

Political Science 385: American Government

Spring 2017, Saunders Hall 637, MW 1:30-2:45

Lawrence H. Nitz, Ph.D., Professor

633A Saunders Hall, 956-8665, lnitz@hawaii.edu.

Class Meetings:

Final Exam: Friday, May 12, 2:15-4:15 PM

This is a course in the workings of American Government. We will use a modern textbook that happens to have very good hyperlinks to contemporary news videos.

Text and Video Material.

Matthew Kerbel, *AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: Your Voice, Your Choice*, 5/e, Academic Media Solutions. The publisher's link to video clips is given here:

<http://www.academicmediasolutions.com/#!kerbel-amer-govt-5e-video-labs--worksh/cjfi>.

The UH Bookstore will carry the textbook. It is also available on-line from the publisher with the instructions given below. Please note that the eTextbook is the least expensive, and the version with color illustrations is the most expensive.

Student order instructions from the publisher.:

TO THE STUDENT: HOW TO ORDER THE TEXTBOOK DIRECTLY FROM ACADEMIC MEDIA SOLUTIONS TO GET THE BEST DEAL - Go to <https://academicmediasolutions.textbookmedia.com>. Register. It will take about 60 seconds. You will be taken to My Account. You will see "You currently have no books to view." To find Kerbel, *AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: Your Voice, Your Future, Fifth Edition* book, click on Booklist. Locate the book and click on Pricing Details. You will have four options for the format (e-book, pdf, and print:: paperback or loose-leaf). Read the descriptions and make your choice. Click on Add to Cart, then Checkout. Then you'll see a page for Review Order. Once processed, eBook orders will be in My Account. Print orders may take up to seven business days, but you'll have the online book immediately in My Account.

The "Resources" segment of the Laulima listing for POLS 385 lists the video clips, news segments and snippets from political satire. Please browse these, as they expand the issues in the text in a most captivating way.

Critical Monographs:

A week in the middle of the semester will be devoted to presentations on one of two critical monographs. Please pick one to prepare a presentation for class sessions during the period (tba) More details on the presentations will be forthcoming.

Thomas Frank. *Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People?* Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Co., 2016. ISBN 9781627795395.

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson. *American Amnesia: How the War on Government Led Us to Forget What Made America Prosper*. Simon and Schuster, 2016. ISBN-10: 1451667825; ISBN-13: 978-1451667820

(Both available from Amazon as paper or Kindle editions, and in the used book trade as paper editions.)

Plan of the Course:

The reading schedule is intended to take us through material 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. We will commit to mastering one of the two critical books on American political culture listed above. 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 (Frank or Hacker and Pierson). 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 three other students, dramatize one or more segments of the work. We shall allocate two class sessions for the presentations at the end of the semester. Sometime in mid-semester an assignment will ask you to provide the text you have selected and if working in a team, a list of the individuals and/or teams making the presentations.

Policy Analysis and Assessment

The following list of URLs identify some of 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. Your evaluation should be entered in the week’s open assignment 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.

Policy Organization Websites

www.urban.org, www.cbpp.org, www.brookings.edu, www.heritage.org, www.rand.org

Political Critique Performance

Political engagement is essential in any democracy, as is the ability to voice criticism and as necessary, to make fun of our institutions. This course is about engagement. At the end of the semester (See reading schedule) 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, the story of the Hebrew Peoples’ captivity under Nebuchadnezer, emperor of Babylon. 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 at least a grade of B for the presentation.

Political Science 385 Calendar , Section 1, L. H. Nitz			
Dates	Events	Reading	Other Holidays
Sunday, January 01, 2017			
1/2/2017			
1/4/2017			
Monday, January 09, 2017	First Day of Class	Kerbel Ch 1	
Wednesday, January 11, 2017			
Monday, January 16, 2017	ML King Day	Kerbel Ch 2	
Wednesday, January 18, 2017			
Monday, January 23, 2017		Kerbel Ch 3	
Wednesday, January 25, 2017			
Monday, January 30, 2017		Kerbel Ch 4	
Wednesday, February 01, 2017			
Monday, February 06, 2017		Kerbel Ch 5	
Wednesday, February 08, 2017			
Monday, February 13, 2017		Kerbel Ch 6	
Wednesday, February 15, 2017			
Monday, February 20, 2017	Presidents' Day	Kerbel Ch 7	
Wednesday, February 22, 2017			
Monday, February 27, 2017		Kerbel Ch 8	
Wednesday, March 01, 2017			
Monday, March 06, 2017		Kerbel Ch 9	
Wednesday, March 08, 2017			
Monday, March 13, 2017		Kerbel Ch 10	
Wednesday, March 15, 2017			
Monday, March 20, 2017		Kerbel Ch 11	
Wednesday, March 22, 2017			
Monday, March 27, 2017	Kuhio Day		Spring Recess
Wednesday, March 29, 2017	Spring Recess		Through 31
Monday, April 03, 2017		Kerbel Ch 12	
Wednesday, April 05, 2017			
Monday, April 10, 2017		Kerbel Ch 13	
Wednesday, April 12, 2017			
Monday, April 17, 2017		Kerbel Ch 14	April 14 Good Friday 15, 16 Easter
Wednesday, April 19, 2017			
Monday, April 24, 2017		Kerbel Ch 15	
Wednesday, April 26, 2017			
Monday, May 01, 2017			
Wednesday, May 03, 2017	Last Day of Instruction		
Friday, May 12, 2017	Final Exam fpr Course, Regular Classroom		
Course Start: 1:30 – 2:29 pm	Friday	Exam 2:15 – 4:15 pm	

The Usual Boilerplate:

1. **The University of Hawaii provisions on plagiarism and student conduct code provisions on harassment**
http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/proscribed_conduct.php
2. **Good taste and polite exchange, even when spirited**

Basis for Grading:

<i>Research Reviews</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Participation</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Political Critique Performance</i>	<i>40 %</i>
<i>Final Exam</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>