Bellevue College
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE
Cultural & Ethnic Studies 160/Political Science 160

Item 5638 HYA/5361 HYA

Fall 2012 (9/18-12/07)
Credits: 5

Dr. Tate  
(L-221) M-T, 11:30-12:20
(425) 564-2169, ttate@bellevuecollege.edu

Course Description
This course treats the ways in which political culture (APC) defines and shapes American political institutions, the policy process, political outcomes, and political life in general. Political culture--attitudes and orientations towards the political system and towards the role of the self in it (Almond & Verba)--may shed light on recurring “quarrels” in American politics and on the policy process. Political outcomes in the United States are not random but are structured and underpinned by a core set of values. The course seeks to identify and describe those core values and understand their role in the political structures, social-welfare, the market, and in Americans’ self-perception. Critical questions include the origins, sources, and distinctive elements of American political culture (APC), how the political culture shapes and constrains political decisions and the institutions; the identifiable changes over time as a response to broad societal shifts, and what the future portends in a time of globalization. In this broad inquiry, we necessarily treat concepts such as democracy, liberalism, egalitarianism, individualism, exceptionalism, political community, and political culture itself.

Learning Outcomes
On completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the concept of political culture and interpret its function in political society
2. Identify the core elements of APC and evaluate the effects on American political life.
3. Describe and explain how the political culture shapes the political process and policy outcomes
4. Demonstrate high-order critical-thinking and effective writing.

Essential Reading Resources
The following are the core literature in American political culture, many of which are referenced in the reading guide under each topic. Most of the readings may be found on Library Reserve (R), online, or as Handouts in Canvas.

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1 One credit hour of this course is online via Canvas.


Excellent historical accounts:


COURSE OBLIGATIONS AND POLICIES

How to Succeed in This Course
Submit assignments by the due dates, attend class regularly and on time, exercise due diligence in the assigned weekly readings, and participate fully in the discussions, presentations, and other activities. You will not be penalized for your views, but are expected to support them with evidence from the readings and to respect other perspectives and points of view. Deep reflection is valued in this course. Regular attendance and timely arrival are expected. Your final grade will likely suffer, if you are habitually late or absent.

Policy on Late Assignments
Excepting cases of serious illness or family emergency, late assignments cannot be accepted. If you are unable to sit a prescribed exam or test because of serious illness or family emergency, you should contact the instructor immediately by telephone or call the Division Office (425) 564-2331. Proof, such as a doctor's note, will normally be required in such cases. The final exam (3/20) cannot be re-scheduled.

GRADING CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

Weighted Grade Distribution
Class Work/Participation 20%
Discussions (Canvas) 25%
Review Essay 25%
Final Exam 30%
**The following are the grade allocations and corresponding grade points:**

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>84-86</td>
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<td>72-75</td>
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**ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

All provisions of the Bellevue College regulations concerning cheating and plagiarism apply and are enforced. Please read carefully the Social Science Division Policy statement at the MyBC course site. I encourage you to visit during office hours (see MYBC for schedule)--or to make an appointment for a mutually convenient meeting time.

It is very important to follow the accepted rules of academic writing and citation: If you get an idea from any source (book, journal, magazine, newspaper, or the Internet), you must give the author(s) credit, even if you do not use a direct quotation. Excellent citation and other help can be found in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers* and the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/]. Use either the Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Psychological Association (APA) citation style.

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

If you require accommodation based on a documented disability or have vital emergency medical information to share, please inform the instructor right away. To register as a special-needs student, contact the Disability Resource Center (www.bellevuecollege.edu/dss) in B-132, Tel.: 425.564-2498/TTY Line: 425. 564-4110).

**CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES**

You are highly encouraged to take a Library Media Center (LMC) tour to learn how and where to find books, journal articles, abstracts/collections, A-V materials, newspapers, and to use the other rich resources. The LMC (www.bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/) is also a handy gateway to other Washington libraries and resources. You may also be interested in BC’s Academic Success Center (http://bellevuecollege.edu/academicsuccess/).

Further information about the academic calendar, enrollment, examination schedules, etc. may be found in the Credit-Class Schedule for Winter 2011, available on the BC web page (www.bellevuecollege.edu).

**Deadline to withdraw without a “W” posted to transcript is Oct. 1 by midnight (online) or by 5:00 p.m. (in person).**

**Non-Instructional Day(s):** Oct. 9 & 26; Nov. 12, 22, 23.
Note: The schedule may vary, depending on the progress and needs of the course—as well as on other factors, such as emergency college closures—and we are unlikely to cover all these topics. Lecture/discussions are designed to complement, not replace, the readings for which you are responsible.

PART A: AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Introduction: Political Culture and Political Life

1. The Progressive Theme in American Political Culture
Recommended:³
“The Basic Requisites of Political Culture,” in Devine, Ch. 3: 77-134.

2. The Liberal Idea in American Political Culture
Smith, Rogers M. “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America,” *American Political Science Review* 87, No. 3, September 1993, pp. 549-566. (R)

Recommended:

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² “R” after a reference means that the item has been placed on BC Library Reserve.
³ Recommended readings are not required but are for those who wish to explore the topic further.
Film: “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” (1939)

3. Political Authority
Huntington, Chs. 3-4.

4. Virtue and Corruption
Media Probes: Political Spots—The Thirty Second Candidate
http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from_idea_to_ad/watch2.html

5. Anti-Intellectualism
Hofstadter, Chs. 2, 6, 12

6. A Civic Religion?

7. One Culture or Many?
Recommended:

8: The Paranoid Theme

9: Patriotism
10: Individualism and Community

11: Equality and Inequality

PART B: PATTERNS OF PROTEST AND CRITIQUE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
1. The Socialist Left

2. The Populist Strand

3. The Libertarian Tradition
Film: Berkley in the Sixties

4. The Civil-Rights Movement
Film Excerpts: Martin Luther King, Jr., “When a man has already died,” 1965; “I Have a Dream,” 1963. In Great American Speeches: 80 Years of Political Oratory.

5. Multiculturalism & Cultural Nationalism

6. Communitarianism

7. The Christian Right

8. The Anti-Statist Right; the Statist Right; Political Speech
Huntington, Ch. 8

Summing Up/Conclusions
Whither American Political Culture?

Division of Social Science
Political Science & International Studies Program
Fall 2012