

POLS 0001 - AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Catalog Description

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Introduction to the principles and problems of the American political system on national, state, and local levels. Includes discussion of constitutions, federalism and executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government. Other topics include political behavior, elections and parties, interest groups, and the policy making processes that address political issues. (C-ID POLS 110) (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Explain the key elements of the U.S. and California constitutions and describe how they have changed over time.
- CSLO #2: Identify and evaluate institutions and political processes within the national, state and local governments.
- CSLO #3: Explain the role of societal actors in influencing government policy.
- CSLO #4: Analyze the role of ideology, culture and diversity in shaping public opinion and public policy in the United States and California.
- CSLO #5: Define civil liberties and civil rights, identify their sources and outline how and why they have changed over time.
- CSLO #6: Outline the policy making process at the national, state and local levels, analyzing relations amongst the three branches of government, social institutions and citizen participation.

Effective Term

Fall 2024

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. critically evaluate U.S. and California government using principles of democracy and/or American political values;
2. Analyze the role of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, class and ideology in shaping public opinion and public policy in the United States and California.
3. differentiate the key elements of the U.S. and California constitutions and describe how they have changed over time;

4. define federalism and appraise it in the United States;
5. define civil rights and civil liberties, identify their sources and outline how and why they have changed over time;
6. evaluate the role of the media and determine how public opinion influences public policy;
7. analyze and critique the role and impact of interest groups and political parties in the national and state political systems;
8. explain and evaluate the national and state election processes;
9. compare the roles and powers of each of the three branches of government at the state and national levels;
10. define political bureaucracy, identify its roles and evaluate its performance;
11. outline the policy making processes at the state and national levels, analyzing relations amongst the three branches of government, social institutions and citizen participation; and
12. compare and contrast local government institutions and processes to the state and national levels.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Social Sciences
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
 - CSU - US2 Hist/Const/Amer Idea
 - CSU - US3 Hist/Const/Amer Idea
 - CSUGE - D8 Pol Sci/Govt/Lgl In
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
 - IGETC - 4H Pol Sci/Govt/Lgl In

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Essay Examinations
 - Example: Employ identification, short answer, paragraph and essay questions on in-class, written exams. Example: describe the roles played by the media in politics. Graded based on rubric defining four roles and connection to public opinion.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: Respond to 100 multiple choice questions designed to test your knowledge and understanding of the United States Constitution. Example: The Bill of Rights reflects: a) elitism; b) anti-Federalist concerns; c) the goal of creating a stronger government; or, d) none of the above. Correct responses indicate student learning of key elements of the US constitution and the role of struggle.
- Projects
 - Example: Select a book from an assigned reading list and present a six-page written analysis of its relevance to politics by incorporating all the appropriate materials covered throughout the semester. Graded on the demonstrated ability of students to apply key concepts and analyze effectively relevant material.
- Reports
 - Example: Choose a current event article from a local or alternative newspaper/periodical concerning politics. Analyze in a two page formal paper your chosen article from the perspectives of the readings covered in our text book, "American at Odds: The Essentials." By next Thursday, post your paper to the class web

board. By the following Thursday, you will need to post two, one-page, papers critiquing, both positively and negatively, two of the papers posted by your colleagues. We will spend the first fifteen minutes of class for the next two weeks discussing your articles and relating them to our course material. Essays and comments will be graded on the demonstrated ability of students to apply key concepts and analyze effectively relevant material.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will provide lecture on the U.S. Constitution while students will take notes and ask and answer questions posed.

Distance Learning

1. Instructor will provide students with text and audio-visual learning materials (e.g. videos, PowerPoint, lecture notes) supported by textbook chapters on civil rights. Students will need to use this material to effectively participate in discussions that the instructor will monitor to provide clarification and correction when needed.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read chapter in textbook on Elections and identify the principles problems with them. 2. Read the Constitution of the United States and prepare to discuss it merits. 3. Read the newspaper (daily) or a news magazine (weekly) so that you can discuss recent political events in class.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Select a book from the assigned reading list and present a six-page analysis of its relevancy to politics by incorporating all appropriate materials covered throughout the semester. 2. Select two journal articles from the instructor's list and do an in-depth, written analysis of the connections to politics by utilizing specific information discussed throughout semester.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Research Paper: students will select a topic from the instructor's list, compile a research file on that topic, and produce a synthesis essay.
Group Projects: students will make presentations to the class on a policy issue chosen from the instructor's list.

Required Materials

- Struggle for Democracy
 - Author: Greenberg & Page
 - Publisher: Longman
 - Publication Date: 2020
 - Text Edition: 13th
 - Classic Textbook?:

- OER Link:
- OER:
- California Politics
 - Author: Renee VanVechten
 - Publisher: Sage
 - Publication Date: 2021
 - Text Edition: 6th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- We The People
 - Author: Patterson, Thomas
 - Publisher: McGraw Hill
 - Publication Date: 2019
 - Text Edition: 13th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Governing California
 - Author: Anagnoson et al
 - Publisher: Norton
 - Publication Date: 2021
 - Text Edition: 8th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- We the People
 - Author: Ginsberg, Benjamin
 - Publisher: Norton
 - Publication Date: 2022
 - Text Edition: 13th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.