Honolulu Community College
General Education – DIVERSIFICATION DESIGNATION
Certification and Recertification
Application Form
Spring 2012

APPLICANT: Larry Meacham

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COURSE ALPHA and NUMBER:  Pols 130

COURSE TITLE:  Introduction to American Politics

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SECTIONS:
Fall: 2
Spring: 2

APPLICATION IS FOR:
☐ New Course  ☐ Modified Course  X Existing Course  ☐ Re-designation

X Certification  ☐ Re-Certification. Date of last certification:

DIVERSIFICATION AREA DESIGNATION SOUGHT:
☐ DA (Arts)  ☐ DP (Physical Sciences)
☐ DB (Biological Sciences)  X DS (Social Sciences)
☐ DH (Humanities)  ☐ DY (Laboratory)
☐ DL (Literature and Language)

What percentage of the CONTENT of this course focuses on this diversification area?  75%

What percentage of CLASS MEETINGS focuses on this diversification area?  75%
1. **Hallmarks and SLOs.** Please explain how course-specific SLOs align with the diversification area’s hallmarks.

**DS.1 Uses the terminology of theories, structures, or processes of the social or philosophical sciences.**

The SLOs use the terminology of theories (e.g., Elite vs. Populist), structures (e.g., the Presidency, Congress, Supreme Court) and processes (e.g., elections).

**DS.2 Involves concepts, models, practices, or issues of concern in the study of these theories, structures, or processes.**

The SLOs use concepts (e.g., democracy), models (e.g. special interest iron triangles), practices (e.g., judicial confirmations) and issues of concern (e.g., civil rights).

**DS.3 Demonstrates inquiry that is guided by quantitative and/or qualitative methods employed in the scientific study of the structures or processes of these sciences.**

The SLOs use qualitative analysis (e.g., Democrats vs. Republicans) and quantitative analysis (e.g., taxes and budgets) to study the structures and processes of American politics.

**Pols 130 SLOs**

By the end of the course, you will be able to explain:
- U.S. ideals and the Constitution;
- protections and limits of civil liberties;
- how elections are won;
- the workings and structure of the media;
- how parties and special interests work;
- how the Congress, Presidency and Supreme Court work;
- civil rights history and current issues;
- patterns of U.S. taxes, spending and wealth;
- theories and practice of foreign policy.

You will also be able to debate whether:
- the U.S. political system has succeeded;
- the Patriot Act abridges freedom;
- the Electoral College should be abolished;
- the media have a liberal bias;
- we should adopt publicly funded elections;
- Congress should have term limits;
- wiretaps without warrants are justified;
- affirmative action advances racial equality;
- tax cuts are good for America;
- America must exercise world leadership.
2. **Assessment strategies.** Explain assessment strategies you have used (or plan to use) to measure the degree to which students exit the course with the course-specific SLOs. If there are multiple sections of the course taught by different instructors, please discuss how assessment is (or will be) carried out across instructors.

Students are given short-answer practice quizzes after each unit, short answer quizzes in the 5th and 10th week, and a comprehensive final exam of short answer questions. All the SLOs are measured with these tools.

At the end of the course, students take a knowledge survey, which has been shown to correlate at 0.8 with actual learning. Weaknesses in any part of either of the knowledge inventory or final exams results in restructuring and/or lengthening of the units dealing with those particular subject areas and more emphasis on addressing those subjects in the practice quizzes.

In addition, students must write a 5-page paper, typically addressing both sides of an issue such as free trade, arms treaties, etc.

There is only one instructor teaching this subject at HCC

3. **Assessment of assessment.** How have you used (or plan to use) the assessment findings to modify or improve this course? If there are multiple sections of the course taught by different instructors, please discuss how review of assessment results is (or will be) carried out across instructors.

Each semester, weaknesses in any part of either of the knowledge inventory or final exams results in restructuring and/or lengthening of the units dealing with those particular subject areas and more emphasis on addressing those subjects in the practice quizzes.
DIVERSIFICATION BOARD DECISION:

☑ Approved
Re-Certification Due: 02/17

☐ Not approved
If not approved, reasons for disapproval:


Diversification Board Chair Signature: Jennifer King
Date: 4/24/17
Introduction: We think we already know about American politics. But it is actually quite different from what we think. For instance, in the 2000 election many people found out for the first time that the presidential election is actually determined by the votes of 50 states in the Electoral College. When you vote in November, you are actually voting for Democrats or Republican electors. In December, these electors choose the president. When the U.S. Supreme Court stopped the recount and Bush ‘won’ by 527 votes out of 6 million, he won all of Florida’s 25 electoral votes and the election. In the 2008 election, Barack Obama won about 53% of the popular vote but about 68% of the Electoral College, because he won majorities, and thus all the electoral votes, in 28 states. See? You have already learned something new.

Course Description: An introduction to American politics, including the Constitution, federalism, civil rights, the media, political participation, parties, elections, special interests, Congress, the Presidency, the bureaucracy, the courts, civil rights, the economy and foreign policy. Prerequisite: Placement in ENG 22/60 or ESL 23.

Student Learning Outcomes/Course Objectives:
By the end of the course, you will be able to describe:
- U.S. ideals and the Constitution;
- protections and limits of civil liberties;
- how elections are won;
- the workings and structure of the media;
- how parties and special interests work;
- how the Congress, Presidency and Supreme Court work;
- civil rights history and current issues;
- patterns of U.S. taxes, spending and wealth;
- theories and practice of foreign policy.

You will also be able to outline arguments on each side of the issues of whether or not:
- the U.S. political system has succeeded;
- the Patriot Act abridges freedom;
- the Electoral College should be abolished;
- the media have a liberal bias;
- we should adopt publicly funded elections;
- Congress should have term limits;
- wiretaps without warrants are justified;
- affirmative action advances racial equality;
- tax cuts are good for America;
- America must exercise world leadership.

Method of Instruction/Class Requirements:
- Come to class and keep up with the news (e.g. at nytimes.com, washingtonpost.com, cnn.com, etc).
- Take the quizzes at any community college learning center. Quizzes will be short-answer (Example: "Briefly outline the 3 ways the Constitution partitions power.") and will be preceded by a full review.
- Write a clear, well-organized paper, due 5/2, with 5 pages of double-spaced text, plus references and a bibliography, on a political topic of your choice, upon approval of the instructor. It can be on the adult career of a U.S. politician, a major political event such as an election or protest, expanded treatment of one of the issues, etc. You should give both sides of the topic you choose. Note: If you email your paper, paste it into the body of the email. DO NOT USE AN ATTACHMENT.
- Grades: Class participation 15%. Quiz 1 & 2 - 20% each, Final 25%, Paper 20%.
A=85%, B= 75%, C =65%, D=55%, F=45%. Nothing accepted over three weeks late.
Office hours: MW 1-2 PM, Bldg 7 RM 617. Telephone: 845-9161. email: meacham@hawaii.edu

Tentative Schedule: "M&F" = the McKenna & Feingold textbook.

Unit 1 - American Ideals and the Constitution (1/9-1/22) American ideals. The Articles of Confederation. Division of Powers, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances. The U.S. a republic. Compromises, amendments and opposition to the Constitution. Increased democracy since 1789. READ: M&F Unit 1 - Should Americans believe in a unique American mission?

Free press, right to assemble, rights of the accused, privacy, gun control. READ: M&F Issue 20 - Is warrantless wiretapping in some cases justified to protect national security?

Unit 3 - Public Opinion, the Media, Political Participation (1/30-2/5) Political polls. Media: deciding what's news, framing agendas, distorting reality, e.g. is crime rising? Concentrated ownership. Analyzing movies and TV programs. Participation: Who votes? How to be politically effective. READ: posted issue (Resources B06a) - Does the media have a liberal bias?

Unit 4 - Parties and Elections (2/6-2/12) Parties: functions, differences, re-alignments, third parties. Elections: Winning elections with money, organization, and strategy. Analyzing recent campaigns. READ: posted issue (Resources B07A) - Should the Electoral College be abolished?


Unit 7 - The President and the Bureaucracy (3/5-3/11) Becoming President. Presidential roles. Governance 'games'. The NSC and OMB. Presidential character. The president and the bureaucracy. The Bureaucracy - making policy, carrying out deregulation and privatization. READ: M&F Issue 4 - Does the President have unilateral war powers?

Unit 8 - The Courts (3/12-3/18) Politics in the courts. The Supreme Court at work. Stare Decisis, Judicial Activism, Strict Constructionism. READ: M&F Issue 5 - Should the Courts seek the original meaning of the Constitution?


Paper due Wednesday 5/2. Final Review. Final Quiz Wednesday 5/9, 1-3:45 PM.

Note: If you email your paper, paste it into the body of the email. DO NOT USE AN ATTACHMENT.

This syllabus conforms to the Honolulu Community College syllabus guideline adopted July 26, 1999. http://www.honolulu.hawaii.edu/Intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachit/syllab-1.htm