Dr. Yvonne Aimé Gastélum

Office: Nasatir Hall 116
Office Hours: Fridays, 10:30am-12:30pm and by Appointment
Email: gastelum@post.harvard.edu

Course Description:
The science of politics is often described as the study of “who gets what.” It is the study of power, collective action, and negotiation between individuals and groups for resources, recognition, and public space. It is also the study of the institutional design needed to determine collective goals, enforce law, and construct justice. All of these definitions tell part of the story. In this course you will learn how to integrate different aspects of politics into a cohesive understanding. We focus on explanations of how American politics functions and to what ends.

We specifically study the institutions and salient political issues of the United States. We focus on federalism, majority rule, representation, Congress, the Executive, and the Judiciary; as well as the institutional mechanisms needed to support liberal democratic government at the national and local levels, with an emphasis on California Government. In addition, we will focus on the connection between political ideals and practice--the “isms” and the “pressure system” of political parties, media, and interest groups.

One of the main questions to consider is how to identify and evaluate political decisions and outcomes. Which frameworks offer the best explanations and which fail? Why? In answering these questions we learn how to assess the political world, the institutions that order it, and our role in making decisions which govern our communities.

This is an introductory course in Political Science. You will be assigned multiple readings that should be completed prior to the assigned syllabus date. Reading prior to lecture is essential to understanding the material and being prepared for discussion. We will use our books in class during lecture and you are expected to come to class with your books, any additional assigned readings, and materials in hand. In addition, you will be tested in both multiple choice and short essay format, and study sheets will be provided through Blackboard for download as well as discussed in class prior to testing.
Student Learning Objectives:

1. You will learn central concepts of political science, including: sovereignty, federalism, liberalism, democracy, and collective action.

2. You will learn to define and explain concepts and institutions pertaining to U.S. politics, including the legislative, judicial, and executive branches; the separation of powers, representation, pluralism, and electoral politics at national and local levels.

3. You will learn to analyze the political institutions of the United States and how citizens interact with them, with specific attention to American political culture and the history of American constitutional government.

Goals for GE Courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences:

Goal 1: Explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences.

Goal 2: Comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences.

Goal 3: Identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness.

Goal 4: Enhance understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

Course Requirements:

1. Tests (Multiple Choice). There are 4 multiple choice tests, each following the end of the respective units tested. Test dates will be announced in class and on Blackboard Announcements. Make up tests can be completed with proper documentation during office hours only (see general course guidelines).

   - Test 1 covers Units 1 and 2 (15%)
   - Test 2 covers Units 3 and 4 (20%)
   - Test 3 covers Units 5 and 6 (20%)
   - Test 4 covers Unit 7 (20%)

2. Quizzes (25%). There are 5 Quizzes. Each Quiz consists of 3 questions (short essay format). Each answer is worth a possible 3 points, for a total of 9 points possible per quiz. Quizzes are “open book” and you may use your book, lecture notes, and downloaded lecture slides to complete your quizzes. Quizzes must be completed in blue
or black ink within the time allotted. Missed quizzes can be completed with proper documentation during office hours only (see general course guidelines).

The following point scale will determine your grade for this portion of the course:

- 45 points = A (100)
- 44 points = A (98)
- 43 points = A (94)
- 41-42 points = A- (92)
- 38-40 points = B+ (88)
- 33-37 points = B (84)
- 30-32 points = B- (81)
- 27-29 points = C+ (78)
- 24-26 points = C (74)
- 20-23 points = C- (70)
- Below 20 points will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

3. Attendance in this course is mandatory. Regular attendance will aid in your understanding of the course material. There is a sign-in sheet every day in class.

Course Books and Materials:

2. Scantrons (#882)

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

General Course Guidelines:

1. Only excused absences or extenuating circumstances (including documented illness, hospitalization, or family emergency) will be considered grounds for a make-up of a missed assignment. Multiple Choice Tests and Short Essay Quizzes can be made up within one week of the assignment with proper documentation, during office hours only.

2. You may NOT record lecture unless you have prior, written permission from me.
3. There are no laptops or other electronic devices allowed during tests, quizzes, or exams.

4. Syllabus dates are subject to change (i.e. if we need an extra day for a given author we will take it and shift further readings and exam dates).

5. All course assignments and requirements must be completed to receive credit for the course. Missing assignments will result in an F for the course. Excessive absences may result in failure of this course (i.e. you will not receive credit for the course if you turn in assignments without attending a majority of lecture).

6. Plagiarism or Cheating invalidates an assignment, and will result in an “0” for that assignment, and an F in the course. Note the following section on Cheating and Plagiarism in this syllabus.

**Plagiarism and Cheating:**
Plagiarism and cheating will result in a “0” for the assignment affected. The following definitions (edited for our purposes) are from the SDSU General Catalog and should serve as a sample reference for considering what constitutes cheating and plagiarism.

**CHEATING**
Cheating is the act of obtaining credit for academic work by the use of dishonest or fraudulent means. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:
(a) copying from another's test or other examination;
(b) discussing answers or ideas relating to the answers on a test or other examination without the permission of the instructor;
(c) obtaining copies of a test, an examination, or other course material without the permission of the instructor;
(d) using notes, cheat sheets, or other devices not explicitly authorized by the instructor;
(e) submitting work previously presented in another course, if contrary to the rules of the course;
(f) altering or interfering with the grading procedures;
(g) plagiarizing, as defined below; and knowingly assisting another student in any of the above.

**PLAGIARISM**
Plagiarism is the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting the same as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to:
(a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another;
(b) omitting footnotes/endnotes for ideas, statements, or facts that belong to another;
(c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another;
(d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another without proper citation;
(e) submitting as one's own work papers purchased from others (companies, peers, online editing services, etc).
**Reading Schedule:** (*)&nbsp;Starred Readings are available under Course Documents on Blackboard. Read Announcements for Updates on Reading Schedule and Notes.)

**Thursday, January 22:** First Day of Class. Introduction Lecture.

**Unit 1: What is Politics?**

Tuesday, 1/27: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 1 (pp.1-24)

Thursday, 1/29: a) *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 1 (pp.25-39)
    b) Handout on “Isms”*

**Unit 2: Liberal Democracy, the American Constitution, and Federalism**

Tuesday, 2/3: a) *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 2
    b) Handout on Federalism*

Thursday, 2/5: a) Chapter 3 (pp. 87-114)
    b) Federalist #10 and #51 (in textbook Appendix and online)*

Tuesday, 2/10: a) *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 3 (pp. 115-127)
    b) *California Politics* (p.4-5, 96-104)

**Unit 3: Congress, Parties, and Representation**

Thursday, 2/12: a) *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 6 (pp. 231-281)
    b) “Obama Vows to Reduce Pork Barrel Spending”*

Tuesday, 2/17: a) *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 6 (pp. 282-296)

Thursday, 2/19: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 12 (pp.525-549)

Tuesday, 2/24: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 12 (pp. 550-574)

**Unit 4: Interest Groups and the Public Good**

Thursday, 2/26: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 13 (pp. 577-602)

Tuesday, 3/3: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 13 (pp. 608-614)
Unit 5: Executive Power

Thursday, 3/5: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 7 (pp. 299-320, 325-337, 342-344)

Tuesday, 3/10: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 8 (pp. 347-350, 358-387)

Thursday, 3/12: a) Selection from Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton* *
b) Article, “What It Will Take for Obama to Become the Next FDR”*

Unit 6: The Judiciary and Civil Rights

Tuesday, 3/17: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 9 (pp. 394-411)

Thursday, 3/19: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 9 (pp. 415-432)

Tuesday, 3/24: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 4 (pp.128-178)

Thursday, 3/26: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 5 (pp.186-200, 203-228)

Spring Break: 3/30-4/3

Unit 7: Voters and Democratic Power

7a: The National Arena

Tuesday, 4/7: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 10 (pp.458-479) and Chapter 11 (pp. 481-515, 518)

Thursday, 4/9: *Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 14, Start Section “How the Media Influences Citizens” (pp. 640-650)

7b: California Politics

Tuesday, 4/14: CA Handout 1, *California Politics* (pp. 17-39, 118)

Thursday, 4/16: CA Handout 2, *California Politics* (pp. 43-51)

Tuesday, 4/21: CA Handouts 3, 4, 5

Thursday, 4/23: *California Politics* (pp.129-132, and Chapter 10) and Review
Unit 8: American Institutions and Values—Politics as usual?

Tuesday, 4/28: Logic of American Politics, Chapter 15.

Thursday, 4/30: Chapter 15 Review.

Tuesday, 5/5: Closing Lecture.

Thursday, 5/7: Last Quiz.