

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

PROF. HARRIS **A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION** **FALL 09**

RM. 447 Clark Hall

Off. Hrs MW 9:00 -10:30, T 4-5

This is a GE course that satisfies the American Institution requirement. This means the learning objectives for this course were created by a University Committee to make sure that every one who enters SJSU has is grounded in the founding principles of our Nation!

This course is designed to make students more responsible and engaged in the political process at the Local, State and National level because it is the only way to make the ideal of government for the people and by the people! All students are expected to have the capacity to explain and analyze the structures and functions of the US political system which includes the following:

1. The foundations and principles of the American Political system including the US and California Government, and relations among various levels of government. 2. Student should also have the capacity to analyze our National Institutions such as Homeland Security, the CIA, FBI, and Federal Reserve Board. We shall also study the President, Congress the Judiciary and Political Parties. For example, did the President and the Congress commit War Crimes by invading Iraq? Is the US violating international law by using illegal renditions, and using drones to kill suspected "terrorists" without providing them with due process?
2. What are the links if any between US citizens and their elected representatives outside of the election cycle? Why is that upper income voters what ever their race participate more in civic activities than lower class white and non-white voters? Why does the US have one of the lowest percentages of citizen participation, in voting, political parties, interest groups, and citizen engagement?

3. Student will develop the capacity to evaluate and analyze the differences between the US Constitution and the California State Constitution

REQUIRED TEXT BOOKS

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| PARENTI, | <u>DEMOCRACY FOR THE FEW</u> |
| PATTERSON, | <u>WE THE PEOPLE</u> |
| JOHNSON, | <u>SORROWS OF EMPIRE</u> |
| JOHNSON, | <u>BLOWBACK</u> |
| GERSTON | <u>CALIFORNIA POLITICS & GOVERNMENT</u> |

Course Requirements

Students are required to have read the assigned reading before they come to class. Every class begins with a 10 minute “question time” based on local, State, National, or International current issues that affect the US. Each student must present a political issue for the class to discuss during question time based on the reading or and contemporary news events.

GRADES:

MIDTERM BASED ON PATTERSON AND PARENTI TEXTS
50 pts.

TWO REVIEWS OF US FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST
VIETNAM PERIOD

C. JOHNSON, BLOWBACK 10 pts.

C. JOHNSON, SORROWS OF EMPIRE 10 pts

D. FINAL PAPER 3-5 pages. HOW DID CALIFORNIA GO
FROM FIRST TO LAST? 30 pts.

E. Reading: Gerston and Christiansen ,California Government

US POLITICAL CULTURE

The Core Principles of American Government

Week Two: CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL STATE. READING: Promoting Liberty and Self-Government Chapt.

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN US POLITICS

Students will develop the capacity to understand the ideological differences between Liberal Capitalism and Social Democracy. At this very moment we are debating who should provide health care to our citizens and to those who do not have health care. In short, "Who Gets What, When and how" remains the ultimate test to determine where power in a country resides. In best for any given country.

For instance, in Europe the dominant mode of politics is Social Democracy. In the US the dominant model is liberal capitalism. What paradigm do you think provides more liberty, social equality justice? What model do you think would best defend our environment a Liberal-Capitalist perspective or a Social Democratic position? This course will help you understand the difference Liberal Democracy and Social Democracy

A Liberal/ Conservative Ideological Perspective

Reading: Patterson, founding principles of the US government

Chapters. 1, 2, 3,4,5,10,11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

Gerston and Christensen, Chapt. 1-5

A Social Democratic Ideological Perspective

Parenti: Chapt. 1,2,3,4, 5, 6, 7,9,11, 13, 14, 15, 16

Social Democrats argue that only with socio-economic equality can a truly democratic society exist. Social Democracy would make equality of opportunity the founding principle and therefore it would make our society more equal and just and equal. It could make our society more because they would just and educated based redistribute more of the wealth to the middle and working classes. In addition, all the European Social Democratic states provide free health, low tuition rates for schools like Oxford and Cambridge. The Social Democratic states have also created the greatest multi-national integrated rail system in the world.

C. Johnson. Blowback, Blowback is a CIA concept based on the concept of unintended effects from covert actions around the world. For example, some argue that 9/11 was Blowback to the US for all of their unjustified attacks against non- Western for the last one hundred years countries from Vietnam to Iraq. Student must right a pro or con 3-5 page for or against the US unilaterally attacking countries that have not attacked the US

Final 3-5 page essay: On the major differences between the social democratic paradigm and liberal capitalism.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you need a course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me or visit me during my office hours as soon as possible.

Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students must be registered with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

PLAGIARISM

At SJSU plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism as SJSU includes but is not limited to : The acts of incorporating ideas, words, sentences, paragraph, or parts thereof, or specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing it as one's own work. Students caught plagiarizing automatically fail the course. If you are unsure about the policy on Academic Integrity please see the policy on academic integrity on the University Website http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct.