Political Science 1

Government of the United States and California

El Camino College, Spring 2014

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Office Hours (ARTB 320): Fridays 2:00 am – 3:00 pm, or by appointment.

Course Times & Locations:

Section 2605: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:45 – 9:10 am (SOCS 201)
Section 2630: Fridays, 9:30 – 12:40 pm (SOCS 210)

Course Description:

The goal of this course is to become familiar with the basics of government, especially that of the United States and California. As part of this class we will survey the concepts, theories, and functions of the American political system. This will include an analysis of the Constitution and the three branches of our federal government. Emphasis will be placed on the formal and informal influences of federalism on national and state governments.

Course Methodology:

This course will consist of two in-class lectures per week running for approximately one hour and twenty minutes. Each week will focus on a different topic in American politics (for example, Federalism, the President, etc.) and each lecture will focus on a selected readings. Students will be expected to complete the readings for each lecture before the beginning of class. The second lecture of each week will focus on a particular controversial topic dealing with the topic of the week. This meeting will also be devoted to student participation and debate around a set of questions provided by the instructor which will attempt to establish why the topic is controversial and important. In addition to the readings, students will be expected to attend all lectures and participate. Course assignments will include both a midterm and final exam as well as a 4-5 page research paper. Also, there will be short quizzes given each week on the key concepts for that week.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

By the end of the semester, students should have a basic understanding of (1) the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution, including its Articles and Amendments, as well as those for the government of California; (2) how political parties and interest groups serve as channels for popular participation and the techniques the use to do so; and (3) the various roles played by the President and California Governor, the political resources available to them to meet these expectations, and how these resources are limited.
Course Objectives:

Specifically, students will be expected to be able to:

1. Identify the theoretical foundations and 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 processes.

Course Requirements and Assignments:

GRADING BREAKDOWN:

- Class participation and attendance – 10%
- Weekly Quizzes – 20%
- Midterm Exam – 25%
- Research Paper – 20%
- Final Exam – 25%

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION

Attendance and participation in lectures is mandatory and attendance will be taken at the start of each class.

WEEKLY QUIZZES

There will be weekly in-class quizzes during the course. Quizzes will be given at the start of class and students will have 15 minutes to finish. The quizzes will not be difficult, but are designed to encourage students to attend lectures and keep up with the readings.
MIDTERM & FINAL EXAMS

The course exams will consist of three sections: (1) a set of multiple choice questions pertaining to the key themes and concepts of the course; (2) a set of short-answer questions requiring students to elaborate on the major issues; (3) three essay questions of which the students will select one to respond to. Exams require a bluebook and will be closed-book and no notes.

RESEARCH PAPER

Students will write one 4-5 research paper addressing a question concerning the themes and issues introduced during the course. Students will be assigned the essay question at the end of the tenth week of the course (Thursday, April 2, 2014). Papers will be due at the start of class at the beginning of the fourteenth week of the course (Tuesday, April 29). Papers will be evaluated on the degree to which they adequately respond to the assigned question, the accuracy and force of their arguments and the clarity of their writing.

EXTRA CREDIT

Various extra credit assignments and projects may be given throughout the course at the instructor’s discretion.

Course Texts: All texts are available at the college bookstore. Both texts are required.


Course Schedule

**Week 1  COURSE INTRODUCTION**

LECTURE 1: Tuesday, January 21, 2014
LECTURE 2: Thursday, January 23, 2014


**Week 2  THE CONSTITUTION**

LECTURE 3: Tuesday, January 28, 2014


LECTURE 4: Thursday, January 30, 2014

READING: *You Decide!* Debate 14, pp. 208-221.
Week 3  FEDERALISM


Week 4  CIVIL LIBERTIES


Week 5  CIVIL RIGHTS


LECTURE 10: Thursday, February 20, 2014  READING: *You Decide!* Debate 5, pp. 54-75.

Week 6  PUBLIC OPINION and POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION


LECTURE 12: Thursday, February 27, 2014  READING: *You Decide!* Debate 5, pp. 76-93.

Week 7  INTEREST GROUPS


LECTURE 14: Thursday, March 6, 2014  READING: *You Decide!* Debate 8, pp. 120-133.

Week 8  POLITICAL PARTIES and CAMPAIGNS


*   *  MARCH 17-21 SPRING BREAK  *   *

Week 9

LECTURE 17: Tuesday, March 25, 2014  Midterm Review

*   *  Thursday, March 27, 2014  MIDTERM EXAM  *   *
Week 10  MEDIA and POLITICS

LECTURE 18: Tuesday, April 1, 2014
LECTURE 19: Thursday, April 3, 2014

READING: AM GOV, chapter 10.
Discussion of Research Paper Topic.

Week 11  CONGRESS

LECTURE 20: Tuesday, April 8, 2014
LECTURE 21: Thursday, April 10, 2014

READING: AM GOV, chapter 11.
REALINDG: You Decide! Debate 6, pp. 94-106.

Week 12  THE PRESIDENCY

LECTURE 22: Tuesday, April 15, 2014
LECTURE 23: Thursday, April 17, 2014

READING: AM GOV, chapter 12.

Week 13  THE JUDICIARY

LECTURE 24: Tuesday, April 22, 2014
LECTURE 25: Thursday, April 24, 2014

READING: AM GOV, chapter 14.
READING: You Decide! Debate 10, pp. 142-163.

Week 14  PUBLIC POLICY: DOMESTIC

* * RESEARCH PAPERS DUE TUESDAY, APRIL 29 *

LECTURE 26: Tuesday, April 29, 2014
LECTURE 27: Thursday, May 1, 2014

READING: AM GOV, chapter 15.
READING: You Decide! Debate 1, pp. 2-14.

Week 15  PUBLIC POLICY: FOREIGN

LECTURE 28: Tuesday, May 6, 2014
LECTURE 29: Thursday, May 8, 2014

READING: AM GOV, chapters 16.
READING: You Decide! Debate 17, pp. 270-183.

Week 16

LECTURE 30: Tuesday, May 13, 2014    Final Review

* * Thursday, May 15, 2014    FINAL EXAM *

Page 5 of 7
Course Policies and Suggestions:

1. You will do well on your exams if you read and re-read the texts carefully, attend class and participate, and ask for help if you feel yourself getting confused or behind.

2. Large classes are not ideal, but many studies have shown that people learn well in them if everybody works together carefully. To be specific: (a) please put away non-class reading material during lecture; (b) please silence or preferably turn off all cellphones during lecture; (c) while taking notes on laptop computers or tablet devices is acceptable, please refrain from visiting websites unrelated to the course or lecture (e.g. Facebook, etc.); (d) finally, please do not talk in class unless called upon. This as well as the other rules are important. Please be considerate of your fellow students (and the instructor).

3. Please bring the readings to class each day. Frequent references will be made to the text and reading along will be immensely useful to you later when you are preparing for exams.

4. Please take advantage of office hours. Lecturers enjoying talking with and getting to know their students. It is especially important that you contact your instructor if you feel confused or if you are falling behind. Instructors are here to help.

5. Students are encouraged to ask questions in class. While the last portion of class will be set aside for this specific purpose, questions during the lecture are also welcome, even if they are only for clarification or repetition. Every question is useful, and if you feel confused it is likely that other people do as well.

6. Please arrive to class on time. Important announcements (deadlines, discussion of paper topics and exams and so on) frequently come in the first five to ten minutes of class. If you arrive late you risk missing important information that could influence your grade. In addition, the in-class quizzes will begin exactly at the start of the class. If you are late you will have less time to complete the quiz.

7. The course paper is due at the beginning of class on the day stipulated in the course schedule. All late papers lose two marks per day (e.g. an A+ paper becomes an A-paper) unless a verifiable doctor’s note is provided.

8. Please bring blue books for both the midterm and the final exam (two blue books will be needed). Please use blue or black ink pens on your blue books. Your paper should be typed, double spaced, with regulation one-inch margins and written in 12-point font size.

9. Make sure that your correct and current email address is registered with the college so that you can receive course emails. The instructor will occasionally send out class emails regarding additions or updates to the course readings as well as other matters relating to the course material.

10. If you have any questions about this course, its assignments, quizzes, exams, readings or other requirements, please contact the instructor by email or after class or during office hours.
Accessibility (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 Resources Center. To make arrangements for academic accommodations, contact the Special Resources center.