**REEDLEY COLLEGE**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 2**

**Introduction to American Government**

**Semester: FALL 2023; Section: 51105**

**Instructor: Darlene Haines; Class Dates: 8/7/23-10/6/23**

**Email: darlene.haines@scccd.edu; Class Days: TBD**

**Phone/Text: 559-797-1321 Class Time: TBD**

**Office Hours: By Appointment Only; Bldg/Room: Online (Asynchrous)**

**WELCOME MESSAGE**

Welcome to Introduction to American Government and Politics! This course satisfies, in part, the American history and institutions requirements for CSU/UC. In this course we will be discussing many various aspects of American government. Some of the topics we will discuss include the history and foundations of American government and how they relate to current events. This includes the three branches of our Federal Government and the U.S. Constitution and its predecessor, the Articles of Confederation.  In studying the U.S. Constitution, this class will focus largely on the Bill of Rights and the Civil War Amendments, as well as the struggle for equal rights in the United States. We will spend the final portion of the course studying California state and local government.

It is important to note that some topic discussion (abortion, gay marriage, gender, gun control, religion, etc.) may be sensitive and some may have strongly held beliefs.  Therefore, it is necessary to maintain respect for others' opinions and keep an open mind as to why they feel that way.  In addition, when discussing your opinion on topics it is important to maintain respect and give examples from your educational background and life experiences so that others may understand why you hold these opinions.  We will not debate topics as to whether they are right or wrong, but rather explore the nature of those topics as they relate to policies, power, authority, legitimacy, and democracy in American government.

It is important that you communicate any technical difficulties you may be experiencing to the help desk as soon as possible to keep up with the course.  In addition, please be aware of the due date for each assignment in this course.  To perform well you will need to be vigilant in reading assigned texts, keeping up with your coursework and checking Canvas every day.  If you experience extenuating circumstances, please let me know right away. It is a pleasure to have you in class and I look forward to helping you on your academic journey!

**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**“An introduction to the principles and problems of national, state, and local government with particular emphasis on the Constitution of the United States and the state and local government of California.”**

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

• American Government 3e. Krutz, Glen and Sylvie Waskiewicz. July 28, 2021. OpenStax: Creative Commons. ISBN-13: 978-1-951693-38-1.

**🡪 The text is available in electronic version free by accessing the** [**OpenStax website**](https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e)**.**

• Introduction to California Government and Politics, Version 3. Reti, Steven. 2022. An Open Educational Resources Publication by College of the Canyons. licensed under CC BY 4.0.

**🡪 This text is available in electronic version free by accessing** [**Google Drive**](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11NAs1lIDNgAeJ1teNmtFH1XVwW_QRwNZ)**.**

• Computer or e-device AND Good internet connection

**PREREQUISITES** It is advised that students are eligible for **English 1A or 1 A H**.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the Constitutional processes and principles as they occur in modern U.S. and California politics.
2. Relate the structures, roles and powers of the national, state and local governments.
3. Recognize the impacts of various “policy inputs” on the development of public policy in the United States and in California.
4. Identify the categories of policies made by governments within the United States, and relate the questions underlying these policies.

**OUTCOME ASSESSMENT:**

Students will have achieved course objective if they complete all coursework and/or assignments with a cumulative average grade of C or better.

**LEARNING METHODS:**

Lectures, active learning, required readings from the textbook, newspaper and/or journal articles, internet articles, assignments and classroom assignments.

**CANVAS/EMAIL/ZOOM**

**CANVAS** will be utilized for test scores and announcements. Make sure you check Canvas every day for changes or updates. The new 24/7 Online Support is now LIVE. You can reach them by calling 1-844-629-6837.

**EMAIL** Reedley College will use your student email account as the primary means to communicate with you. Communication with all students will be via district provided email unless you choose to receive notices about your student account by U.S. Mail. Email accounts can be accessed from any of the lab computers on campus or from an off-campus computer with Internet access.

**ZOOM MEETINGS** **This class is asynchronous and does not require regular attendance via virtual meetings.** Virtual meetings may be scheduled using Zoom; however, they are not mandatory and will not count against your grade if you cannot attend. Typically, these meetings will not present any new information that could otherwise be found in the syllabus and/or Canvas Announcements. These meeting may be recorded and available for future viewing. You can view upcoming or past Zoom meetings by clicking on the Zoom button from the Canvas Home Page. If you attend a virtual meeting, you must present yourself as if you were in an on-campus class. Your appearance and background environment must be professional and academic.

**PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE**

All students enrolled in Distance Education courses must log in to the course(s) and complete any assignment(s) or other activities, to be determined by the instructor, that are required during the first week. Students who fail to complete first week assignments/activities within the instructor’s deadline will be dropped. After the first week and during the time period before the final withdrawal date, “students are responsible for officially withdrawing from any class or classes in which they no longer wish to be enrolled.”

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Upon identifying themselves to the instructor, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact Programs and Services located in the Disabled Students Programs and Services Building. You may also call (559) 638-0332. The TTY phone number is (559) 638-0356. "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 American with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act please contact your instructor as soon as possible."

**ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

Academic freedom includes freedom of inquiry and instruction for every faculty member, including freedom in presenting and discussing subjects related to his academic discipline. Academic freedom also includes, but is not limited to, freedom to:

* Inquire about, present, and explore difficult and controversial material that is relevant to the official course outline of record;
* Express differences of opinion with and among students, faculty, staff, and administration on academic matters;
* Demonstrate, teach, and defend critical thinking skills and intellectual honesty.

Every faculty member is a member of a learned profession and shall have the freedom to use his professional scholarship, and present this scholarship in any academic discourse.

**ONLINE CLASSROOM GUIDELINES**

In this course, effective communication and respectful behavior are essential. Adhering to these guidelines will create a conducive online learning environment where we can explore the complexities of American government and politics thoughtfully and respectfully. These guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Contributions in Discussion Boards:** Engaging in meaningful discussions allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities of American politics and governance. Actively participate in discussion boards, engage with your peers, and contribute substantively to discussions on American government topics. (see “Leaving Feedback). **Example:** Instead of a brief comment like "I agree," provide reasoning and evidence to support your agreement or disagreement with a classmate's post on a political issue.
2. **Academic Language:** Academic language fosters clear communication and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject matter. Use formal and appropriate language suitable for an academic context when discussing American government and political concepts. **Example:** Instead of using colloquial language like "the big political guys," use "prominent political figures" to maintain an academic tone.
3. **Being Respectful of Others' Opinions:** Respectful discussions promote a constructive learning environment and allow for the exchange of diverse perspectives. Treat your classmates' opinions with respect and engage in civil discourse, even when opinions differ. **Example:** Instead of dismissing an opposing viewpoint, acknowledge the validity of the perspective and offer a counterargument supported by relevant theories or historical examples.
4. **Respecting Diversity:** Recognizing diverse viewpoints enhances the exploration of the multifaceted nature of American democracy. Embrace the diversity of political beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and experiences within the class when discussing American government and politics. **Example:** When discussing public policy, consider how different cultural backgrounds may influence individuals' perspectives on the issue.
5. **Academic Integrity - Doing Your Own Work:** Academic integrity is fundamental to the study of politics and ensures fair evaluation of students' knowledge and insights. Submit original work that reflects your understanding of American government and politics. **Example:** Provide proper citations when referring to historical events, court cases, or political theories to acknowledge the sources of your information.
6. **Using Chat GPT or AI Tools:** While AI tools can assist in research, they should not replace your engagement with the subject matter. Treat Chat GPT or AI tools as supplemental resources to complement your learning, not as replacements for critical thinking and analysis. **Example:** Use AI-generated summaries of legislative debates as a starting point for further research and analysis but independently analyze and assess the nuances of the discussion.
7. **Using Proper MLA Format - Citing Sources and In-Text Citations:** Proper citation strengthens the credibility of your political analyses and demonstrates responsible scholarship. Accurately cite all sources used in your academic work to give credit to authors and researchers. **Example:** Follow MLA format guidelines for citing Supreme Court cases or government reports in your research.
8. **Avoid Emoticons and Texting Language:** Professional language encourages clear and respectful communication in academic discussions. Maintain a formal tone in your online communications and avoid using emoticons or texting language. **Example:** Refrain from using expressions like "LOL" or emoticons like ":)" when discussing political events or policy issues.
9. **No "Yelling" or Using All Caps:** Respectful debates and conversations promote a conducive learning atmosphere. Avoid writing in all caps, as it may be perceived as shouting and disrupt the flow of discussions. **Example:** Instead of writing "THE PRESIDENT SHOULD DO THIS," write "The President should consider implementing this policy due to these reasons."
10. **No Flaming:** Respectful debates foster a constructive exchange of ideas and enhance the learning experience. Refrain from engaging in aggressive or offensive behavior towards others, even when discussing politically sensitive topics. **Example:** If you disagree with a classmate's political perspective, focus on presenting your own views with supporting evidence rather than resorting to personal attacks.

Failure to follow these guidelines could result in any or all of the following:

(1) Meeting with the instructor; (2) Loss of points; (3) Other disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

**\*\*Essentially, any behavior that disrupts the class will not be tolerated.**

**EXAMS**

All exams must be taken on Canvas. The Unit Exam will only be available on the scheduled exam day from 12am until 11:59pm. You must log on to Canvas on the scheduled due date to take the Unit Exam. Keep in mind, all three Unit Exams are worth half of your overall grade in this class. To perform well on Unit Exams, it is essential to:

1. Stay up-to-date with all assigned readings.
2. Submit all assignments on time.
3. Take all Practice Quizzes for each unit.

**PRACTICE QUIZZES**

Practice Quizzes are available on Canvas and are designed to enhance your understanding of specific topics covered in the chapters. While Practice Quizzes are entirely optional, engaging with them offer many benefits. Some of these include:

**Reduce Anxiety and Increase Confidence**: Taking Practice Quizzes reduces exam anxiety and boosts confidence by creating a safe space for learning and mistake-making, instilling a sense of control over learning, demonstrating progress and growth, improving memory recall, and areas to improve.

**Flexibility:** Take Practice Quizzes on your time. Practice quizzes will be available at the beginning of each Unit until the day prior to the Unit Exam. You will have **two untimed attempts**. Quizzes will vary in length from 5-15 questions based on the specific chapter. Typically, the more information there is in the chapter, the more likely you are to see more questions and vice versa.

**No Impact on Overall Grade:** After each Practice Quiz you will receive a score based on the amount of correct answers. These points will not count towards or against your overall grade. In this way, practice quizzes provide a safe space for students to make mistakes and learn from them without the fear of negative consequences.

**Familiarize with Exam Format:** Get a sample of what the actual exam will look and feel like and become acquainted with various question types on the exam including: multiple choice, true/false, multiple answer, fill in the blank, and matching questions. By familiarizing yourself with this comprehensive range of question styles, you will develop a deeper understanding of the assessment structure and focus your studies.

**Instant Feedback:** Get instant feedback to help you identify areas of study that may require more attention and help you focus your studies. Answers can be viewed **only once** after each attempt. Answers will be marked either correct or incorrect. Please note incorrect answers will not show the correct answer. Again, this is done to help focus your studying and reinforcement of information learned.

**DISCUSSION BOARDS**

The quality of your writing assignments is significant in this course. You are expected to maintain a professional and academic tone throughout. Engage your critical thinking skills and ensure to address all aspects of the question comprehensively. To achieve your highest potential, follow these guidelines:

**Length:** A minimum of two well-crafted paragraphs is mandatory for each assignment. You may find that two paragraphs for specific discussion topics is not enough. A well written response to these topics generally encompasses about four or more paragraphs.

**Supporting Sources:** It is required to include at least one reference to the textbook to reinforce your analysis. However, don't limit your research to the textbook only. You are encouraged to explore additional resources to further back your argument and provide a richer context to your work. All sources used, including your textbook, should be appropriately cited using the Modern Language Association (MLA) style. This includes in-text citations and a Works Cited list. Familiarize yourself with the guidelines of the [MLA citation format](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html) to avoid plagiarism and a deduction of points.

**Participation and Feedback:** Active participation in this course extends beyond merely posting your assignments. You are expected to read and leave meaningful comments on at least two other posts. Respectful, constructive, and meaningful feedback is important to help improve critical thinking and communication. Simply saying "good job" or "I liked your post" doesn't help others improve (and won't earn you points for participation). Use the **WHO** feedback method:

**What you liked:**

Explain specifically what you liked about their writing (how they described or explained something, how they supported their thoughts, etc.).

**How to improve:**

Offer suggestions what could have been included or omitted to improve their writing (defined a term or concept, support their opinion using the textbook, cited sources, used specific examples, etc.).

**Overall thoughts:**

provide your overall reaction to their writing and encourage them to continue improving.

**Helpful Tips:** It is highly recommend drafting your assignments in Microsoft Word before pasting them onto the discussion board. This approach ensures that your work is saved and allows you to perform spell checks and grammar edits before submission.

**Grading Rubric:** All discussion board assignments (excluding Discussion Board 1) will be graded using the Discussion Board Grading Rubric. This measure is designed to provide you with constructive feedback to improve your future assignments.Any additional comments and feedback on your assignments will be posted in the assignment comment section on Canvas.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Ratings** | | | **Points** |
| Critical Thinking  Used critical thinking to demonstrate analysis and understanding of the topic. | **20 to >15.0 pts**  **Proficient**  Fully demonstrates critical thinking and analysis of the topic. Fully defines and explains uncommon words or phrases. | **15 to >6.0 pts**  **Refining**  Somewhat demonstrates critical thinking and analysis of the topic. Somewhat defines and explains uncommon words or phrases. | **6 to >0.0 pts**  **Developing**  Minimally demonstrates critical thinking and analysis of the topic. Minimally defines and explains uncommon words or phrases. | 20 |
| Source Connections  Used at least one source (textbook) to connect the topic to authoritative data. | **20 to >15.0 pts**  **Proficient**  Fully articulates specific examples from the textbook to connect the topic to course learning. May skillfully connect additional authoritative sources and/or personal experiences to the topic. | **15 to >6.0 pts**  **Refining**  Somewhat articulates specific examples from the textbook to connect the topic to course learning. May somewhat connect additional authoritative sources and/or personal experiences to the topic. | **6 to >0.0 pts**  **Developing**  Minimally or vaguely articulates specific examples from the textbook to connect the topic to course learning. May vaguely connect additional authoritative sources and/or personal experiences to the topic. | 20 |
| Participation and Collaboration  Demonstrated class participation by reading and responding to other posts. | **10 to >7.0 pts**  **Proficient**  Fully provides respectful, meaningful, and reflective feedback. Responds to at least two other posts. | **7 to >4.0 pts**  **Refining**  Provides feedback that is respectful, but is general and is somewhat meaningful and reflective. Responds to at least two other posts. | **4 to >0.0 pts**  **Developing**  Provides feedback that is respectful, but does not provide meaningful, and reflective feedback. Responds to only one post. | 10 |
| **Total 50** | | | | |

**FINAL REFLECTIVE ESSAY**

This writing assignment will be a reflection on your political thoughts and attitudes of American government and politics before and throughout this course. You must address **ALL** of the questions in your essay. Sources are not required, however, if you use a source, it must be cited appropriately. You must submit this assignment on Canvas. Late submissions, emails, and hard copies will **NOT** be accepted. The final reflective essay is submitted privately so you may be as candid as you see fit. Specific guidelines are provided below and on Canvas at the appropriate time.

**1. Content:** Reflection papers are to be used as proof of your thoughtful, meaningful, and critical thinking of our subject matter. You should use your textbook and other sources used in class to help you develop an informed opinion based on facts and not biases.

**2. Format and Citations:** Submissions must be in MLA format. Sources are not required however, if you choose to use sources, you are expected to cite appropriately.  When using citations, you must provide a Work Cited list at the end of the essay.

**3. Length:** 2 to 4 pages (Times New Roman 12-point font; double-spaced; 1-inch margins – top/bottom; left/right).

**4. Questions: YOU MUST ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS FOR FULL CONSIDERATION.**

**You do not have to type these questions as part of your essay.**

1. What were your political thoughts and attitudes prior to taking this course? (This question is not specifically addressing your political leaning, but rather how much of a role the government played in your life and whether you thought that was good, bad, beneficial, detrimental, etc.)
2. How did your ***political socialization*** play a role in developing these thoughts? (See Openstax Ch 6.1)
3. What particular area of the course impacted you the most? Why?
4. Has what you have learned affected preconceptions (ideas or opinions formed beforehand; a bias; prejudice) or misconceptions (ideas that are wrong or untrue) prior to this class?
5. Will what you have learned change your thoughts, attitudes, and or behavior in the future?

**LATE/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS POLICIES**

**Missed Exams**: Occasionally, unanticipated circumstances may cause you to miss an Exam. In such cases, a provision exists for a make-up exam under two conditions: either prior notification is given before the scheduled exam date, or credible evidence (e.g., doctor's note, substantiation of a family crisis, etc.) is provided to demonstrate that your absence was indeed unavoidable. Please note that explanations such as "I forgot" or "I didn't know" will not be deemed acceptable. If you fail to appear for the rescheduled examination without a compelling reason, anticipate receiving a score of zero for that particular exam. Be aware that the make-up exam may have a different structure from the original, potentially comprising entirely of essay or short answer questions.

**Late Assignments**: It's essential for the progression of the course that discussion board posts are submitted by the specified due dates. However, I understand that sometimes other commitments might cause minor delays. Therefore, a grace period has been factored in, allowing you to submit your posts a couple of days past the initial due date, provided that the discussion board is still open. During this grace period, there will be no penalty for late submissions. This is intended to promote active participation without overly penalizing unforeseen delays. Please strive to adhere to the original deadlines as closely as possible to maintain pace with the course.

**Missed Assignments**: If you miss the submission window for an assignment, you will receive a zero. Assignment make-up opportunities are permitted provided you can offer documented evidence that substantiates the unpreventable nature of your absence. This may include, but is not limited to, situations such as a family emergency, medical appointments, illness, or other unforeseen major events. As with exams, "I forgot" or "I didn't know" are not considered valid excuses.

**EXTRA CREDIT:**

**Presidential Podcast – Washington Post**

Extra credit is optional and not required as part of your grade in class. To earn extra credit, choose any episode from the [Presidential podcast](https://www.washingtonpost.com/podcasts/presidential/)  from the Washington Post and listen in its entirety. Bonus episodes or any other episodes outstide of 2016 will not be accepted. Then write a brief summary of the episode and how it relates to what you are learning from the textbook and other information learned in this course. Then describe what you found most interesting and whether you agree or disagree with the hosts overall opinion. You may submit a maximum of 5 summaries.  Each summary is worth up to 10 extra credit points.  Submissions will be accepted on Canvas throughout the semester, with all submissions due in the last week before finals. All submissions must comply with the following:

* Must be in proper [MLA format](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html) including a works cited page.
* Include the name and date of the episode (must be during 2016).
* Must include a summary of the episode and your opinion about a topic discussed.
* Must include a minimum of one textbook source to support your opinion and topic being discussed.
* Must be at least a minimum of 400 words (one page)
* Must be submitted on Canvas by 11:59pm on the assigned due date.

**CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:**

“Cheating is the act or attempted act of taking an examination or performing an assigned, evaluated task in a fraudulent or deceptive manner, such as having improper access to answers, in an attempt to gain an unearned academic advantage. Cheating may include, but is not limited to, copying from another’s work, supplying one’s work to another, giving or receiving copies of examinations without an instructor’s permission, using or displaying notes or devices inappropriate to the conditions of the examination, allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the student, or failing to disclose research results completely.”

“Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating: the use of another’s words or ideas without identifying them as such or giving credit to the source. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, failing to provide complete citations and references for all work that draws on the ideas, words, or work of others, failing to identify the contributors to work done in collaboration, submitting duplicate work to be evaluated in different courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors involved, or failing to observe computer security systems and software copyrights. Incidents of cheating and plagiarism may result in any of a variety of sanctions and penalties, which may range from a failing grade on the particular examination, paper, project, or assignment in question to a failing grade in the course, at the discretion of the instructor and depending on the severity and frequency of the incidents.”

**GRADING:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Points** |
| Exams (3) 150 points each | 56% (450 points) |
| Discussion Boards (1) 25 points  (3) 50 points each | 22% (175 points) |
| Final Essay Exam 200 points | 22% (175 points) |
| **TOTAL** | **100% (800 points)** |

**GRADING SCALE:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 800 points to 720 points |
| B | 719 points to 640 points |
| C | 639 points to 560 points |
| D | 559 points to 480 points |
| F | 479 points and below |

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE BY MONTH**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **AUGUST 2023** | | | | |
| **MONDAY** | **TUESDAY** | **WEDNESDAY** | **THURSDAY** | **FRIDAY** |
|  | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| WEEK 1 | Read Syllabus | **Due: Disc Board 1**  **Purpose of Government** | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 1 Democracy |  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 2  Foundational History |
| WEEK 2 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 3  Federalism |  | **Due: Disc Board 2**  **Pick-a-Question** |  |
| WEEK 3 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
|  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 4  Civil Liberties |  |  |  |
| WEEK 4 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |
|  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 5  Civil Rights |  | **Due: Disc Board 3**  **Pick-a-Question** |  |
|  | **SEPTEMBER 2023** | | | | |
| **MONDAY** | **TUESDAY** | **WEDNESDAY** | **THURSDAY** | **FRIDAY** |
| WEEK 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| **Labor Day No Class** | **Unit 1 Exam**  **Due 11:59pm** | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 6  Public Opinion | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 7  Voting & Elections |  |
| WEEK 6 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| Due: Reading Openstax Ch 8  The Media |  | **Due: Disc Board 4**  **Pick-a-Question** |  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 9  Political Parties |
| WEEK 7 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| Due: Reading Openstax Ch 10  Interest Groups | **Unit 2 Exam**  **Due 11:59pm** | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 12  The President |  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 15  The Bureaucracy |
| WEEK 8 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| Due: Reading Openstax Ch 11  The Congress |  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 13  The Courts |  | Due: Reading Openstax Ch 16  Domestic Policy |
|  | **OCTOBER 2023** | | | | |
| **MONDAY** | **TUESDAY** | **WEDNESDAY** | **THURSDAY** | **FRIDAY** |
| WEEK 9 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Due: Reading Openstax Ch 17  Foreign Policy | Due: Reading California Government Ch 2 AND Ch 9 | Due: Reading California Government Ch 8 AND Ch 12 | **Unit Exam 3**  **Due 11:59pm** | **Final Essay**  **Due 11:59pm** |

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE BY WEEK:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **WEEK** | **DATES** | **ASSIGNMENTS** |
| 1 | Aug 7-11 | Read Syllabus, Discussion Board 1  Read Openstax Chapter 1 & 2 |
| 2 | Aug 14-8 | Read Openstax Chapter 3  Discussion Board 2 |
| 3 | Aug 21-25 | Read Openstax Chapter 4 |
| 4 | Aug 28-Sept 1 | Read Openstax Chapter 5  Discussion Board 3 |
| 5 | Sept 4-8 | **Unit 1 Exam**  Read Openstax Chapter 6 & 7 |
| 6 | Sept 11-15 | Read Openstax Chapter 8 & 9  Discussion Board 4 |
| 7 | Sept 18-22 | **Unit 2 Exam**  Read Openstax Chapter 10, 12, & 15 |
| 8 | Sept 25-29 | Read Openstax Chapter 11, 13, & 16 |
| 9 | Oct 2-6 | **Unit Exam 3**  **Final Essay**  Read Openstax Chapter 17  Read California Government Chapter 2, 8, 9, & 12, |

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. Study both the theory and practice of “democracy.”

2. Research the forces and political philosophies that influenced the founding fathers of the United States and the

framers of the Constitution.

3. Compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution of the United States of America,

including a discussion of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist factions.

4. Review the role played by the U. S. Constitution in (a) creating our federal system of government, with its

subsequent divided responsibilities, and (b) establishing the separation of powers and checks and balances

principles at the national level, as well as the implications of such.

5. Examine the federal system as a practical device to accommodate—within one government—national and local

needs unique to the United States.

6. Evaluate the relationship between the Bill of Rights, the government, and the concept of “civil liberty,” noting that

liberty is both the absence of governmental intrusion and the result of a set of guarantees that protect the

individual against the excesses of government.

7. Assess the idea of civil rights as the rights of all citizens to equal protection of the law, as provided in the 14th

Amendment of the Constitution. Students will also explore the development of civil rights, using the evolving

civil rights of African Americans and other groups as examples.

8. Consider his/her role as a voter in the United States political system, and survey the varying forms and systems of

elections used in the United States, including primary elections, general elections, California referendum and

initiative elections, California recall elections, and the electoral college.

9. Gain an understanding of the characteristics of the American political party system and the functions parties serve

in the process of governing.

10. Analyze the issues surrounding the development of public opinion, and its influence on the formation of public

policy.

11. Examine the influence of different means of mass communication (media)—both news-based and entertainment-

based—on the development of public policy, and the techniques employed by each.

12. Evaluate the positive and negative effects of the countervailing influences of interest groups in American politics,

the tactics of interest groups, and the means employed for keeping them honest.

13. Appraise the powers and limitations of the office of the President of the United States, and examine the roles

he/she plays as a ceremonial, political, administrative, military, and legislative leader.

14. Examine the various powers/roles of Congress, different theories of representation, and the strengths and

weaknesses of the legislative, or lawmaking, process.

15. Study the role of the national courts in interpreting the Constitution, shaping individual rights, and determining

the distribution of governmental power. Students will also consider the subtleties of constitutional interpretation,

noting that the Constitution is a living document that adapts to changing needs.

16. Explore the vastness and complexity of the bureaucracy. Students will investigate the different national

departments and agencies, the characteristics of their growth and evolution and the mechanics of reorganization

and reform; and to comprehend the difficulties of effective reform.

17. Examine the programs in the area of domestic policy intended to promote “the general welfare.”

18. Investigate the forces that shape American foreign and defense policy.

19. Study the structure, major functions, and significant powers of both the State of California and local

governmental entities. Additionally, students will examine the relationship of state and local institutional powers

to the concept of Federalism and survey various examples of direct and indirect democracy at the state and local

levels.

The instructor retains the right to change or modify this syllabus as necessary.