2.3 People, Power, and Politics
3 hours; 3 credits

Introduction to social science concepts through the study of power, authority, and social organization in U.S. society. Emphasis on the interaction of government and civil society. Readings focus on primary documents concerning the role of social class, race, and gender in the construction of social and political inequality. (Not open to students who have completed Core Studies 3.)

Prerequisite: none

Goals

Goal 1
To understand the development and workings of modern societies in an interdependent world.

Goal 2
To develop the ability to think critically and creatively, to reason logically, and to express one’s thoughts orally and in writing with clarity and precision.

Goal 3
To understand how social diversity has social and political implications for the distribution of rights and resources in different historical periods, including the present.

Goal 4
To produce informed and responsible participants in society.

Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

Describe the founding documents of the U.S. and explain debates surrounding them; analyze the ideas of liberal democracy and the criticisms of those ideas; describe and categorize social movements critical of the practices or assumptions of liberal democratic processes and institutions; identify and distinguish between different methods of social stratification; explain how power operates through the social construction of difference to reproduce inequality.

Demonstrate their understanding, in writing, of difficult material; produce written work that demonstrates the importance of finding and using evidence, including quotations, paraphrases, and appropriate documentation; communicate their thoughts orally in class; organize ideas appropriately and use suitable verbal tools of support where several ideas are expressed;

Demonstrate conceptual knowledge of differences of race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, disability, and sexuality.
Outcomes

The ability to articulate the central debates concerning the drafting of the founding documents of U.S. government.

An understanding of the principles and practices of liberal democracy and the role of social movements in transforming U.S. society and government.

The ability to communicate in an essay format utilizing primary sources to make an argument.

The ability to utilize the concepts of inequality and diversity to analyze the distribution of political rights and resources in U.S. history.

The ability to discuss controversial subjects of social difference involving both articulation and listening skills.

Sample Methods of Assessment

An in-class debate modeled after the conflict between the Federalist and Anti-federalist perspectives concerning the Constitution.

An in-class examination that measure students’ mastery of the core concepts and functioning of liberal democracy and the ways in which social movements have challenged them.

An essay assignment to utilize primary documents from the course to show how social conflicts concerning race, social class, or gender have resulted in changes to the constitution or its legal interpretation.

An in-class essay that compares the social forces that brought many Africans and East Asians to the U.S. and the differences and similarities in political rights and exclusions they encountered.

In-class discussions by students concerning social conflicts over the differences in political rights provided by government based on sexual orientation.
Sample Course Outline:
The following are suggested course topics; instructors are free to re-frame and reorganize the topics according to their own best pedagogical judgment, and to choose their own texts.


**Week 1**  
**Introduction; Origins of Liberalism**  
The Declaration of Independence, pp. 2-5.

**Week 2**  
**Foundations of U.S. Democracy**  
The United States Constitution and *The Federalist Papers* 10 and 51, pp. 7-34.  

**Week 3**  
**Power and Authority: The Social Construction of Difference**  

**Week 4**  
**The Supreme Court and Inequality**  
*The People v. Hall*, pp. 115-120.  

**Week 5**  
**The Politics of Slavery: The Civil War and Reconstruction**  
Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” pp. 105-113.  

**Week 6**  
**Social Class and the Industrial Revolution**  

**Weeks 7, 8**  
**Gender Inequality**  
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Address at the Seneca Falls Convention, and Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, pp. 97-104.  
Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love” and “Woman Suffrage,” pp. 159-168.  

Week 8 Midterm test

Week 9 Immigration and Social Conflict

Week 10 The New Deal and Its Critics
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Commonwealth Club Address, pp. 191-198.

Weeks 11, 12 The Civil Rights Movement
James Baldwin, “In Search of a Majority,” from *Nobody Knows My Name*, pp. 267-272.
Indians of All Tribes and Jack D. Forbes, *Alcatraz Is Not an Island*, pp. 298-301.

Week 13 Sexuality and Civil Rights

Week 14 Reproductive Rights; Review

Week 15 Final examination

Method of Evaluation

A required in-class final exam will account for at least 30% of the final course grade. Individual instructors will determine the type and grading weight of other assignments, which may include: in-class and take-home writing assignments and essays; in-class and take-home exams; papers; in-class oral presentations, class participation. A suggested formula is: final exam 30%, midterm exam 20%, two essays (15% each), and class attendance and participation (15%).
Bibliography:

The United States Declaration of Independence (1776)
The United States Constitution (1787)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Address at Seneca Falls (1848)
Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions (1848)
Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852)
People v. Hall (1854)
Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857)
Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love” (1910) and Woman Suffrage” (1917)
Woodrow Wilson, “An Address to Several Thousand Foreign-Born Citizens” (1915)
Margaret Sanger, My Fight for Birth Control (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1931)
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Commonwealth Club Address (1932)
W.E.B. DuBois, Black Reconstruction in America (Russell and Russell, 1935)
C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951)

Indians of All Tribes, Alcatraz in Not an Island, ed. Peter blue cloud (Wingbow Press, 1972)
Radicalesbians, “The Woman-Identified Woman,” reprinted in Notes from the Third
Year: Women’s Liberation, eds. Anne Koedt and Ellen Levine (1970)

Note: Instructors are free to choose their own texts. All of the above are in Gaston Alonso, Corey Robin, Roberta Satow, and Alex Vitale, eds. People Power and Politics 10th Edition (Boston MA: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2002).