

Humboldt State University
American Institutions: Political Science 110
Spring 2008: Tues/Thursday
Instructor: Daniel Faulk

Class Web Blog: <http://tribes.tribe.net/hsuamericangov>

Office Hours: T/TH 3:20-4:20 p.m. Monday Night 9:30pm-10:00pm. (FH 152)

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Introduction:

American Government, Political Science 110, is an entry level university course. This course is designed for first and second year HSU students and is not intended for, nor is it designed for, junior and senior students at HSU.

It is assumed that students in this course have met both junior and senior high school requirements in American Government. This course assumes that you have an understanding of the US political system, its major institutions and how these institutions function. It is also assumed that you have a basic understanding of the structure and function of California political institutions.

In a university you are expected to develop higher level thinking skills. These higher level thinking skills are tools that equip you to survive in the 21st century. These skills are required because the world is changing, rapidly, and problem identification, problem solving, team work and networking are basic social, political and economic requirements for the 21st century global economy.

Excerpts, below, from two recent articles on education and the global economy illustrate the relationship between higher level thinking and the ability to compete in the global economy:

Panel on Work-Force Skills Calls for Drastic Overhaul of America's Education System

By JEFFREY SELINGO
Washington

A panel of political, business, and higher-education leaders laid out a sweeping proposal for overhauling the nation's education system on Thursday. It calls for squeezing \$67-billion from the current system and using that money to prepare some students for community college by the end of 10th grade, to change the way elementary and secondary teachers are trained and recruited, and to pay those teachers more.

The radical changes are needed, the 26-member New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce said, because the United States is lagging on several key educational benchmarks, and ***the structure of the global economy is changing in ways that make even educated American workers at risk of having their jobs outsourced to other countries.***

"The only work that employers will pay high wages for in the future is creative work," said Marc S. Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy and vice chairman of the private, nonpartisan commission. "Being able to consistently create the next big thing is what will separate us from competitors on the other side of the world."

Excerpts from Tough Choices or Tough Times by the National Center on Education and The Economy, December 2006

" A swiftly rising number of American workers at every skill level are in direct competition with workers in every corner of the globe"

" While our international counterparts are increasingly getting more education, their young people are getting a better education as well."

" ... employers everywhere have access to a worldwide workforce composed of people who do not have to move to participate in work teams that are truly global."

"...jobs that are most vulnerable are the jobs involving routine work."

" Many good, well paying middle class jobs involve routine work of this kind and are rapidly being automated."

"...how can American workers possibly maintain, to say nothing of improve, their current standard of living. Today, Indian engineers make \$7,500 a year against \$45,000 for an American engineer with the same qualifications. If we succeed in matching the very high levels of mastery of mathematics and science of these Indian engineers---an enormous challenge for this country---why would the world's employers pay us more than they have to pay the Indians to do their work?"

" This is a world in which a very high level of preparation in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science, literature, history, and the arts will be an indispensable foundation for everything that comes after for most members of the workforce. It is a world in which comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job, in which creativity and innovation are the key to the good life, in which high levels of education---a very different kind of education than most of us have had-- are going to be the only security there is."

" ...candidates will have to be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, good at both analysis and synthesis, creative and innovative, self disciplined and well organized, able to learn very quickly and work well as a member of a a team and have the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market as the shifts in the economy become ever faster and more dramatic."

" The core problem is that our education and training systems were built for another era. We can get where we must go only by changing the system itself."

With the above in mind, this course is designed with the goal of providing an introduction to understanding systems of governance, to the practice of problem solving and to the development of political skills.

Course Structure:

- 1. Understanding and Analysis of Systems**
- 2. Application of Analysis to American and California Institutions**
- 3. Solving political problems by taking appropriate action**

Course Objectives:

To prepare students to survive in the 21st century:

- 1. Students will critically examine the concepts to freedom, responsibility and citizenship.*
- 2. Students will think about systems.*
- 3. Students will think about the relationship between systems and institutions.*
- 4. Students will be able to apply the appropriate concepts in 1984 to current events.*
- 5. Students will develop skills of political analysis and be able to analyze power relationships between individuals, institutions, and systems of thought.*
- 6. Students will explore the philosophical and practical implications of the American Revolution and the counter revolutionary system of governance created by the Founding Fathers.*
- 7. Students will develop an understanding of the institutional power structure of the federal and state government.*
- 8. Students will examine the possible consequences of the global economy on national and local sovereignty.*
- 9. Students will develop skills in decision making and problem solving.*
- 10. Students will learn to be effective citizens.*

Title V

POLITICAL SCIENCE INSTITUTIONS REQUIREMENT: CSU Executive Order 405 and Title 5: 40404 the teaching of "the Constitution of the United States, the operation of representative government under that Constitution, and the process of California State and local government" including the "political philosophies of the framers of the Constitution and the nature and operation of the United States political institutions and processes under the Constitution as amended and interpreted; the rights and obligations of citizens in the political system established under the Constitution; the Constitution of the State of California within the framework of evolution of Federal-State relations and the nature and processes of State and local government under the Constitution; and contemporary

relationships of State and local government with the Federal government, the resolution of conflicts and the establishment of cooperative processes under the constitutions of both the State and nation and the political processes involved." EO 405

Requirements:

There are 3 Projects:

Project 1: Political Analysis (group project)

Project 2. Title V(group project)

Project 3. Political Action (individual or group project)

To pass the course students must complete, with a passing grade, the first two projects.

Project 3 is required of all students wishing to receive an A in the course and may also be completed by students who wish to improve their grades as an extra credit assignment.

In addition:

Completion of in class assignments and journal entries (individual)

All students must complete a **Final Project**, which is a **pass/fail** assignment.

Attendance: this will be checked at random, if you are not present on the day/s attendance is checked your final grade will be lowered by a minimum of 5% (missing one day) and a maximum of 15%(missing three or more days). (For night class, attendance will be checked after the break).

TEXTS:

All books are available at **Northtown Books** in Arcata, some might also be discovered at used bookstores around town and ex students might also lend/sell you their used copies. Books may be shared if the assignments can be completed in a timely fashion. In most cases there is no requirement that you have the current edition of the text. Total cost for all text should not exceed \$65/student.

First Project Text:

1984 by George Orwell

And ONE of the following:

Drug Crazy by Mike Gray

Saying Yes by Jacob Sullum

Reefer Madness by Eric Schlosser

Rogue State by Blum

Empire's Workshop by Greg Grandin

The Best Democracy Money Can Buy by Greg Palast

The War on the Bill of Rights by Hentoff

Silencing Political Dissent by Chan

Perfectly Legal, by Johnston

Censored 2005/2006/2007, by Phillips

Confessions of An Economic Hit Man, by Perkins

Against Love, by Kipnis

Second Project Text:

The Declaration of Independence

The US Constitution

How Democratic is the American Constitution, by Dahl

And

A People's History of The United States by Howard Zinn

Suggested Readings:

The following list of Suggested Readings are **not required** for this class.

The Republic, Plato

Two Treatises of Government, Locke

Common Sense, Paine

The Wealth of Nations, Smith

The Anti Federalist Papers, Brutus

The Articles of Confederation

A Conflict of Visions, Sowell

Free to Choose, Friedman

The Road to Serfdom, Hayek

Capitalism the Unknown Ideal, Rand

The Communist Manifesto, Marx

Animal Farm, Orwell

It Can't Happen Here, Sinclair Lewis

Brave New World, Huxley

The New Testament (Four Gospels, Acts and Romans)

Origin of Species, Darwin

Colossus, Ferguson

The New York Times

The Wall Street Journal

The Deputy, Hochhuth
The Hazards of Being Male
Dreaming the Dark, Starhawk
On Liberty, Mill
A Theory of Justice, Rawls
Socratic Citizenship, Villa
The Prince, Machiavelli,
Political Parties, Michels
Gynecology, Daly
Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin
The Plague, Camus
Nine Parts of Desire, Brooks
Moses, Man of the Mountain, Hurston
Mutual Aid, Kropotkin
The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck
Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems, Galileo
War Is a Racket, Butler
Misquoting Jesus, Ehrman
The Handmaid's Tale, Atwood
The Robber Bride, Atwood

Introduction:

What are we doing here? What is the difference between university and high school? How is the structure of this course preparing you or NOT preparing you for the future global economy? How would a class need to be taught in order to know what you need to know about politics and political systems? What type of thinking is required in a university? What should you already know before you enroll in this course? What is the relationship between the structure of the class and the idea that gave rise to that structure? How do ideas manifest in forms and what do these forms mean? How does teaching style reflect internalized structure? What is a *conventional* thought process and what is *conventional* teaching (or lack thereof)? What does a moral structure, an ethical process and a theological system of thought have to do with politics and teaching? What is dogma? What is the difference between knowing and thinking? How is the educational system organized and what does this organization say about power relationships? What do we study in politics? What is critical thinking and how do we use critical thinking in the study of American Government? What is an Institution? What is a teacher in a university paid to do? What is a text book and what do formal text books say about the teacher's view of their responsibility to students?

Project One:

Weeks: *One - Six:*

This is a Group Assignment with a TWO STEP Process:

Step ONE: Individual Process

Thinking Involved: Identification, Comprehension, Application

Read 1984 and *read* one of the other books listed under " First Project Text"

1. Make a list of institutions, methods and patterns of control, and guiding principles from *1984*.
2. Define each concept and provide at least one quote from *1984* that illustrates each concept.
3. Read the selected alternative text and look for concepts/patterns that illustrate the ideas/patterns presented in *1984*.
4. Make a chart that applies the concepts in 1984 to the examples in your chosen text and briefly describe why the example in the text is an illustration of concepts in *1984*.
5. ***USE Quotes to illustrate ideas and concepts***

Step TWO: Collective Process

Thinking Involved: Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation

Identify: Methods of Conquest

Discuss: Similarities and differences between each individual text

Synthesize: All text into one coherent view of the system

Illustrate: Create a visual illustration ***utilizing examples*** and ***quotes*** from all the books to demonstrate your understanding of the books and their relationship to 1984 and the American political system.

***Or* come up with a creative alternative to the above assignment that fulfills the purpose and function of the assignment.**

Week: *Six*

First Project Due

Project Two:

Weeks: *Six-Twelve*

Required Text: Declaration of Independence and US Constitution (**bring to class**) and A People's History of the United States and How Democratic is the American Constitution?

Make a chart/poster that illustrates the following:

Federal Government

1. What is the *structure of institutional power* as proposed and written into the **US Constitution** in 1787.

For each branch of government illustrate the following:

1. Qualifications for Office

2. Term in Office

3. Selection Process

4. Individual Powers

5. Shared Powers

6. Gridlock (power blocked or checked by)

2. Illustrate each amendment to the Constitution that changed the institutional power structure. For example, the first ten amendments, known as "The Bill of Rights", protected some forms of individual liberty from government power. Show the date of each amendment and include a brief discussion of how it altered institutional power relationships. **Add the important institutional changes to your project.**

3. Illustrate the **ten most important Supreme Court Decisions** in US history and discuss how each one of these decisions altered power relationships in the United States. **What were the consequences of these decisions on institutional power.** Present the evolution of rights for individuals, the role of states and the **power of native nations and tribal governments.**

4. What is the budget of the US government, where does the money come from and how is it allocated. Is the debt increasing, is the deficit going up or down? Should social security be included as a part of federal government **general fund expenditures?** Why or Why not?

Who pays the taxes and what percentage of income is paid in taxes for different income groups at the federal level. How much of a **paycheck** is taken for federal taxes and what is taken for state taxes? What tax is regressive? What part is progressive?

5. USE pie charts to illustrate the following: Different views of the Federal Gov. tax revenue and expenditures, use a line chart to show increases and decreases in the debt and deficit, use a chart to illustrate the trade balance of payments over the past decade and the value of the dollar in comparison to the Yen and Euro over the same period of time. Discuss what these charts illustrate and short and long term implications.

State Government

1. How is power arranged in California at the **STATE, COUNTY and LOCAL** levels of Government. Make sure you illustrate the major difference in the executive branch at the state level when compared to the federal level of government. USE the same model used in the Federal chart to illustrate power arrangements at the STATE level of government.

2. What **similarities and differences** exist between California's Government and the Federal Structure of Government and how do these differences affect power relationships and accountability of elected officials in California.
3. Discuss California's fourth branch of government, include in this discussion Proposition 13 and its affect on the California budget. Discuss the role of direct democracy in California's political system
4. Discuss how proposition 215 or another proposition that was the result of California's democratic process has been affected by the Federal government.
5. Discuss the federal rules for citing LNG facilities that were part of the Federal Energy Bill (Aug. 8, 2005) and how these rules affect the control California has over the placement of such facilities.
6. What is going on with California's budget? Use a **pie chart** to illustrate the income the state receives and how the state government spends its money. What is the difference between how the state spends its money and how the federal government spends tax money.
7. Discuss the implications of bond funding for infrastructure on student fees in the CSU system.
8. What is the relationship between population, political and economic power, and the distribution of water in California?

Tribal Authority

What are the implications of PL 280 on native peoples of the United States and California, how does this law apply to the conflicts between states and tribes when it comes to crimes, courts and an issue like gambling revenue?

Text

Integrate *quotes* from throughout the assigned text into the charts/poster in a manner that illustrates context and meaning.

Provide sources for information on charts.

***Or* come up with an alternative approach that will accomplish the goal and function of the above assignment.**

Project 2: (Title V Project) Grading Criteria

C: You answered the questions correctly. Basic understanding of factual material with some limited use of quotes from required text.

B: You answered the questions in depth, added quotes to reveal context and meaning. The project suggested institutional understanding.

A: The project illustrated integrity. Answers were thoughtful, quotes demonstrated understanding and revealed relationships, project was organized and coherent, illustrated system thinking.

Points off: Cut and paste. Plagiarism. Disorganization.

Week: *Twelve (or Thirteen)*
Second Project Due

Weeks: *Thirteen- Fifteen*

Films:

The Future of Food

The Corporation

Project Three:

Everyone (if there is time...) will be required to do an in-class timed assignment on finding political resources

And then....

For *extra credit or an A:*

Political Action Project: Carry out a political action project at the local, state or federal level of government.

- * Identify a problem**
- * Develop a plan of action**
- * Carry out the action plan**
- * Evaluate your success**

End of Political Action Project Evaluation Paper:

At the end of your project *one paper* will be turned in by the group that worked on the political action. This paper will contain a cover sheet with the **name of your project** and a list of all **group members in alphabetical order**.

The Final Evaluation Paper will contain the following information organized in the following manner:

1. What you did. Make a numerical list of each activity/action used to affect the political process
2. Why you took on this issue
3. What you learned in the process of the political action
4. What you would do differently and what you would do in the future to influence decision makers on this issue.

Attachments: Attach to your final paper all letters/ emails etc. related to your project.

Due: Final day of regular class meetings BEFORE finals week

Final:

Create a Visual/Creative Representation of the Whole Political-Economic System

Due: Final Day

GRADES

Percentages:

Project 1: 25%

Project 2: 50% (This project is mandatory for all students including Cr/Ncr students and you will fail this class if you do not pass project #2 with a C or better)

Recognized Participation in class: 15%

Project 3: Extra Credit/ A: Can boost final grade ½ grade, required for an A

Final: Mandatory

Absence: - 5% to -15%

Names on all collective assignments **MUST BE IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER**

General Grading Criteria:

Content: Did you read the books or do the research listen to the lectures, participate in the discussions: is this reflected in your work?

Organization: Is your paper, presentation or project clear and well organized?

Concepts: Did you look for relationships, did you learn from your mistakes, is your analysis becoming more sophisticated, are your actions becoming increasingly effective? What are the relationships? What patterns emerge from your research, action, readings and discussions etc. What do these patterns mean? What are the larger themes that govern political relationships?

Grades in this class are based on a *qualitative* assessment of thinking not a quantitative analysis of accumulated facts memorized. Your grade will be based on what the teacher perceives to be your thought process and the level of thinking you exhibit in your work. (Educational systems do not require grades, institutions pretend that grades are objective measures of intellect or knowledge, they are not objective and grades do not serve an educational function, grades serve a grading function, a schooling function, a conforming function. Grades are not objective, what is graded is always arbitrary, what is valued by the grader is subjective. You are in *a system* which values grades, ..what does that say about the system's values? What does it say about you if you value grades? What does it say about me that I am participating in this system?)

Letter Grades:

A: Represents the ability to be independently and collectively *responsible* to solve problems effectively, to work well with others and to demonstrate analysis, evaluation, synthesis, creativity and originality: *exceeds course requirements* (IP)

B: Represents the ability to fulfill course assignments, to apply information in new context and to comprehend content: *meets course requirements* (OP)

C: Recall facts and understanding of general ideas, can not work independently of teacher's didactic instruction, can not solve problems for themselves, needs to be told exactly what to do and how to do it: *generally does minimum required to pass class* (P)

D: Confused, misses class, fails to meet responsibilities to others: *falls below minimal standards for understanding political relationships* (S)

Disclaimer: Terrorist attacks happen, teachers get sick, power fails...classes are scheduled on Mondays, which turn out to be holidays... The appearance of structure is an illusion, all is chaos. But, chaos is order.

If you have a learning disability that requires accommodation please see me.

**I do not accept late papers, but really good chocolate may encourage me to reconsider this policy if there is a serious and compelling justification for such tardiness.
In Politics everything is negotiable....**