

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

DEANZA COLLEGE

Tuesday/Thursday 1:30 - 3:20 p.m.

CRN 01816

Meeting Location: L26

Instructor: Crystallee Crain, Ph.D.

Office: L13 Office Hours:
Tuesday 5 - 6:30 p.m., Fridays 2 - 3 p.m.

(I will be available on skype during these times. It's helpful to make an appointment.)

Skype name: *peaceandresistance*
E-Mail: *crystallee.crain@gmail.com*

Class blog: www.professorcrain.org
Phone: 510-469-3729 (text is best)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Critical examination of the contemporary and historical struggle for the development of democratic political institutions in the United States at the state, local, and national levels.

Particular emphasis is given to the conflict between disparate socioeconomic groups (e.g. traditional elite's versus the historically (and currently) disenfranchised; women, people of color, workers, immigrants, etc.) in the conduct of U.S. political life.

LEARNING GOALS

1. We want you to learn how to use the political tools available in a democratic society to make the best possible life and world for yourself, consistent with other people being able to do the same thing.
2. You will be able to understand the basic political landscape in the U.S. both the major institutions of the formal government and also the major social structures that shape extra governmental politics (the economy, the structures of race, class, and gender, corporations, etc.) By the end of the term, not only should you be able to explain "how a bill becomes a law" in the formal system of "public" government but, as important, you should be able to identify the political power dynamics of any social or institutional setting you are in. In particular, you should be able to identify the workings of the "private" system of government and know how you are individually impacted by a variety of government decisions.
3. You should know how to participate in political life. You should understand that it is just not only how to vote, but also how to write letters to the editor or elected officials, how to make an informational flyer, how to organize people to act collectively either in the electoral arena or

around issues, how to hook into a march or protest, etc. You should especially know how to create more democracy in our society.

4. You will know how to think critically about politics. This means both being able to see past the superficial rhetoric of politicians and mass media and also understanding your own political values and how these values inform your actions. You should understand the impact of political decisions, both on your own life, but also on the lives of other people and the planet.

5. We want you to master the key content areas in contemporary U.S. politics:

- *environmental sustainability, environmental justice*
- *corporate & big money domination of the political process*
- *social class, socio-economic inequality*
- *race, citizenship, culture and*
- *gender*

INSTRUCTOR BIO

[Dr Crystallee Crain](#) began her career in public service with a passion for justice, equity, and access for low income communities and communities of color. Dr Crain has worked as a professor for 10 years teaching in political science and sociology departments in California and Michigan. Ms Crain has over a decade of professional experience and has had many successes in leadership development, teaching, and capacity building for organizations that work to prevent violence. As a public health advocate Dr Crain demands for better systems and services for the most marginalized.

Crystallee earned a [Doctorate of Philosophy in Transformative Studies](#) at the [California Institute of Integral Studies](#) in San Francisco, CA. She holds a Master of Arts in Social Sciences, and a Bachelors in Political Science from Northern Michigan University. In 2013 she received advanced training in Health and Human Rights in the School of Public Health at Harvard University. In 2011 she received the Norman Lear Award from People for the American Way ([Young People For](#)). Dr Crain proudly serves as a member of the [Alameda County Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission](#) where she researches and develops policy to uplift the needs of LGBT and systems impacted youth. Dr Crain is also a member of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement ([NACOLE](#)). In 2011 she was featured in the TIME Magazine PROTESTOR issue highlighting activists around the world who speak truth to power.

COURSE MANUAL

Crain, C. A People's Primer: Exploration of Government & Social Change. Course Manual. (purchase online or in bookstore)

CLASS RULES

- **Classes begin and end on time.**
- Lateness or early departure must be arranged with instructor.
- Unauthorized absences result in half a grade point deduction.
- No use of **laptops, cellphones, i-pods** etc. during class. **No texting.** (For emergency notification authorization, see instructor.)
- All people deserve to experience a safe learning environment. **Refrain** from using biased language that could hurt another student. For example, do not use the term "illegal". **Human beings are not illegal** and the now criminalizing immigration process that was once an administrative process does not define a person or groups humanity. This value must be expressed in class. **Use undocumented instead of illegal.**
- History matters. Be sensitive to historical contradictions and inequality that has existed in this country and that may still exist for a variety of groups.

POINT DISTRIBUTION

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|---|------------|
| ● 3 Short Essays (25 points each) | 75 |
| ● 10 weekly Blog Discussions (15 points each) | 150 |
| ● Midterm Assignment (80 points) | 80 |
| ● Final (100 points) | 100 |
| ● Class participation (10 points per week) - 120 | |

TOTAL 525

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, Jan. 4 :: First day of Winter Quarter 2016.

Saturday, Jan. 16 :: Last day to [add](#) quarter-length classes. *Add date is enforced.*

Sunday, Jan. 17 :: Last day to [drop](#) for a full [refund or credit](#) (quarter-length classes). *Drop date is enforced.*

Monday, Jan. 18 :: Last day to [drop](#) a class with no record of grade. *Drop date is enforced.*

Friday, Jan. 29 :: Last day to [request pass/no pass](#) grade. *Request date is enforced.*

Friday, Feb. 26 :: Last day to [drop](#) with a "W." *Withdraw date is enforced.*

Monday, Jan. 18 :: Holiday: Observance of Martin Luther King's Birthday

Friday, Feb. 12 :: Holiday: Observance of Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

Saturday-Sunday, Feb. 13-14 :: Holiday: Presidents' Day Weekend (no classes)

Monday, Feb. 15 :: Holiday: Observance of George Washington's Birthday

March 19-25 :: [Final Exams](#)

Friday, March 25 :: Last day to [file for a winter degree or certificate.](#)

Friday, March 25 :: Last day of Winter Quarter

HELPFUL READINGS (all hyperlinked)

"Progressives Ask for Too Little, Not Too Much in Age of Plutocratic Rule, John Nichols and Robert McChesney, [Truthout](#) (Aug 14, 2013)

"The Cult You're In," Kono Matsu

"Media Monopoly Revisited," Patrick Morrison, Extra! (Oct 2011)

"Corporate-Funded Online Astroturfing," George Monbiot, Z Magazine (April 2011)

"The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community," David Korten, Yes! Magazine (Summer 2006)

"A Winning Progressive Politics," Paul Wellstone, In These Times (Jan 6, 2003)

"How Students in San Jose Raised the Minimum Wage," Gabriel Thompson, The Nation (Nov. 28, 2012)

"Story of Citizens United v. FEC," Annie Leonard (Story of Stuff project)

"The Top 4 Victories Handed to Corporate America by Today's Supreme Court-So Far," Jim Hightower, AlterNet (2/19/11)

Joe Mathews and Mark Paul, watch short video from authors of [California Crackup](#) and explore this website

"Top Judge Calls Calif. Government 'Dysfunctional,'" Jennifer Steinhauer, NY Times (October 10, 2009)

"Reagan's Real Legacy," Peter Drier, The Nation (Feb 4, 2011)

"The Stolen Presidential Elections," Michael Parenti

"West Coast Wasteland," Sasha Abramsky, The Nation (Feb 8, 2010)

"What Americans Want: The People's Budget," David Moberg, In These Times (June, 2011)

"Tea Party Confidential," Kate Zernike, In These Times (October 2010)

"Oppression and Democracy," Nicky Gonzalez Yuen

The Story of Cosmetics, Annie Leonard

"The Anti-Lady Laws of 2012," Sady Doyle, In These Times (Feb 2012)

"Update on Mortgage Lending Discrimination; After a disastrous detour, we're back where we started," Jim Campen, Dollars & Sense December 2010)

"The New Jim Crow," Michelle Alexander, The American Prospect (December 2010)

"The Ten Most Startling Facts About People of Color and Criminal Justice in the United States," Sophia Kerby, Center for American Progress (March 13, 2012)

"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," Peggy McIntosh

"Exploring the Depths of White Racist Socialization," Tim Wise

"The Hidden Wound Revisited: White People and Racism," Luba Presnetsova (Fall 2011)

"Internalized Oppression and the Culture of Silence," Keith Osajima

"Internalized Racism," Suzanne Lipsky

"Lin's Full-Court Press Against Stereotypes," Ky-Phong Tran, SF Chronicle (Feb 19, 2012)

"The Con-fusion Ethic," Tim Wise

Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress

Drawing the Color Line

Persons of Mean and Vile Condition

UNIT 1: CONSENT

Week 1

Introduction to Course Objective, Course Themes, Assignments, Review Blog

Read:

1. [Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress](#)
2. [Drawing the Color Line](#)

Blog #1

Week 2

Read: APP - Introduction, Ch 1

Blog #2

Week 3

Short Essay #1

Read: APP - Ch 2

Additional Readings

1. [Persons of Mean and Vile Condition](#)
2. [Tyranny is Tyranny](#)
3. [A Kind of Revolution](#)

Blog #3

UNIT 2: DISSENT

Week 4

Read:

APP - Chapter 4, Chapter 5

Film in class - The End of America

Blog #4

Week 5

Short Essay #2

Read: APP - Chapter 6

Blog #5

Week 6

Read: APP - Chapter 7

Blog #6

Additional Readings

1. [War Is the Health of the State](#)

Week 7

Midterm Assignment Due (Tuesday start of class)

Film in class - The Weather Underground

Blog #7

Read:

1. [The Impossible Victory: Vietnam](#)
2. [Surprises](#)
3. [The Seventies: Under Control?](#)

UNIT 3: SYSTEMS

Week 8

Read: APP - Chapter 8

Blog #8

Additional Readings

1. [Carter-Reagan-Bush: The Bipartisan Consensus](#)
2. [The Clinton Presidency and the Crisis of Democracy](#)

Week 9

Short Essay #3

Read:

1. [The Coming Revolt of the Guards](#)
2. [The 2000 Election and the "War on Terrorism"](#)

Blog #9

UNIT 4: PEOPLE POWER

Week 10

Blog #10

Read: APP - Chapter 11

Film in Class - Black Power Mixtape

Week 11

Read:

1. [California Policy Process](#)

California Policy Concerns

The 2016 Election

Week 12

Finals due last Thursday of class