Course Syllabus (Fall 2014)

American Government
El Camino College
M 6:00-9:10pm
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Email: ericdalegria@gmail.com
Office Hours: Upon request/TBD

Political Science 1
Governments of the United States and California
3 units; 3 hours lecture
Recommended Preparation: eligibility for English 1A
Credit, degree applicable Transfer CSU, UC*

Course Description:
This course is a survey of the concepts, theories, and functions of the American political system. The basic principles of the United States Constitution and the government of California will be examined. Emphasis will be placed on the formal and informal influences of federalism on national and state governments.

Course Objectives:
1. Identify the theoretical foundations and the applications of the American political system.
2. Analyze major political institutions: the presidency, bureaucracy, Congress, Judiciary, elections, political parties, and interest groups.
3. Examine and assess the implementation of democracy, including the different perspectives of elitism, pluralism, and majoritarianism.
4. Evaluate the role of the mass media in the political process.
5. Identify and discuss political culture and the function of political socialization.
6. Compare and contrast the relationship of federal and state governmental systems and processes with emphasis on California.
7. Evaluate and analyze the interdependence of economics and politics.
8. Distinguish between civil rights and civil liberties and their evolution in American society.
9. Assess the federal and state judicial systems and their impact on public policy.
10. Examine and discuss the process of public policy making in relation to international and domestic policy issues.
11. Assess the concept and implementation of citizenship.
12. Analyze issues of race, ethnicity, class, age, and gender as they relate to the distribution of power in the political process.

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.

Materials

Required Text

Optional Texts


***Students are also strongly encouraged to follow current events through sources such as CNN and USA Today.

Evaluation
Grading will be based on the following criteria:

1. **Attendance & Participation (25%)**: Class meets for three hours per week. Students are expected to arrive on time for every meeting. Students are expected to prepare for each class meeting and take part in all discussions and lectures, assigned readings, and in-class projects. Students will be specifically evaluated on the quality and quantity of their participation.

2. **Examinations (25%)**: There will be three closed book in-class exams following the completion of a unit. Exams will consist of objective and short answer sections and may include any material that was discussed in-class.

   **Make-ups**: Make-up exams will only be given to students with instructor approved excuses for their absence. Missing an exam without an excused absence and failing to reschedule the exam can result in an automatic failing grade. Make-up exams should be scheduled as soon as possible, following the missed exam. See the instructor to schedule a make-up exam.
3. **Semester Portfolio (25%)**: Each student will complete a series of short writing assignments which constitutes a Semester Portfolio. Writing assignments will be given in class and will be related to class lectures, class discussions and current events. The writing assignments will be reviewed and revised throughout the semester, but each student will be given only one grade for their portfolio towards the conclusion of the semester.

4. **Leading Class Discussion (25%)**: Students will be placed into several small groups. Each group will be assigned, by the instructor, a reading that they will be expected to present upon at the beginning of the topic discussion. Each student is expected to participate and presentations should cover the key elements of the assigned reading and should pull upon current issues when appropriate. Presentations should last roughly 20-30 minutes.

5. **Extra Credit**: Students may earn up to an additional 10% towards their grade by completing a book review or special research project assignment approved by the instructor. See the instructor if you’d like to pursue this option.

**General Information**

1. Students are expected to have all assignments in on time. Late papers (without approved excuses) are automatically lowered 1 grade level.

2. Students exhibiting disruptive behavior will be asked to leave class and will be dealt with according to ECC policies.

3. Students cheating on exams or papers (i.e. not writing them themselves) will a grade of “F” and will be dealt with according to ECC policies.

4. Announcements in class (exam dates, schedule/assignments changes, extra credit opportunities, etc.) will be usually made one time. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain this information (preferably from another student) should they miss it in class.

5. All work submitted by students for evaluation must meet the minimum criteria for college level work. (i.e. all work must meet the basic requirements of grammar and logical structure expected in college writing)

**Course Outline (Tentative)**

8/25  Introductions, Course Syllabus Review

9/1  Labor Day – No Class
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment/Event</th>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>The Democratic Republic, Chapter 1 &amp; Federalist Papers #10 &amp; #51, A4-A9 (Appendix C)</td>
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<td>9/22</td>
<td>Civil Liberties, Chapter 4</td>
<td>Group #2 Presentation</td>
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<td>9/29</td>
<td>Civil Rights, Chapter 5</td>
<td>Group #3 Presentation</td>
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<td>Review for Exam #1</td>
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<td>10/6</td>
<td><strong>Exam #1</strong></td>
<td>Public Opinion and Political Socialization, Chapter 6</td>
<td>Group #4 Presentation</td>
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<td>10/13</td>
<td>Interest Groups, Chapter 7</td>
<td>Group #5 Presentation</td>
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<td>10/20</td>
<td>Political Parties, Chapter 8</td>
<td>Group #6 Presentation</td>
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<td>Campaigns, Elections and the Media, Chapter 9</td>
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<td>10/27</td>
<td>Review for Exam #2</td>
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<td>11/3</td>
<td><strong>Exam #2</strong></td>
<td>The Congress, Chapter 10</td>
<td>Group #8 Presentation</td>
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<td>11/10</td>
<td>The President, Chapter 11</td>
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<td>11/17</td>
<td>The Bureaucracy, Chapter 12 Group #10 Presentation</td>
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<td>The Courts, Chapter 13 Group #11 Presentation</td>
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<td><strong>Semester Portfolio’s Due, Extra Credit Projects Due</strong></td>
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<td>11/24</td>
<td>Public Policy, Chapter 14</td>
<td>Group #12 Presentation</td>
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<td>What is Leadership?</td>
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<td>12/1</td>
<td><strong>Leadership Panel</strong></td>
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<td>Review for Final Exam</td>
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<td>12/8</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
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Other Information: ADA Statement:
El Camino College is committed to providing educational accommodations for students with disabilities upon the timely request by the student to the instructor. A student with a disability, who would like to request an academic accommodation, is responsible for identifying herself/himself to the instructor and to the Special Resource Center. To make arrangements for academic accommodations, contact the Special Resource Center.

Student Code of Conduct
http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/boarddocs/5500%20%20Academic%20Honesty.pdf

Student Rights and Grievances Procedure 5530
http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/policies.asp