This course provides a study of the American Political System. Students will be exposed to a variety of matters pertaining to American Politics, including, but not necessarily limited to: underlying American political values, the U.S. Constitution, political parties, interest groups, governmental institutions, and the role of mass media (including social media). The student will be able to correctly identify the structure and processes of the three branches of the United States Government: Legislative, Executive, and, Judicial. The student will be able to describe the non-institutional aspects of the American system of government: political parties, interest groups, and the media. The course assignments will all be placed on the students’ e-portfolio site with the attention of the student learning material and familiarity with various social media platforms.

**Required Reading:**


*Optional, but you must buy one for completion of the Theoretical Book Assessment assignment:*


Reserve Readings in the Library and/or on Moodle. RR

*I will occasionally hold Google + Hangout office hours. If you’re interested, you’ll need to be on Google + to participate. These office hours will be ad hoc and based on student needs. The Hangout can include a total of 10 users. My user name on Google + is Janni Aragon.*

**E-Portfolios of Student Work:** Your work will be maintained on a WordPress site. This will include links to your blogs, vlogs, Twitter feed, Theoretical Book Assessment, and screen shots of your Wikipedia entries. I respect your need for privacy or to maintain a smaller digital footprint and you are encouraged to use a pseudonym and make your site private; however, you will have to give me and your collaborating peers access to the site. Please note that the e-portfolio and course assignments are not optional. At the course’s end, you will have an online dossier (the e-portfolio) to share your writing, analysis, and vlogs with potential employers or to use for other courses that require digital platforms.
**Blogs:** You will blog using WordPress, which is one of the better blogging platforms. It has the most functionality, relatively easy to use, and free. You will blog three times about different themes related to the course materials. These posts will be due between May 17th, 31st, and June 26th by 10am. You will find more information about this assignment in the syllabus. No late blogs accepted.

**Vlogs:** Students will do three video logs. This will require that you have a You Tube channel—you might opt for one student in the group to set this up or for each student to do so to make sharing the vlog on your e-portfolio. The vlogs will be completed in groups of 2-3 students. No individual vlogging. These three posts will be due May 14th, June 7th, and 21st by 10am. No late vlogs accepted. You are focusing on 1-2 readings and offering your analytical assessment of the themes in the reading(s). The vlog should be 5-7 minutes long.

**UVIC Library Media Tech Help:**
http://libguides.uvic.ca/content.php?pid=161413&sid=1364447
You can rent cameras, audio recorders, and camcorders via the library. The staff in the library are great and I suggest you meet with them. There are also multi-media rooms for you to use (book them). You are assessed on the depth of your analysis, sound, and video quality.

**Theoretical Book Assessment:** Note this is not a book review. This assignment requires you to dig deeper and offer analysis and not summary of the book. The assessment is due to me (hard copy and Moodle copy uploaded) and posted on your blog (e-portfolio) by Fri, June 28th at noon. No late assessments accepted. More information about this assignment is in the syllabus.

**Wikipedia Entry:** This Wikipedia entry will be pulled from your Theoretical Book Assessment. You will upload an entry about a specific chapter of the book that you have chosen. You will need to register with Wikipedia (you can use a moniker). The Wikipedia entry (screen shot sent via email) is due to me and posted on your blog (e-portfolio) by 10am on June 27th. No late entries accepted.

**Twitter:** The class will use Twitter to follow the news and to discuss the news, lectures, and readings. Our hash tag is #Poli313 More information about this is on the syllabus. I’ll distribute a form for you to share your Twitter handle. Please remember to protect your privacy and avoid using your full name. You might use @jwhedon in lieu of say, Joss Whedon. Also, follow #uspoli

**Attendance/Participation:** I will take roll. You will not earn any credit for attendance/participation if you do not attend 70% of the lectures. Your mark is based on your attendance and solid participation in class. This means asking questions and offering points of analysis based on course material. Thus, your grade should vary from an A to C-, or F. Attend class! Educators agree that attending class is important to your learning.

http://www.umassd.edu/dss/resources/students/classroomstrategies/howtogetgoodgrades/
http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/getting-better-grades.html and a peer reviewed article about the correlation between attendance/participation and success:

**The Cost of Cutting Class: Attendance as a Predictor of Student Success**
Steven E. Gump
Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.
Article Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/27559212
Now, you see that you do not have a mid-term or final. Please do not mistake that this means that you can skate by without completing the readings, as this is not the case. In order to write strong blog posts, vlog, and write an excellent assessment, this will require your close familiarity with the course materials. You will need to engage the course materials and demonstrate that you are thinking about the materials. Your writing will need coherence and weave the course materials in the posts, vlogs, and assessment.

Keep abreast of events in the US. Read or listen to a daily news report such as Newsweek, Time, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post or watch the Daily Show or the Colbert Report.

**The make-up of the course:**

E-Portfolios for student work

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vlogs</td>
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<td>Twitter</td>
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<td>Theoretical Book Assessment</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Wikipedia Entry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
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**Schedule:** Please note the assigned readings and that I will not lecture on each reading, but provide an overview of the themes. I do use PPT or Keynote presentations, but I am not wordy with slides and they will not provide enough information to preclude reading the material. Please keep up with the readings!

**Week 1: May 1st and 3rd** Course Introduction and Constitution


CoD Ch 1 pages 3-24, Ch 2 43-70

**Week 2: May 7th, 8th, and 10th** Congress

Enloe and Seager Who Are Americans? Who makes up the empire? 14-21, 64-65

CoD Ch 8 264-301

http://www.senate.gov US Senate

http://www.house.gov/ US House of Representatives

Enloe and Seager Suffrage 34-35 Representatives 36-37

**Week 3: May 14th, 15th & 17th** Presidency

Ch 9 303-335

*School House Rocks: America Rocks*

http://www.whitehouse.gov/ The White House

http://conservapedia.com/Main_Page Conservapedia
**Week 3:** May 21st, 22nd, and 24th  SCOTUS & Public Opinion, Political Socialization, and the Media  
CoD Ch 11 364-397 & CoD Ch 4 110-151  
http://www.supremecourtus.gov/ The Supreme Court of the United States  
Enloe and Seager Media 40-43  
http://www.racialicious.com/ Racialicious

**Week 4:** May 28th, 29th, and 31st  Finish Media and begin Participation and Voting  
CoD Ch 5  
Enloe and Seager Voting 38-39, Degrees and Dropouts 76-77, Health 66-69, 82-83  
http://www.rockthevote.org/ Rock the Vote  
http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/ Center for American Women and Politics

*No classes the week of June 1st-11th thanks to the Congress. Please attend some of the talks. We can chat about extra credit opportunities. 😊 I will have office hours only by appointment and not June 3-7 due to Congress commitments. I am the Local Area Coordinator for the Canadian Political Science Association meeting and welcome you to attend the conference and/or volunteer.*

**Week 5:** June 12th and 14th  Political Parties, Campaigns and Elections & Interest Groups  
CoD Ch 6 186-235 & CoD Ch 7  
http://www.thetaskforce.org/ National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
Bedolla and Haynie, “The Obama Coalition and the Future of American Politics” RR

**Week 6:** June 18th, 19th, and 21st  More About the Real State of America and Political Performance  
http://www.theroot.com The Root  
Listen to Great Speeches and Discuss (in class)  
http://www.naleo.org/ National Association of Latino Elected Officials

**Week 7:** June 25th and 26th  Civil Liberties and Civil Rights  
CoD Ch 12 & 13 (read entire chapters)  
Official Business:
The assignment of letter grades is as follows per the UVIC guidelines:

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<td>85-89</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>49-49</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Communication: Place 313A in the subject heading of any email communication sent to me. Treat online communication with the same integrity as office hour consultations.

Digital and Face to Face Communication Expectations: I will treat students with the respect that you deserve as a human being and student in my classroom. Likewise, I expect the same. Please send a complete email, address me, sign your name, and use complete sentences to make sure that your email is clear. If you ask a question that is answered on the syllabus, my reply might be: Dear Student: The answer is on the syllabus. Cheers, Prof. A

In terms of email communication about assignments, you cannot take back a fast, rude email that you sent from your smart phone or other device. I ask that you wait 24 hours after you get graded work returned to you before you email me. Then, before you contact me, re-read the directions, wait the 24 hours, and email me or come see me during office hours. I am seeing a higher incidence of what I refer to as interesting emails that usually require a meeting.

Also, per the UVIC Calendar I am in charge of maintaining a safe, educational learning environment for our class. This means that all students should feel like they can participate in discussion and not feel attacked nor hear threats from other students or the instructor. To this end, I take my teaching and your learning seriously. We will discuss an array of interesting and occasionally controversial topics. Please feel free to chat with me if you have any concerns. Thank you for reading my syllabus.

It is the students’ responsibility to add, drop, or withdraw from the course. If arrangements need to be made regarding the accommodation of a disability, see me ASAP. Participation is necessary in this course. I will occasionally lecture outside of the course materials and students are accountable for this information and their peer’s presentations.

Late work is NOT accepted, however some exceptions can be made with an accident report or fax from funeral home. Medical exceptions might be made, when there is satisfactory evidence of an illness. Medical notes alone are not always sufficient for an extension and the point penalty of 5 points per day might still apply, as all the due dates are in the syllabus—there are no surprises. Manage your time well. See me if you are deathly ill before the assignment is due. Part of your university experience is managing your time.

All written work for this class should use Times New Roman 12 font (or another clear font style) and please use MLA or Chicago citation for sourcing all assignments in this class. I do prefer APSA citation style; however that style is more common in the US.
In the spirit of collegiality, I ask that you come to class on time. Please do not disrupt the class with late arrival; however, I realize that some circumstances will cause you to be late on occasion. Please don’t make it a regular habit. Remember that talking during the professor’s lecture distracts those around you and the professor. Please be polite—we all appreciate it.

Please turn off your cell phones and avoid texting during class, as you really should be paying attention to lecture and it texting is a distraction to those around you. Usage of laptop is in the classroom is permitted but limited to appropriate usage—taking of notes or verifying the syllabus on the Moodle course site. It is inappropriate to surf the web, use Facebook, download music and play video games during class. Extracurricular computing is disturbing to the people sitting around you. Please do not be surprised if I ask you to stop texting or playing computer games. I am easily distracted by side conversations and texting, and so are your classmates sitting near you. If we set aside time for live tweeting or social media use—this is different. Thank you for your understanding.

**Theoretical Book Assessment:**
This 10 page assignment requires you to examine one of the following books and apply the book’s findings to the current political culture, situation or economics (this will vary with each book). This assignment is more open-ended and requires a consultation with the professor. The assignment will incorporate as many as three additional course readings, a scholarly journal article, and demonstrate a close reading of CoD. You will reflect on the accuracy, timeliness, and biases of the book, as well as how the other course materials influence your reading of the book. Is the book merely polemic? What does the book offer the student of politics? What are the theoretical and/or practical implications of the book? What can we learn from the book? What is missing? The assessment is due to be (hard copy), uploaded to Moodle and uploaded onto your WordPress site by noon on Friday, June 28th.

**Book Choices:**
*Trouble with Unity*
*Pundit Mom’s*

**Blogs:** Students will write a series of blog posts related to the course materials. You will reflect and comment on course materials. However, this is not summary, but analysis. *No late blogs will be accepted.*

Think of your blog posts as thoughtful reflections about the issues and news related to CoD and our other course materials (lecture). This is going to require that you keep up with the news or think about the readings and previous courses that you’ve taken. You should not have to do extensive research—instead you’re analyzing the readings and making connections as needed. You need to write three posts that vary 800-1000 words. You will need to email me the URL for your blog and each new post will
require an email to me, as well as uploading the URL onto your e-portfolio. These posts will be due May 17th, 31st, and June 26th by 10am.

**Prof. Hacker’s advice about evaluation:**
http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/a-rubric-for-evaluating-student-blogs/27196

How do you blog? Use a blogging platform like WordPress. I prefer WordPress. You will need to decide if you want all the bells and whistles or not. Go check them out! Please avoid Tumblr, as you will not be able to do as much with it and then will get frustrated, when you can’t format the look of your blog or make your overall e-portfolio work for you.

If you use embedded video and pictures, will I get a higher mark? Not necessarily so. I’m looking for content: analysis. Move beyond merely stating the obvious and demonstrate a close reading (not review) of the course materials. And, if you use other content, you must cite the content in that particular post. Use MLA or Chicago citation style. Cite properly!

Should I use a fancy font? No, use something like Times New Roman 12 point font. Use a font that your professor can clearly read—to this end also make sure that your background is not too busy since the words need to be read. The blog is marked in the same way that a paper would be: based on content. However, you have the added place to embed video, photos, or other images as add ons to your post. Please credit any images, links, videos, photos, or other work that you have included.

**Blog Grading Rubric: The first five points are the most important for this class.**

**Content:** Has the student demonstrated a thorough reading of the articles and information? Did the post make connection to past/current events? Is the blog post overly descriptive (summary) or analytical? Is the blog informative and does it offer analysis?

**Directions:** Did the student follow directions? Was it submitted on time? (Late blogs are not accepted)

**GSP:** Is the blog post coherent and clean in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation? Think of the blog posts as your papers placed in an online format. Thus, you need to cite properly any sources (video, photos, articles, other blog posts, television shows).

**Creativity:** Is there pride of ownership with the blog—how does it look? Were links included, video clips, pictures? Is the blog functional? Can I read the font?

**Organization:** How is the blog organized? Is the blog coherent?

**SEO:** Search Engine Optimization for public blogs. Are tags used well? Are keywords used? Are new posted updated via Twitter other Social Media platforms?
You are not expected to use your real name. Assume a handle that will work for you and one that protects your privacy. Please let me know what your handle is. Our Twitter Group will be #poli313a. You will need to request to join the group. We will use Twitter time for questions and discussion. You can choose to participate during the Twitter time or later that day. You can log into Twitter at www.twitter.com. We are going to test this Web 2.0 platform this term and see how it helps class discussion and questions.

Department of Political Science Policy on Academic Integrity

Please refer to the University of Victoria Calendar for complete information regarding student Academic Integrity. Your enrolment in the course means that you agree to the university policies and the grading policies noted in this syllabus.

Plagiarism: A student commits plagiarism when s/he submits the work of another person as original work, gives inadequate attribution to an author or creator whose work is incorporated into the student’s work, including failing to indicate clearly through accepted practices such as footnotes, internal references, and the crediting of all verbatim passages through indentations of longer passages or the use of quotation marks, the inclusion of another individual’s work, and paraphrases material from a source without sufficient acknowledgment as described. Students who are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism in a particular instance should consult their course instructor. The University reserves the right to use plagiarism detection software to detect plagiarism in essays, term papers, and other assignments.

This course uses the qualitative criteria associated with each letter grade in the University of Victoria Calendar (p. 37) when marking assignments. University Policy on Academic Integrity is strictly enforced in this course as per the University of Victoria Calendar (p. 33-35). I reserve the right to use plagiarism-detection software, like Turnitin, in cases of suspected plagiarism.

Disclaimer: The professor reserves the right to alter the Course Calendar at any time without prior notice. It is the students’ responsibility to attend class and verify announcements.