

## SYLLABUS FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE 102

American Institutions and History—Instructor: Joseph Chirra

Spring 2020 – Class Number 1019 – MW 1:30pm – 3:20pm – Room OC 3104

The texts (with ISBN) for this course are:

Government By The People, (Brief)(2012), Magleby 9780205884001 Use Brief edition  
California Government and Politics Today, (14<sup>th</sup> ed.), Field 9780205251780  
Twentieth-Century America, Thomas C. Reeves 9780195044843

**Note: Earlier editions of these texts are not suitable. You should NOT use them.**

In addition to the assigned texts, each student is required to be aware of current political events. Students will be picked at random each day to provide a current event for analysis and discussion.

Quiz hints and other course materials will be published online in Canvas. Set your spam filters to accept email from SURF.

You will be held responsible for the lecture material, any outside or online work you may be assigned, and the material in the assigned readings. All assigned chapters in the texts must be read whether or not a lecture is delivered on them. **Read page 4 of this syllabus carefully.**

### **Course Objectives:**

My primary objectives in teaching this course are: **1.** to instruct students at an academic level which is commensurate with the first two years of higher education; **2.** to explore concepts, ideas, and information which will help students better understand some of the important principles in political science; and **3.** to help students achieve, among others, these specific learning outcomes:

A. Students will be able to describe the system of checks and balances in American government and evaluate how it affects legislation.

B. Students will be able to identify, compare and contrast the various positions on the ideological spectrum, and apply the core values and beliefs of each position to contemporary political issues.

C. Students will be able to describe different instruments of US foreign policy, give examples of their use, explain the role of different institutions in crafting foreign policy, describe different explanations for why a particular policy was made, and evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of that policy.

How to reach me:

by mail at Mail Station 8B

by email at jchirra@miracosta.edu

## Evaluative Process

There will be fourteen (14) weekly quizzes, each worth twenty (20) points. There will be one (1) video quiz worth thirty (30) points during the last week of the semester. **There are no make-up quizzes. However, the lowest weekly quiz grade will be dropped.**

There will be thirteen (13) weekly in-class or out-of-class critical thinking writing opportunities, worth one hundred thirty (130) points. Evaluation guidelines include (a) my overall view of the quality of your research and writing; (b) how well you support your conclusions with reasoning; and (c) how little b.s. and redundancy is found in the writing. **There is one make-up permitted on the critical thinking writing exercises—one only—not two, not three, just one.**

There will be a comprehensive final exam worth 100 points. **There is no make-up final exam.**  
**NOTE: The final exam will be given only on the date and time shown in the college course schedule or this syllabus. Do not request a different date to take the exam for any reason. If you cannot be present for the final exam, you should not take this course.**

**There is no extra credit. That means that there is no extra credit, none.**

The maximum number of points is **520** (290 points for the weekly quizzes, 130 points for the critical thinking exercises, 30 points for the video quiz, and 100 points for the final exam). Your final grade is computed by dividing the total points you receive by 520. **No extra credit.**

The grading scale is:				
A	100 – 90%	Quizzes	290	55%
B	89 - 80%	Crit. Writings	130	25%
C	79 - 70%	Final Exam	<u>100</u>	<u>20%</u>
D	69 - 60%		520	100%
F	below 60%			
<b><u>No Extra Credit. None.</u></b>				

Students seeking an I (incomplete) grade must file a petition with the instructor citing “unforeseeable, emergency, and justifiable” reasons.

The department’s course of study (detailing the learning outcomes plus writing/critical thinking expectations for this class) is available at the LRC.

**Please note: A student with a verified disability may be entitled to appropriate academic accommodations under governing law. Please contact your instructor, or call DSPS at 760-795-6658. When these accommodations necessitate the use of recording of my lectures, please be aware that I retain all rights to my intellectual property and that I require the appropriate acknowledgement form from DSPS to be signed by the student. I make every effort to respect the confidentiality and privacy of all students in these matters.**  
**<http://www.miracosta.edu/Studentservices/dsps/index.html>**

## **Some thoughts about the study of political science**

There is an appalling lack of critical thinking occurring among the electorate, the political pundits, and elected officials themselves. The danger to our democracy cannot be overstated. More than ever, it is important that United States citizens and other students studying American political institutions and history think carefully about our system of government.

I realize that one semester is a very brief time to assimilate the broad scope of the subject matter at hand. Accordingly, I will make every effort to keep our time together as interesting as possible. Your active participation in class will make my job easier and make your experience more rewarding. My former students will tell you that I encourage student input during class discussions and I particularly encourage students to be forceful in stating their views. Lively debate is a hallmark of a vital society.

At the same time, unconsidered expression (otherwise known as b.s.) quickly becomes boring. That's why keeping up with the reading and keeping up with current political events is so important. The assigned readings provide plenty of material to weave articulate arguments on a wide variety of issues. As important, the readings will help you develop the historical perspective that is necessary to understand the political dynamic of our times.

If you do the work, you will be part of the attentive public for the rest of your life.

### **Use of electronic devices in class: No electronic devices may be used during class.**

Lectures may be recorded provided that you sign the appropriate acknowledgement form re: my intellectual property rights that is found on Canvas. No video recording or photographs are allowed. Posting of any of my materials, quizzes, notes, etc. online to any website constitutes theft of my intellectual property and will be referred to the appropriate legal authorities. Again, **no electronic devices may be used.**

### **Assigned Readings**

Readings for the week must be completed **before** the first class of each week.

**Read page 4 of this syllabus carefully.**

### **Attendance Policy and Office Hours**

Class begins promptly and I expect every student to attend every hour of every class meeting. **Participation in class is part of the evaluation process.** Any student **may** be withdrawn if she or he has missed more than **five** class hours. I encourage you to visit me during my scheduled office hours to talk about your progress in the class and about any other relevant matters.

### **Withdrawal Policy**

Any student has the right to a grade of W if a withdrawal is initiated before 75% of the semester has elapsed. State law prohibits giving a W after the 75% point. Students remaining in class beyond that time will receive the grade earned at the end of the course. It is the student's responsibility to know when the 75% date is.

Any student contemplating withdrawal is strongly encouraged to talk with me first. It may not be as bad as you think.

## Semester Schedule – Spring 2020

WEEK NUMBER	WEEK OF	MAGLEBY (M)	REEVES (R)	FIELD (F)	Writing Opp. No.	WEEKLY QUIZ	QUIZ TOPICS	OFFICE HOURS
<b>1</b>	1-20 Wed only	1 & FP#10 & Dec. of Ind.		1-3				T432 (in T430) Associate Faculty Office on OC
<b>2</b>	1-27	1 & F.P. #51 & #78 & Const.	1	4-5	1	1	M1 etc. plus lecture	
<b>3</b>	2-3	2	2	6-7	2	2	M1R1 etc. plus lecture	
<b>4</b>	2-10	2	3	8-10	3	3	M2R2 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>5</b>	2-17 Wed only	4	4	11-12	4	4	M2R3 plus lecture	
<b>6</b>	2-24		5		5	5	M4R4 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>7</b>	3-2	5	6		6	6	Field1-12 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>8</b>	3-9	6	7		7	7	M5R5&R6 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>9</b>	3-23	7	8 <u>and</u> 9		8	8	M6R7 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>10</b>	3-30	8	10		9	9	M7R8&R9 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>11</b>	4-6	10 ( <u>not</u> 9)	11		10	10	M8R10 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>12</b>	4-13	11	12		11	11	M10R11 plus lecture	Monday 12– 1:00 pm
<b>13</b>	4-20	12	13		12	12	M11R12 plus lecture	
<b>14</b>	4-27	9 <u>and</u> 13	14			13	M12R13 plus lecture	
<b>15</b>	5-4	14	15		13	14	M9,M13,R14 plus lecture	
<b>16</b>	5-11	Lecture <u>and</u> Video					Video Quiz	
<b>Finals Week</b>	5-18	Regular Class on Monday			<b>FINAL</b>	<b>EXAM</b>	<b>Wed 5-20</b>	<b>1:30-3:20 pm</b>