



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Course Acronym:	POLS
Course Number:	C1000
Descriptive Title:	American Government and Politics
Division:	Behavioral and Social Sciences
Department:	Political Science
Course Disciplines:	Political Science
Catalog Description:	This course is an introduction to government and politics in the United States and California. Students examine the constitutions, structure, and operation of governing institutions, civil liberties and civil rights, political behaviors, political issues, and public policy using political science theory and methodology.
Prerequisite:	
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	Eligibility for English 1A
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade and Pass/No Pass
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	prior to 1992
Transfer UC:	Yes
Effective Date:	prior to 1992
General Education: ECC	Area 2B - Social and Behavioral Science
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	Area D - Social Sciences
Term:	
Other:	

IGETC:	Area 4 - Social and Behavioral Sciences
Term:	
Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	SLO #1 Articles and Amendments In a multiple choice test, students will demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of the United States Constitution including its Articles and Amendments, as well as those for the government of California. SLO #2 Linkage Mechanisms In a multiple choice or written essay test, students will demonstrate an understanding of how political parties and interest groups serve as channels for popular participation, and compare/contrast the techniques they use to do so. SLO #3 The Executive Branch In a written essay or multiple choice exam, students will demonstrate an understanding of the various roles played by the President and California Governor, the political resources available to them to meet the expectations associated with those roles, and how those resources are limited.
Course Objectives:	At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to: 1. Explain the founding and development of the U.S. and California Constitution. 2. Critique governing institutions and political processes within the United States and California. 3. Employ introductory political science research methods to contextualize contemporary political issues and operations in the United States and California 4. Assess civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and subsequent court decisions. 5. Investigate the role of identity and political ideology in shaping public opinion and public policy in the United States and California. 6. Analyze how to effectively participate in politics at the national, state, county, and/or city levels.
Major Topics:	1. The purpose of government and nature of democratic governance a. Political philosophies that underlie democratic government b. Comparison of representative and direct democracy c. The value of, influences on, and consequences of participation and nonparticipation in democratic government 2. The U.S. and California Constitutions as frameworks for government

- a. Political philosophies of the framers and critics of the U.S. Constitution
- b. Processes for amending and interpreting the U.S. and California Constitutions
- 3. The theory and practice of federalism in the United States, focusing on California
 - a. The framework and operation of federal, state, and local relations
 - b. Interaction between the federal government and Native American tribes and entities
- 4. The structure and contemporary operations of federal, state, and local governing institutions in the United States and California including the
 - a. Executive branch
 - b. Legislative branch
 - c. Judicial branch
- 5. Civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups
 - a. Civil liberties and rights as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and federal and state court decisions
 - b. Contemporary and historical interactions between government and marginalized populations within the United States based on factors such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, class, ability status, age, citizenship status, language, religion, and/or other forms of identity
- 6. Individual and group behaviors within the context of the U.S. and California constitutions, including
 - a. Elections, campaigns, and voting
 - b. Political parties
 - c. Interest groups
 - d. Social movements
- 7. Factors that shape politics and policymaking including
 - a. Political culture
 - b. Political socialization
 - c. Political ideologies
 - d. Public opinion
 - e. Media

	8. Political issues and public policies a. Domestic b. Economic c. Foreign 9. Introductory research methods used in political science including a. qualitative tools and techniques b. quantitative tools and techniques
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
Primary Method of Evaluation:	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	Examples of potential methods of evaluation used to observe or measure students' achievement of course outcomes and objectives could include but are not limited to quizzes, exams, essays, field journals, projects, critical analysis papers, service learning, simulations, research demonstrations, etc. Methods of evaluation and appropriate representative assignments will be determined at the discretion of local faculty. For example: Read the chapter in your textbook covering the views of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes on the state of nature and the social contract. In a three- to five-page essay, evaluate the scope of government presented in each of these views and compare and contrast the two types of government each of these two views would produce.
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION Identify the principal components of the California Constitution, and its amendments, from the time of California's admission to the Union in 1850 to the present. In a three- to five-page essay, compare and contrast the legislative, executive, and judicial characteristics of the California and United States Constitutions. Trace and assess the role of direct democracy in California's political system, and the constitutional amendment process.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	THE RELATIONSHIPS OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS In a two- to four-page essay, analyze the types of federal grants-in-aid for states, counties, and cities. Distinguish between categorical and block grants in the context of devolution since the 1980s and 1990s. Evaluate the relative merits of categorical and block grants in reference to federal/state control of these grants and their intended purpose.

Other Evaluation Methods:	Completion, Essay Exams, Matching Items, Multiple Choice, Term or Other Papers, True/False, Written Homework
Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Group Activities, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Answer questions, Required reading, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Patterson. 2024. We the People.15th ed. 2024 Krutz and Waskiewicz. 2024. American Government 3e. OpenStax (OER) Sidlow and Henschen. GOVT 12: Principles of American Government. 2025 Reti. 2023. Introduction to California Government and Politics. (OER) Van Vechten. 2021. California Politics: A Primer.
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite:	
Category:	
Requisite course(s): List both prerequisites and corequisites in this box.	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching Skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). If applicable	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	Eligibility for English 1A

Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). If applicable	This course involves reading college level textbooks, written assignments and answering essay questions. A student's success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills. Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts. Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process.
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	H. Bader and B. Keene
Date:	01/01/1964
Original Board Approval Date:	
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	Laurie Houske, Josh Casper
Date:	10/10/2024
Last Board Approval Date:	11/18/2024
Effective Term:	FA 2025