

San José State University
College of Social Science
Interdisciplinary Social Science and Sociology Department
AAS 33A-02, Asian Americans and U.S. History and Political Institutions
Spring Semester, 2025

Instructor Office	Dr. Soo Choi 238B DMH
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Classroom and Class Hours Office Hours	CLK 234 3:00 -4:15 pm M & W 3:00-4:15 pm & Zoom meeting

GE/American Institutions Category: D2 Social Sciences and US 1 American Institutions

Course Description

This course will examine the development of the U.S. from before the era of European expansion through the Civil War. Emphasis will be given to the historical and political factors that shaped the culture, society and institutions of the nation. This approach will focus on the roles played by workers, immigrants, and people of color generally and Asian Americans in particular. Since Asian immigrants did not arrive in large numbers until the 1850s, AAS 33A will focus on the historical experiences of Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and women. Such an examination of minority groups in the United States will help us understand the development of this country as a diverse, multicultural nation.

This course will also examine the development of national political ideologies, institutions, and practices. Topics will include the nature of government, the evolution of the Constitution, federalism, civil liberties and civil rights, political parties and interest groups and the ways in which politics and public policy have been interwoven with struggles over the issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and class.

While team taught, your section instructor will be responsible for specific assignments and grading.

Texts

Greenberg, Edward S., and Benjamin I. Page, *The Struggle for Democracy*, 11th Edition, Pearson Publishers, 2014 ISBN-13: 978-0133915273

ISBN-10: 0133915271

Jones, Jacqueline, et. al., *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*, 4th Edition, Pearson Publishers, 2014 (Combined 33A and 33B edition) ISBN-13: 978-0205901302

ISBN-10: 0205901301

These textbooks are available for purchase at Spartan Bookstore and other outlets.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services are listed on Syllabus Information web page. (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>) hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

As stated above, this course meets the lower division General Education (GE) Learning Outcomes in Social Science (Area D) and American Institutions (US1, US2 & US3). Both 33A and 33B are required in order to receive American Institutions credit.

Area D Social Science. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate understanding of the ways in which social institutions, culture, and environment shape and are shaped by the behavior of individuals, both past and present; [Assessed in quizzes, essays 1 & 2]
2. compare and contrast the dynamics of two or more social groups or social systems in a variety of historical and/or cultural contexts [Assessed in midterm and final exam]
3. place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts; [Assessed in quizzes and final]
4. draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues. [Assessed in quizzes, essays 1 & 2]

US1 American Institutions – U.S. History

As students explore the historical development of the United States, they should be able to evaluate and synthesize different positions, support analysis with relevant evidence, and create evidence-based interpretations of:

1. major subtopics in United States history, such as Native Americans and their interactions with the U.S. government; slavery and its legacies; the foundational ideals of the American Republic; colonization and territorial expansion; economic development; political reform and reaction; immigration to the United States and the experiences of immigrants; foreign relations; wars and conflicts; movements including religious, labor, civil rights, feminist, and environmental. [Assessed in midterm and final exam]
2. multiple perspectives related to, for example, diverse cultures, communities, and environments; age, gender, and sexuality; the history and experience of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; the experiences of people with disabilities; and patterns of race and class relations. [Assessed in essays 1 & 2]

US2 American Institutions – U.S. Constitution

As students explore the meaning and content of the democratic process as it has evolved in the United States, at a minimum they should be able to evaluate:

1. the foundations of the political system, including the evolution of the U.S. Constitution, political culture, separation of powers, federalism, and relations among various levels of government. Students will also analyze the evolving institutions of government, including a study of the powers of the President, Congress, and the Judiciary as well as the bureaucracy; [Assessed in midterm and final exam]
2. the links between the people and the political system of the United States, including voting and other forms of participation, as well as other content areas such as tribal governments, political parties, interest/lobbying groups, and public opinion and socialization. Students should also analyze the rights and obligations of citizens, which may include the tension between various freedoms of expression, including issues related to censorship and freedom of speech, due process, and the maintenance of order; [Assessed in group presentations and final exam]
3. connections to issues of justice/injustice, including the efforts to end racial, gender, and other forms of discriminatory practices in both the public and private sectors. [Assessed in Essays 1 & 2]

US2 American Institutions – California Government

As students explore the operations of government at the state level, they should be able to evaluate:

1. the foundations of the California political system, the similarities and differences between the California and U.S. Constitutions, and the relationship between state and local government in California; [Assessed in midterm and final exam]
2. the evolving relationships of state and local government with the federal government, such as the relationship with tribal governments; the generation and resolution of conflicts; the establishment of cooperative processes under the constitutions of both the state and nation; and the political processes involved. [Assessed in Essays 1 & 2]

Course Requirements and Assignments

All detailed rubrics of all test and essay grading, uploaded in “files” in canvas.

Class Participations and Weekly quizzes (20%)

Two Midterm Exams (30%)

These two exams will be based on class lectures, activities, and readings. This exam will cover the assigned chapters in the textbooks, Canvas activities, and lectures for five-six weeks. It will be composed of two essays, 20 multiple choice questions, and 20 true/false questions.

Two Essays (30%) The rubric and essay prompts, uploaded in “files” in canvas

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will cover the assigned chapters in the textbooks, Canvas activities, and lectures for the entire semester. It will be composed of four essays, 30 multiple choice, and 40 true/false questions.

Grading Scale

95-100%: A 90-94%: A- 86-89: B+ 83-85%: B 80-82%: B- 76-79: C+ 73-75%: C 70-72%: C- 66-69%: D+ 63-65%: D 60-62%: D- 0-59%: F

Course Schedule

1st Week

North American Founders, North America to 1590, Native American Settlements and Civilizations

Reading: Jones Chapter 1

2nd Week

European Footholds in North America, 1600-1660, Various Europeans' colonization of North America

Reading: Jones Chapter 2

3rd Week

European Control of North America, 1660-1715, The beginning of European settlers' firm control of Native Americans

Reading: Jones, Chapter 3

4th Week

African Enslavement: The Terrible Transformation, 1565-1770, The beginning of plantation economy and the introduction of enslaved Africans in North America

Reading: Jones, Chapter 4

5th Week

An American Babel: 1713-1763, Various Europeans' conflicts over the territory of North America, The conflict with France and England

Readings: Jones, Chapter 5

Midterm I

6th Week

Limits of Imperial Control, 1763-1775, Intolerable British control of Americans and Americans' attempt to seek for independence

Readings: Jones, Chapter 6

First Essay Due

7th Week

Revolutionaries at War, 1775-1783, The War between American colonists and Britain, Internal division among American colonists, American colonists' strategies for victory

Readings: Jones, Chapter 7

8th Week

Political Science Perspectives, Political ideologies and their foundations, The genealogy of American political system and institutions

Readings: Greenberg and Page, Forward, Chapter 1

9th Week

New Beginnings: The Creation of the United States in the 1780s and the making of U.S. Constitution

Reading: Jones, Chapter 8

10th Week

Political Philosophies and Agenda, Aristotle & Plato's notion of government, Federalists v. Anti-Federalists

Reading: Greenberg and Page, Ch. 2 and 3

Revolutionary Legacies 1789-1803

Reading: Jones, Chapter 9

11th Week

History and Objectivity: Defending and Expanding the nation 1803-1818, The War of 1812, Effort to gain true sovereignty from Britain

Reading: Jones, Chapter 10

12th Week

Society and Politics in the "Age of Common Man", 1819-1832, Andrew Jackson Presidency, More suffrage right for lower classes

Reading Jones, Chapter 11

Midterm II

13th Week

Congress, Functions, Structure, Roles, Limitation, Balance of Power among Three Branches of Power

Reading: Greenberg and Page, Chapter 11

The Presidency, Functions, Organization, Executive Order, Impeachment, Appointments of federal offices

Reading: Greenberg and Page, Chapter 12

Federal Bureaucracy and the Courts, Functions, Organization, Limitation

Reading: Greenberg and Page, Chapter 13 and 14

Second Essay Due

14th Week

Western Expansion, Asia, the Pacific and early Chinese Immigration, Push and Pull factors of Chinese immigration to Hawaii and the West Coast

Reading: Jones, Chapter 12

15th Week

Origins of the Civil War, The Political/Economic split between the North and the South, The Confederacy, and the Union

Reading: Jones, Chapter 13 & 14

16th Week

Summary and Conclusion

17th Week FINAL EXAM