syllabus is the Academic Senate Policy on cheating and plagiarism. You must read this document carefully—sign it and return it to your instructor. The appropriate website for the University Policy regarding Cheating and Plagiarism is:
http://wwwrohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html

Students should also be aware of the Student Grievances procedure, available on-line at http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/statement/sectionVII.html