

## **Political Science 385: American Government**

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-2:45 Saunders 541.**

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Monday 12:30—1:20 PM and by appointment.

**Final Exam: Regular Classroom, Monday, May 9, .2:14-4:15.**

**Textbook:** The text is published by Flat World Knowledge and available as an e-book or paperback.

David L. Paletz, Diana Owen and Timothy E. Cook. *American Government and Politics in the Information Age*, v. 2.0. 2015, .

The link to purchase the textbook is here:

<https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course?cid=2366323&bid=263609>.

**Project Books** for Weeks of March 28-30 (Both available from Amazon as paper or Kindle editions, and in the used book trade as paper editions.) Please pick one to prepare a presentation for class sessions during the period March 28 and 30 (More details on the presentations will be forthcoming.)

Mike Lofgren. *The Party Is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless, and the Middle Class Got Shafted*. Viking, 2012

Kirby Goidel. *America's failing Experiment: How We the People have Become the Problem*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2014. (As of August 12, no Kindle edition is available)

### **Plan of the Course:**

The reading schedule is intended to take us through texts on the structure and operation of American government, the institutions of American politics, and the origins and flow of the folks who participate in American politics at all levels. At about the 2/3 point in the semester, we will commit to mastering one of two critical books on American political culture. Both were written by relatively conservative scholars driven by great disappointment in changes in American culture and institutions. One attacks what we have come to know as "Liberalism." The other addresses events that have changed the Republican Party in ways that lifelong Republicans could not accept as neutral, but see as destructive to democracy in the United States.

Each of you will select one of the two books listed above. Our assessment of the material will be given in oral presentations. You may choose to present some segment of the work alone, or with up to two other students, dramatize one or more segments of the work. We shall allocate two class sessions for

the presentations at the end of March. Some time in Mid-March we will collect a list of the individuals and/or teams making the presentations and schedule the presentations.

### **Policy Analysis and Assessment**

The following list of URLs identify the most widely consulted think-tanks in the United States. Each is a hub of expertise, often with a clear ideological or theoretical mission. All of them publish a series of research reports as well as a variety of other documents. For our purposes, we want to focus on the *research reports*. The research reports from each of these agencies are comprehensive, well documented, and well argued (whether I agree with the authors or not). The other publications, such as newsletters or “in brief” or other more immediate notes are short, do not provide complete introductions, models or explanations or develop alternate viewpoints. On most of these sites, the “reports” section is listed under “reports” or “research.”

Over the course of the semester, you will write reaction papers to fifteen research reports from these organizations—three from each one. I commend to you the practice of writing one per week and delivering it in the Wednesday class session. Your evaluation should be entered as a “discussion” item in the POLS 385 Lulima site. Please be sure to put the institution short name (e.g., urban, heritage, etc.) and a short title of the research report you are analyzing as the title of your piece. Please include in your report the exact URL which leads to the document.

We are looking for half-page reaction papers here. Please pay attention to the University plagiarism rules—do not simply copy an abstract or take wholesale slices from the original report. Note that you benefit yourself by doing your reports weekly—you have more reports available to review. Waiting till the end of the semester will pretty much take all the current year’s research off the table for you—in addition to leading you to somewhat mindless work. I will generally grade your contribution each week. Since the reviews are due on Wednesday by the beginning of class, I may call upon any of you to talk about the reading on any given Wednesday.

Note that posting your review on the Lulima discussion page takes the article off the list for everyone else.

[www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org)

[www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)

[www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu)

[www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org)

[www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

### **Political Critique Performance**

Immediately after Spring Break—on March 28 and 30, you will be putting your dramatization of one of the critical monographs on American politics on the boards. Naturally, we all present materials in the discussion of political events, policies and personalities. Most of our presentation forms can be a bit boring. Verdi, one of the greatest Italian composers used opera as the vehicle for putting his political

arguments on the streets—in other words, performance. A quarter of a million people marched through Rome demanding Italian unity to the song of the Hebrew Slaves from Verdi’s Nabuko. Keeping with the tradition of the Italian revolutionary (or if you will, the Broadway musical Hamilton) if you set your presentation to music and sing it, you will automatically get an A for the presentation.

### **Cartoon Animation**

The last three weeks of the semester we shall concentrate on that most important part of the American political climate—humor. But, we will be producing, not just consuming it. For this purpose we will each construct an animated cartoon based on some set of reporting from contemporary on-line journals. We will use the MIT program **Scratch** to generate animations. Of course, that means you must do a bit of coding—but since the program was designed for lower elementary school children, you will have no problems. You can see some good cartooning on the Scratch web site, but you will also find really telling political humor in the animations of Mark Fiore (<https://markfiore.com/>).

Now begins the fun. During the course of the three week period, you will spend some time programming a cartoon over the theme you have chosen in the MIT program SCRATCH. The site address is :

<https://scratch.mit.edu/>.

SCRATCH is a programming language suited to creating entities that move, change shape, express verbal cues, and the like. It requires absolutely no prior programming knowledge, and has been designed to be within the reach of elementary school students. (So for you to say that you cannot do this kind of thing would be a very implausible claim. Scratch works in any browser on virtually any platform. If you are a logged in member, you may store your work and publish it or make it open to those to whom you send the URL of your working page. Your work cannot be seen by those to whom you have not sent the link, or if you have not opened it to others.

To use SCRATCH, you must sign up as a member. Because the site caters to children, please be honest in your subscription. We will do several demonstrations through the course of the semester. The goal here is to develop over a period of three weeks, an animated cartoon of some major news theme.

You will want to pick three themes to work up for your cartoons. It will be very helpful if you start to follow the top current political web magazines and blogs. A sample is here: Bloombergbusiness.com, TheDailyBeast.com, The Hill, Politico, CQ, Washington Post, Al Jazeera, The Atlantic, Harpers, The Rothenberg Report (<http://rothenberggonzales.com/>), the German newsmagazine Spiegel (English version: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/>), The Toronto Globe and Mail (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/>). Over the course of our three week engagement with cartoons, you will construct three animated sets. Try to look for issues that you can illustrate in about three minutes (shorter playing times are hard to convey, longer are much harder to get done in a week.) We will go over the delivery times and do some practice programming in Scratch toward the end of the semester.

By the beginning of each class day on which a cartoon is due, please save your work, open it so that others can read it, and send me the URL with which I can access the cartoon. I will grade each cartoon

on its completeness, its executability, and the depth of the political issues conveyed. Before we start your submission work, we will work some exercises in class to be sure that you are comfortable with the program and the rich library of routines, animations, and games.

**The Usual Boilerplate:**

- 1. The University of Hawaii provisions on plagiarism.**
- 2. The University of Hawaii provisions on harassment.**
- 3. Good taste and polite exchange, even when spirited**

**Basis for Grading:**

Research Reviews	60 pts (4 pts each)
Mid-term	30 pts
Political Critique Performance	30 pts
Cartoon Animation	20 pts
Final Exam	60 pts
Total	200pts

**Discussion Schedule: This is a provisional schedule and will be modified as necessary**

Chapter in Text: Title or Subject

**Mon Jan 11, 2016**

Introduction---Politics in America

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Jan 13, 2016**

Communication in the Information Age

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Jan 18, 2016**

The Constitution and the Structure of Government Power

All day M: King Holiday

Mon Jan 18, 2016 -

**Wed Jan 20, 2016**

Federalism

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Jan 25, 2016**

Civil Liberties

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Jan 27, 2016**

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Feb 8, 2016**

Civil Rights

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Feb 10, 2016**

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Feb 15, 2016**

Political Culture and Socialization

All day President's Day

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Feb 17, 2016**

Political Culture and Socialization

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Feb 22, 2016**

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Feb 24, 2016**

Public Opinion

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Mar 7, 2016**

Participation, Voting and Social Movements

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Mar 9, 2016**

Political Parties

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Mar 14, 2016**

Campaigns and Elections

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Mar 16, 2016**

The Presidency

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Mar 21, - 252016**

Spring Break

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Mar 28, 2016**

Performance Project

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Mar 30, 2016**

Performance Project

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Apr 4, 2016**

The Bureaucracy

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Apr 6, 2016**

The Bureaucracy

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Apr 11, 2016**

Policy Making- Domestic Policies

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Apr 13, 2016**

Policy Making- Domestic Policies

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Mon Apr 18, 2016**

Foreign Policy

1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

**Wed Apr 20, 2016**  
1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

Cartoon Project

**Mon Apr 25, 2016**  
1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

Cartoon Project

**Wed Apr 27, 2016**  
1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

Cartoon Project

**Mon May 2, 2016**  
1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

Cartoon Project

**Wed May 4, 2016**  
All day Last Day of Instruction  
1:30pm - 2:45pm POLS 385

Cartoon Project

**Mon May 9, 2016**  
2:15pm - 4pm P385 Final Exam

Final Exam