

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE
COURSE SYLLABUS: RST 255
AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND RELIGION
Fall 2014
PRELIMINARY EDITION: SUBJECT TO CHANGES

COURSE SECTION: 13594 in Jerome Richfield 202, Tues & Thu 2:00-3:15pm

PROFESSOR: R. C. Rodman, PhD

FACULTY OFFICE: Santa Susanna 419

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OFFICE HRS & PHONE: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15-1:45pm; 818-677-6878 ONLY during those times

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION and SLOs

Course Description: RS 255 introduces students to The U.S. and California Constitutions; to the historical, political, religious, and cultural debates and issues that the brought such documents into being, and the ways in which the Constitutions are "lived," changed, affected and affect citizens of this country and of California. The course introduces students to the complex task of forming a civil society by examining the moral ideals informing American politics. Students learn about United States history; the Constitution of the United States; and the principles of state and local government as established in California. This course satisfies the Title V United States

Constitution requirement and the California State and Local Government requirement. This course satisfies the Title V United States Constitution requirement and the California State and Local Government requirement.

Title V: United States Constitution and Government and California State and Local Government Evaluation Criteria:

- US-2 Criterion 1 Course content teaches the political philosophies of the framers of the Constitution.
- US-2 Criterion 2 Course content teaches the operation of United States political process and institutions under the US Constitution.
- US-2 Criterion 3 Course content teaches the rights and obligations of individual citizens in the political system established under the US Constitution.
- US-3 Criterion 1 Course content addresses the Constitution of the State of California.
- US-3 Criterion 2 Course content addresses the nature and processes of California state and local government.
- US-3 Criterion 3 Course content addresses the relationships between the US government and California's state and local governments.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- understand the development of United States and California political ideals, institutions, and processes;
- understand citizens' rights and obligations established by the United States and California constitutions;
- understand the structures and processes of federal, California, and local governments;
- understand federal and state constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and the history of legislative and judicial efforts to apply the principle of religious freedom;
- understand the role of religion in public life in the United States, California, and local municipalities, including its role in both political debate and public and private education;
- describe and analyze the histories of the United States and California over significant time periods;
- explain the principles and major provisions of the Constitutions of the United States and California;
- compare United States and California political institutions and practices;
- describe and examine the histories and development of political institutions as related to diverse

peoples in the United States and California

II. TEXTBOOKS AND REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Corbett and Corbett, Politics and Religion in the United States (New York, Garland, 1999). ISBN 0815331436
 - Primary texts and readings posted on Moodle
- You must have these materials with you in class.

III. COURSE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Familiarity with Moodle: Technological Information: This class will employ Moodle for both student assignments and to provide students with access assigned materials. It is your responsibility to learn how to use Moodle. For

information and instructions about Moodle, go to: <http://www.csun.edu/it/studentmoodle-help/>

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is mandatory. I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Three or more consecutive absences AND/OR seven absences over the semester will result in your being dropped from the course. The more absences you have, the lower your grade.

- Showing up isn't enough. You must be fully prepared for each class. All assignments must be read prior to the class they are assigned, and all readings must be brought to class.
- You must fully participate in the class by asking/answering questions, fully participating in discussions, and fully engaging in any other activity of the class.
- Please make sure you attend to your personal needs before or after the class. You may not leave during class. No cell phones, texting, or Internet use for anything other than class work.

Written Work: All papers must meet basic scholarly standards appropriate for university level work. Not only does this include proper grammar, punctuation, and syntax, but also serious reflection on your topic. There are many sources to help you with your writing assignments. The most important is the Writing Program at CSUN's Learning Resource Center, Room 408, Bayramian Hall, 818-677-2033 or go to: <http://www.csun.edu/lrc/writing.html>.

Deadlines: Because due dates are stated at the outset, all papers/assignments must be turned in or posted on Moodle on the date listed. No late work will be accepted. Failure to show up on the day of presentations will result in forfeiting your ability to present and all the points that go with it.

Plagiarism/Cheating: Any evidence of plagiarism will result in a failing grade, certainly for the item plagiarized, but also for the course. Plagiarism is one form of cheating, but not the only one. Other examples include "borrowing" stealing, buying or otherwise procuring papers and exams, or having someone else take an exam or write an essay for which you take credit. All instances of cheating will result no credit for the assignment and follow up with the Dean's office.

Special Accommodations: If you have a documented learning disability and/or a physical disability and need special accommodations in order to complete course requirements, please make sure the instructor is informed.

Contact with the Professor: My office hours are posted above. I look forward to working with each of you in class and on an individual basis. Therefore, I urge you to take advantage of my office hours. I am happy to discuss any aspect of this course with you, and help you with the assignments. I especially urge you to see me if you are confused about the course or an assignment. Really successful students ask questions! Please contact me by email, in class, or during office hours with your questions, comments, or requests. No phone calls please.

OUR CLASS CONTRACT

What I Expect From You	What You Can Expect From Me
You will treat everyone in class, including the professor, with respect and courtesy due all human beings.	I will treat you with the respect and courtesy due all human beings.

You will attend every class, give your full attention to the material, and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner.	I will attend every class, give my full attention to the material and conduct myself in an appropriate manner.
You will agree to do the work outlined in the syllabus on time.	I will return your work in a timely fashion.
You can ask for help.	I will assist you in any way I can, and make myself available to you via office hours. You can expect a response to email within 24 hours except in rare cases.
You will acknowledge that your perception of effort, by itself, is not enough to justify a distinguished grade.	I will not discriminate against you on the basis of your identity or your well-informed viewpoints.
You will prepare carefully for every class.	I will prepare carefully for every class.
You will not plagiarize, cheat, copy, or steal the work of others.	I will pursue the maximum punishment for plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity.
You will not make excuses for your failure to do what you ought; you will accept the consequences – good and bad – of your actions.	I will keep careful records of your attendance, performance, and progress.

IV. ASSESSMENT

Grading: Plus-Minus System will be used

- Class participation and attendance: 10%
- Exams: 60%
- Class Presentation & Essay: 30%

Letter Grade Allocation

- 95-100 A
- 90-94 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 83-86 B
- 80-82 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 73-76 C
- 70-72 C-
- 60-69 D

VI. SCHEDULE

- **Week of 9/23: Intro to the course, interviews**
- **Week of 9/2: Tuesday: Read Corbett, Intro;**
Thursday: Primary texts Intro-Your people live only on Cod
- **Week of 9/9: Tuesday: Read Corbett, 27-40; Primary texts, Winthrop-Pope**
Thursday: Corbett, 41-43; Primary texts: First Great Awakening-Sacred Expedition
- **Week of 9/16: Tuesday, Read Corbett 44-49; Primary texts Locke-Slavery**
Thursday; Read Corbett, 51-57; Primary texts Mayhew, Serra, etc.
- **Week of 9/23-25: Tuesday, Corbett 51-59, Wheatley-Declaration of Independence**
Thursday, Exam 1
- **Week of 9/30-10/2: Tuesday, , Corbett 60-75; Primary texts, Virginia Statute, and Memorial**
Thursday, Corbett 76-85; Primary texts, Constitution and Bill of Rights
- **Week of 10/7-10/9: Tuesday, Read Miles, Pain of Trail of Tears; Primary texts, Jefferson and Jackson**

- Thursday, Corbett 87-91; Primary texts, Beecher-O'Sullivan*
 - *Week of 10/14-10/16: Tuesday, Corbett, 92-96; Primary texts Underground Railroad-Frederick Douglass*
 - Thursday, Primary texts As Goes the Church-In God We Trust*
 - *Week of 10/21-23 Tuesday, Exam 2*
 - Thursday, Corbett, 96-112; Primary texts, Alcohol, Women and other Dangerous Things*
 - *Week of 10/28-10/30 Tuesday, Corbett, 113-125; Primary texts Civil Religion-Catholic President*
 - Thursday, Corbett, 126-130, Primary texts, King's Letter from Birmingham*
 - *Week of 11/4-6 Tuesday, Electoral College; Readings Assigned on Moodle*
 - Thursday, Corbett, 130-145*
 - *Week of 11/11-13: NO CLASS ON TUESDAY, VETERANS DAY*
 - Thursday, Exam 3*
 - *Week of 11/18-20 Tuesday, Corbett 151-175; Primary texts, Non-Establishment Cases*
 - Thursday, Corbett, 179-214, Primary texts, Free Exercises Cases*
 - *Week of 11/25-11-27 Tuesday, Group Projects*
 - Thursday: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING*
 - *Week of 12/2-4: Tuesday, group work day*
 - Thursday, Presentations (non-) Establishment*
 - *Tuesday 12/9, Free Exercise Presentations, LAST DAY of classes*
- FINAL EXAM 12/11 3-5pm*