**Politics and Political Analysis - Political Science 120 – Fall 2012**

Meeting Time: M and W 2:00 – 3:15  
Place: Room 581  
Instructor: Dr. Todd Myers   
Telephone Number: 644-7848

Office: 508B  
E-mail Address: [todd.myers@gcccd.edu](mailto:todd.myers@gcccd.edu); myerst@mail.sdsu.edu  
Times Available: Office hours are R 2:00 – 4:30 and W 12:30 – 2:00 and 3:30 -4:30. Other times can be arranged as appropriate. Please contact me 24 hours in advance so I can make certain no conflicts exist with your desired meeting time.

**Text:**

Douglas A. Van Belle & Kenneth M. Mash *A Novel Approach to Politics: Introducing Political Science Through Books, Movies, and Popular Culture*, 2nd edition.

Other readings or films may be assigned during class and you will be held accountable for these assignments

**Introduction**  
Politics is both an art and a science. Over the course of the next several weeks I hope to give you an appreciation of politics as it is lived and how political scientists try to make sense of it. This course will also introduce you to three sub disciplines of political science as it is taught in the United States including political theory, comparative government, and international relations.

**Week 1 - August 20 – August 24**

*A Novel Approach to Politics* (ANAP)– “Preface” and “Introduction” and “Appendix B: A Strategic Approach to Writing for the Classroom” and ANAP Chapter 1 “Introducing the Ancient Debate”

M 20

W 22

**Week 2 – August 27 – August 31**

ANAP Chapter 1 “Introducing the Ancient Debate” and “Appendix B: A Strategic Approach to Writing for the Classroom” and ANAP Chapter 15 “The Latest and Bestest Chapter”

M 27

W 29

**Week 3 – September 3 – September 7**

ANAP Chapter 2 “Why Government?”

M 3 **Labor Day**

W 5

**Week 4 – September 10 – September 14**

ANAP Chapter 2 “Why Government?” and Chapter 3 “Governing Society”

M 10

W 12

**Week 5 – September 17 – September 21**

ANAP Chapter 3 “Governing Society”

M 17

W 19 **Test 1 – Chapters 1, 2, and 3 – Thesis Statement Due as part of your test.**

**Week 6 – September 24 – September 28**

ANAP Chapter 4 “Government’s Role in the Economy”

M 24

W 26

**Week 7 – October 1 – October 5**

ANAP Chapter 4 “Government’s Role in the Economy” and ANAP Chapter 5 “Structures and Institutions”

M 1

W 3

**Week 8 – October 8 – October 12**

ANAP Chapter 5 “Structures and Institutions” and ANAP Chapter 6 “The Executive (in Bad Spanish)”

M 8

W 10

**Week 9 – October 15 – October 19**

ANAP Chapter 6 “The Executive (in Bad Spanish)” and ANAP Chapter 7 “The Confederacy of Dunces”

M 15

W 17

**Week 10 – October 22 – October 26**

ANAP Chapter 7 “The Confederacy of Dunces” and ANAP Chapter 8 “Brazilian Bureaucracy”

M 22

W 24

**Week 11 – October 29 – November 2**

**Political Economy Week TBA**

**Week 12 – November 5 – November 9**

ANAP Chapter 8 “Brazilian Bureaucracy”

M 5

W 7 **Test 2 Chapter 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 Outline and annotated Bibliography due as part of your test.**

**Week 13 – November 12 – November 16**

ANAP Chapter 9 “Courts and Law”

M 12 **Veterans Day**

W 14

**Week 14 – November 19 – November 23**

ANAP Chapter 10 “Not Quite Right, but Still Good”

M 19

W 21

**Week 15 – November 26 – November 30**

ANAP Chapter 11 “Media, Politics, and Government” and ANAP Chapter 14 “Political Culture”

M 26

W 28

**Week 16 – December 3 – December 7**

ANAP Chapter 12 “International Relations”

M 3

W 5

**Week 17 – December 10 – December 14**

M 10

W 13 **Final Exam and Papers Dues 1:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course students will:

1. Identify why governments are created and compare and contrast how power and freedom are balanced in various political systems.
2. Analyze the strengths and shortcomings of political institutions at the domestic and international levels
3. Utilize the basic tools of political science to analyze contemporary political situations
4. Distinguish between different ideologies and explain the historical factors underpinning their development.

**Assessments and Grading Policies**

**Attendance and Participation 10%**

You are expected to attend lectures on a regular basis and attendance will be taken. I reserve the right to drop you from the course if you miss more than three classes. You should read the materials assigned for each week and have questions about those materials for class discussion. **This class lives or dies on the basis of your participation. The best way to earn a strong participation grade is to read or watch political news from reputable sources.** You may also be expected to engage in various group activities. . Give thoughtful responses to the questions the instructor asks you. Do not use lap tops, e-messaging devices or any other technology devices that will hinder you from being present in the class. The classroom is a special space where we can come together and learn about important things and you should respect that space. Remember to be polite to both your instructor and fellow classmates since failure to be so will negatively impact your participation grade. . If you violate these basic principles, I will ask you to leave the classroom and you will be counted absent for that day. If you continue to be rude and disruptive during the course, you will be suspended for two days for each such incident.

**Political Economy Week 10%**

You will be expected to attend two political economy week events and write a two page reaction paper that identifies the argument of the speaker or speakers at the events you choose to attend and offers your thoughtful response to their arguments. Approaching these papers from a theoretical perspective is essential to receiving full credit for this exercise.

**Research Paper 20%**

You will be expected to write a paper for this course dealing with a biographical analysis of a current political leader, a country case study presenting the pertinent political issues presently facing that country, or an analysis of a critical issue in the field of political science. Your paper should be between 5-8 pages in length and should cite at least seven quality references in an annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography is a bibliography that identifies a work and offers 2-3 sentences describing the content of the reference. The bibliography does not count toward your 5-8 page target for the length of your analytical essay. Be certain to meet the dates listed in the syllabus for completing a thesis, an outline, an annotated bibliography, and a rough draft. The final draft of your paper will be due with the final exam.

**Three Tests 60%**

There will be three tests administered over the course of the semester. Each test will be worth 20% of your grade. The tests may be multiple choice, true false, brief impromptu responses to questions posed by the instructor or essay type questions. The tests may or may not be cumulative. I will let you know before each exam.

Plagiarism will result in no credit for the plagiarized assignment.   
  
The following table contains the grading scale on which you will be evaluated:   
  
Grading Scale:   
A =  +90, B = +80, C = +65, D = 60, F = Below 60  
  
Grade consequences for less than completed performance of course requirements:   
  
1. Written assignments will be lowered a letter grade if turned in late.   
2. In-class presentations, tests, and individual presentations cannot be made up if missed.   
  
The instructor reserves the right to use his discretion in individual circumstances that may not be covered by this syllabus or if the application of the rules of the syllabus would result in a miscarriage of justice. . If you have any problems with the class or the instructor please come to talk to me about these issues during office hours so that we can work the issues out.  I am a reasonable person and will try to address your concerns in a manner that will be mutually satisfactory. If you are not satisfied with the resolution we arrive at, you should contact my Chairman, Brian Jennings at 644-7514.

**For Students with Special Needs**

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact disabled student services & programs (DSP&S) early in the semester so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented as soon as possible.  Students may contact DSP&S in person in room 110 or by phone at (619) 644-7112 or (619) 644-7119 (tyy for deaf).

**Supervised Tutoring Referral**

Students are referred to enroll in the following supervised tutoring courses if the service indicated will assist them in achieving or reinforcing the learning objectives of this course:

IDS 198, Supervised Tutoring to receive tutoring in general computer applications in the Tech Mall;

English 198W, Supervised Tutoring for assistance in the English Writing Center (Room 70-119); and/or

IDS 198T, Supervised Tutoring to receive one-on-one tutoring in academic subjects in the Tutoring Center (Room 70-229, 644-7387)

To add any of these courses, students may obtain Add Codes at the Information/Registration Desk in the Tech Mall.

All Supervised Tutoring courses are non-credit/non-fee. However, when a student registers for a supervised tutoring course, and has no other classes, the student will be charged the usual health fee.

**About the Instructor**

My professional background includes a stint in West Africa as an agricultural teacher trainer, work as a sales rep for Prentice Hall Publishing, internships in a variety of agencies for the State of Louisiana, curriculum development and teaching for the Institute of Reading Development, and educational and national security consulting for a variety of federal government agencies.  I have been teaching at Grossmont for the past eight years and joined the faculty as a full time member in the Fall of 2005.

I have been a student for most of my life and have a Bachelor's of Arts from Eureka College in Illinois, a Master in Public Administration from Louisiana State University, and a Ph.D. in political science from that same university.  I have studied in Germany where I was awarded a Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst Stipendiat (The German government's version of the Fulbright Grant) to study political science, economics, and philosophy. I also have studied in Brazil as a Ronald W. Reagan Fellow. Most recently, I have received awards from the NEH to study Chinese culture, the Freeman Foundation to study Japanese culture, and the Lehrman Institute and the James Madison Institute at Princeton University to study American statesmanship. I am deeply interested in the relationship between politics and the stories peoples tell about themselves. I have been published in the *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, the *Encyclopedia of Cultural Sociology*, the *Encyclopedia of U.S. Latin American Relations*, and *Education About Asia*. My present research projects include developing a student-centered think tank focusing on political, cultural, and economic reforms in Asia, writing about American foreign policy and wars in Asia, and writing about the use of film as a medium expressing social critique and order.

In my free time (Is there such a thing?), I read for pleasure (I like to read literature written by Nobel laureates, history, philosophy and economic theory), read, watch, and listen to the news (I like NPR and read the New York Times), play strategy games, spend time with my wife and my two sons, hike, play Frisbee, and appreciate nature.