

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 2 (56199)**  
**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**  
**SPRING 2020**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:15 pm**  
**Forum, Room 10**

**Prerequisite: Eligibility for ENG 1A or ENG 1AH**

**Advisory: Completion of ENG 1A or 1AH**

**Professor Michael T. Yonker**

Email: michael.yonker@reedleycollege.edu  
Phone Number: (917) 414-4672  
Office: CC1-217  
Office Hours: By appointment

**Description of Course:**

In Political Science 2 we will cover the fundamental elements of the American and California political systems. We will start with the framing of the federal Constitution, then continue with a discussion of the structure of national government in this country. We will also address American political culture as well as interest groups and the media. We will study the operation of our government, looking at the structure and function of Congress, the presidency and the court system. Our discussion of national politics will conclude with a discussion of national policies. The remainder of the course will be devoted to a study of government in California.

**Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Study both the theory and practice of “democracy”.
2. Research the forces and political philosophies that influenced the founders of the United States and the framers of the Constitution.
3. Review the role played by the US Constitution in (a) creating our federal system of government, and (b) establishing the separation of powers and checks and balances in the federal government.
4. Evaluate the relationship between the Bill of Rights, the government, and the concept of “civil liberty”.
5. Assess the idea of civil rights as the right of all citizens to equal protection of the law.
6. Survey the varying forms and systems of elections used in the United States; including primary elections, general elections; California referendum, initiative, and recall elections; and the Electoral College.

7. Consider one's role in voting, and participation in politics in other ways, and one's responsibilities in the American political system.
8. Gain an understanding of the characteristics of the American political party system and the functions parties serve in the process of governing.
9. Analyze the issues surrounding the development of public opinion, and its influence on the formation of public policy.
10. Examine the influence of different means of mass communication on the development of public policy, and the techniques employed by each.
11. Evaluate the effects of interest groups in American politics as well as the tactics of such groups.
12. Appraise the powers and limitations of the office of the President of the United States, and examine the roles he or she plays as a ceremonial, political, administrative, military, and legislative leader.
13. Examine the various power and roles of Congress, different theories of representation, and the strengths and weaknesses of the legislative process.
14. Study the role of the national courts in interpreting the Constitution, shaping individual rights, and determining the distribution of governmental power.
15. Explore the vastness and complexity of government bureaucracy.
16. Examine the programs in the area of domestic policy intended to promote the "general welfare".
17. Investigate the forces that shape American domestic, economic, foreign, and military policy.
18. Study the structure, major functions, and significant powers of both the State of California and local government entities.

**Required Texts:**

Wilson, James Q., DiIulio, Jr., John J., Bose, Meena, and Levendusky, Matthew. *American Government: Institutions and Policies*, 16<sup>th</sup> ed.

Gerston, Larry N., and Christensen, Terry. *California Politics and Government: A Practical Approach*, 14<sup>th</sup> ed.

## **Grading:**

All material covered in class and/or in the readings may appear on exams.

There are 500 points possible in the class. All exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions worth two points each. There will be a four- to five-page paper, worth 100 points. Class participation is worth 75 points, class contribution is worth 25 points (explained further below).

Midterm 1:	100 points
Midterm 2:	100 points
Term Paper:	100 points
Class Participation:	75 points
Class Contribution:	25 points
Final:	100 points

A = 90% - 100%

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 59% and below

Except for participation and contribution, grades will be posted to Canvas shortly after the graded item is completed. I will also return the midterms to you during the semester. Grades for participation and contribution for the entire semester will be entered at the end of the semester.

**Make-up midterm exams will only be given under special circumstances.** In order for a student to qualify to take a make-up midterm exam, there must be compelling circumstances, to be determined at Professor Yonker's sole discretion. If such circumstances exist, a student will be allowed to make up a midterm exam. Failure to promptly contact Professor Yonker concerning a missed midterm exam will result in the student receiving a zero for that midterm exam.

**There will be no make-up for the final exam** due to the time constraints placed on the instructor and Testing Center staff at the end of the semester.

## **Scantrons:**

Unless notified otherwise, please use Scantron Form 882-E and a No. 2 pencil for all examinations.

## **Cancelled Class Notification:**

In the event a class must be cancelled, I will attempt to notify the class by email in advance of the cancelled class.

## **Cheating and Plagiarism:**

Cheating is defined as "the willful and intentional practice of fraudulent and deceptive acts for the purposes of improving a grade or obtaining course credit." Cheating is **not** limited to examinations only. It extends to any act in which you engage for the purpose of obtaining unmerited academic credit.

Students are expected to do their own work unless otherwise specified by the instructor (e.g. the instructions for an assignment indicate it is a group activity). If a student copies his or her work from another student or otherwise engages in the behavior mentioned in this paragraph, such activity constitutes cheating.

Plagiarism is “the fraudulent representation of someone else’s writing or other scholarly material as your own.” That is, the student tries to take credit for the work that someone else did. This includes, but is not limited to, any source you use for a paper, or submitting a fellow student’s homework while representing it as your own work. Please see the Reedley Course Catalog for more on cheating and plagiarism.

*Academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating and plagiarism, constitute serious offenses that are subject to the disciplinary procedures of the State Center Community College District (the District). AR sections 5500(11) and 5520. The first offense will result in receiving a zero on the assessment (e.g. exam, quiz, assignment, or activity). A second offense will result in receiving a zero on the assessment, being reported to the Dean of Instruction for Division A, and removal (one or two days at the discretion of the instructor). A third offense will result in receiving a zero on the assessment, being reported to the Dean of Instruction for Division A, and a recommendation by the instructor for a short-term suspension, failure in the course, or expulsion. Students may also be subject to further disciplinary action by the College or the District.*

### **Attendance Requirements:**

Due to State Center Community College District policy, attendance records must be kept. To assist with keeping attendance records, there will be assigned seating via a seating chart. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class through taking roll. Failure to sit in your assigned seat at the beginning of class may result in being marked absent.

**A student who has missed four classes prior to the tenth week of the semester may be dropped.** However, a student cannot be dropped after the ninth week with respect to attendance. For further information please visit or contact Admissions and Records. The phone number is (559) 638-0323.

**Students are responsible for keeping track of their attendance. Students are also responsible for keeping track of information missed during their absence.** If a student misses a lecture, it is the student’s responsibility to obtain that information. To do this, the student who misses a class should ask one of his or her classmates for a copy of his or her notes and ask what else he or she missed. If questions remain, the student should ask Professor Yonker for clarification.

### **Participation and Contribution Grading:**

Through active discussion of material, students may master that material more effectively. Therefore, class participation and contribution are weighted heavily. We have 34 class meetings during the semester. For each class a student attends, that student will earn three points for participation, for a maximum of 102 points. Only 75 points are allocated for participation, so having good attendance is a way to earn up to 27 points extra credit.

For each class meeting during which a student contributes to the class discussion, that student will receive one point, for a maximum of 34 points. Only 25 points are allocated for contribution, so by

regular contribution students may earn up to nine points extra credit. While contribution will be based largely on volunteers, students may be called on at any time and should be prepared to discuss the material assigned for that class meeting. (On midterm exam days, each student receives contribution credit.)

If a student is absent from a class for compelling circumstances (e.g. sickness, family emergency) that student may contact Professor Yonker and explain the reasons for the absence. If Professor Yonker agrees that the circumstances are sufficiently compelling, the student will receive an excused absence and will receive credit for being in class that day. If the student also wishes to obtain contribution credit for that day, the student must email Professor Yonker with two of the student's own questions regarding the material for that day, along with answers to those questions. Each answer must be one paragraph.

During the course of lecture, if students repeatedly demonstrate they are unprepared, the entire class may be subject to a pop quiz.

### **Behavior:**

Conduct in the classroom that detracts from the instructor's ability to deliver the course material and/or a student's ability to receive the course material may trigger the removal procedure outlined in the Student Conduct Code (available at the campus library, Admissions office, Dean of Students office, Student Activities office, and Office of Instruction). Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, reading unrelated material, talking, sleeping, writing letters, text messaging, etc., during class, or failure to treat one's classmates or instructor with respect. Those who engage in such actions can be asked to leave the classroom at the instructor's discretion and subject you to the disciplinary process outlined below. Persisting in such behavior will subject a student to further disciplinary action (see below).

Disruptive behavior, willful disobedience, profanity or vulgarity, or the open and persistent defiance of authority or persistent abuse of college personnel is prohibited.

Failure to treat the instructor with respect, including, but not limited to, talking back in a disrespectful tone and emotional outbursts, are prohibited.

Engaging in the prohibited conduct detailed in the syllabus is not permitted before, during, or after class. Additionally, such conduct is not permitted via email, during office hours, or any other time a student interacts with the instructor.

Students should enter the classroom quietly out of courtesy to students who are studying prior to class. Likewise, students who arrive late for class should take their seat in a manner that does not disrupt the lecture for either the students or the instructor.

**With the exception of devices used exclusively for academic purposes, cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, and all other digital or electronic devices are to be turned off and put away during class unless their use is requested by the instructor. On examination days, no technological devices can be on. They must be turned off and put away.** Failure to adhere to these policies may trigger the disciplinary process.

*Engaging in prohibited conduct in, but not limited to, the syllabus may trigger the following:*

1. First incident – Warning and/or conference with the instructor.
2. Second incident – Conference with the Dean of Student Services and/or removal from class for one or more days. Removal from class will activate the process to remove the student from the class for ten or more days if appropriate.
3. Third incident – Conference with the Dean of Students and removal from class for one or more days. Persisting in misconduct may subject the student to short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion.

**In spite of the three-step process listed above, for student behavior that is severe, which includes, but is not limited to, the aforementioned conduct, the instructor reserves the right to remove the student from class immediately for one or more days or drop the student from the course.** If the student is removed from class, this will activate the process to remove the student from the class for ten or more days if appropriate.

#### **Relevant Deadlines:**

Deadline to drop for refund: End of second week of class.

Deadline to add and deadline to drop to avoid a “W” on transcripts: End of third week of class.

Drop deadline: End of ninth week of class

#### **Canvas:**

**You will find important resources for this class on Canvas.** To use Canvas, go to the Reedley College website. Under “Quick Links,” select “Canvas.” Enter your user ID, password, and role (select “student”). Once you have gained access to your Canvas account, you can then click on any of your classes. You should also seriously consider changing your password to better secure your account.

**You should check your Canvas account daily for important announcements, assignments, and course documents.** If you do not have a computer or access to one, you can use the media center/library at Reedley College. **It is critical that you get access to a computer since you will want to avoid missing important assignments and announcements that are found online.** Should you have any questions regarding Canvas, contact Reedley Canvas Support at (559) 629-6837 or search the Canvas Guides.

#### **Academic Adjustment due to Disability:**

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (e.g. Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

## **Term Paper:**

Details regarding the term paper will be provided later in the semester. If the paper is not turned in by the deadline which will be provided, it will not be accepted unless there are compelling circumstances. If such circumstances exist, the student must contact Professor Yonker to make arrangements.

## **Course Schedule:**

Following is the schedule for this course. You should read each chapter in its entirety prior to the class period during which it will first be discussed.

The readings from 1/16 through 3/26 are from *American Government: Institutions and Policies*; the readings from 4/14 through 5/7 are from *California Politics and Government: A Practical Approach*.

1/14: Introduction to the legislative process

1/16: Appendixes, pages A1 – A2, *The Declaration of Independence*

Chapter 1 – The Study of American Government

1/21: Appendixes, pages A3 – A17, *The Constitution of the United States*

Chapter 2 – The Constitution

1/23: Chapter 3 – Federalism

1/28: Chapter 4 – American Political Culture

1/30: Chapter 5 – Civil Liberties

2/4: Chapter 6 – Civil Rights

2/6: Chapter 7 – Public Opinion

2/11: Chapter 8 – Political Participation

2/13: Chapter 9 – Political Parties

- 2/18: Chapter 10 – Elections and Campaigns
- 2/20: Chapter 11 – Interest Groups
- 2/25: Chapter 12 – The Media
- 2/27: Review for First Midterm Examination
- 3/3: First Midterm Examination – *The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution of the United States*, and Chapters 1 through 12
- 3/5: Chapter 13 – Congress
- 3/10: Chapter 14 – The Presidency
- 3/12: Chapter 15 – The Bureaucracy
- 3/17: Chapter 16 – The Judiciary
- 3/19: Chapter 17 – Domestic Policy
- 3/24: Chapter 18 – Economic Policy
- 3/26: Chapter 19 – Foreign and Military Policy  
Chapter 20 – American Democracy, Then and Now
- 3/31: Review for Second Midterm Examination
- 4/2: Second Midterm Examination – Chapters 13 through 20
- 4/14: Chapter 1 – California’s People, Economy, and Politics: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow  
Chapter 2 – California’s Political Parties and Direct Democracy



- 4/16: Chapter 2 (continued)  
Chapter 3 – California Elections, Campaigns and the Media
- 4/21: Chapter 3 (continued)  
Chapter 4 – Interest Groups: The Power Behind the Dome
- 4/23: Chapter 4 (continued)  
Chapter 5 – The Legislature: The Perils of Policy Making
- 4/28: Chapter 6 – California Law: Politics and the Courts  
Chapter 7 – The Executive Branch: Coping with Fragmented Authority
- 4/30: Chapter 7 (continued)  
Chapter 8 – Taxing and Spending: Coping with Fragmented Authority
- 5/5: Chapter 8 (continued)  
Chapter 9 – California’s Local Governments: Politics at the Grassroots
- 5/7: Chapter 9 (continued)  
Chapter 10 – State-Federal Relations: Conflict, Cooperation, and Chaos
- 5/12: Review for Final Examination
- 5/14: Review for Final Examination (continued)
- 5/19: Final Examination – Comprehensive; 2:00-3:50 pm, Forum, Room 10

**THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE DURING THE SEMESTER**