INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Political Science 160/Cultural & Ethnic Studies 160

Item 5361 A (POLS 160) or 5638 (CES 160)

(Five Credits)

Winter 2011 (Jan. 3-March 22), 11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m. (L-221)

Dr. T. M. Tate
(425) 564-2169
ttate@bellevuecollege.edu
Office: D-200C

Office Hours: See MyBC course site

Pre-requisite: None

Course Description
This course treats the ways in which American cultural patterns influence and shape political outcomes and public policy. Study of the political culture may shed light on the nature of the political struggles and on the policy process in general. Political outcomes in the United States are not random but are structured and connected by certain enduring values. We seek answers to questions such as: How do Americans think about government, political institutions, social welfare, and the market? What are the origins and sources of American political culture? How has it changed over time, and what factors account for this change? How is American political culture distinctive, and how is it being reshaped in a time of globalization? In the process of this broad inquiry, we necessarily treat concepts such as democracy, liberty, individualism, American “exceptionalism,” political community, and political culture itself.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, you should be able to:
• Explain the concept of political culture and its relevance to contemporary political society.

1 One credit hour of this course is online via MyBC.
• Identify the core values in American political culture and understand their influences on political life.
• Demonstrate how the political culture influences and shapes American politics and the policy process.
• Show improved critical-thinking, research and writing skills.

Text and Essential Resources:
Please purchase at the BC Bookstore:


The following are the core literature in American political culture used in this course and our references throughout. You should find most on reserve at the BC Library (inquire at the front desk):


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*

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Work</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions (MyBC)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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*The following are the grade allocations and corresponding grade points:*

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</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).

**NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS: Jan 16, Jan. 31, Feb. 20, and March 1**

**LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT A “W” POSTED TO YOUR TRANSCRIPT IS Jan. 17 BY 5:00 P.M. IN PERSON OR BY MIDNIGHT ON-LINE.**

**COURSE TOPICS, AGENDA, AND READING GUIDE**

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. The lectures are designed to complement, not replace, the readings for which you are responsible.

**A: IN SEARCH OF AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE**

**Introduction: Political Culture and Political Life**

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2 “R” after a reference means that the item has been placed on BC Library Reserve.
**Topic 1: The Progressive Theme in American Political Culture**


Recommended:


“The Basic Requisites of Political Culture,” in Devine, Ch. 3: 77-134.

**Topic 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:


Film: “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” (1939)

**Topic 3: Political Authority**

Huntington, Chs. 3-4.

**Topic 4: Virtue and Corruption**

Media Probes: Political Spots—The Thirty Second Candidate

[http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from_idea_to_ad/watch2.html](http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from_idea_to_ad/watch2.html)

**Topic 5: Anti-Intellectualism**

Hofstadter, Chs. 2, 6, 12

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3 Recommended readings are not required but are for those who wish to explore the topic further.
Topic 6: A Civic Religion?

Topic 7: One Culture or Many?

Topic 8: The Paranoid Theme

Topic 9: Patriotism

Topic 10: Individualism and Community

Topic 11: Equality and Inequality
B: PATTERNS OF PROTEST AND CRITIQUE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

1. **The Socialist Left**

2. **The Populist Strand**
   **Audio Excerpt:** William Jennings Bryan, “Cross of Gold” speech, 1896 (recorded circa 1920s).

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
Globalization and American Political Culture

*Division of Social Science*
*Political Science & International Studies Program*
*Winter 2012*