

SYLLABUS FOR POLS 102 ONLINE:

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

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Face to Face Office Hours - By appointment only

Virtual Office Hours: M-Th 9:00-10:00 am (*see below for details*)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will examine the origin, development and operation of local, state and national political institutions within the United States, emphasizing the contemporary operations of the American political system. Students will gain an understanding of important American documents, the rights and powers provided therein, and the structure of the American system of government.

The goal of this course is to foster informed, responsible participation in public life. Knowing how to be a good citizen is essential to the preservation and improvement of the United States' democracy. Upon completion of this course, students will understand the major ideas, protections, privileges, and structures that affect the life of a citizen in the United States political system.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- 1. H&H:** A More Perfect Union, First Edition, McGraw-Hill Publishing, 2010.
Authors: Harrison and Harris.
ISBN #978-0-07-352638-6.

** This text is available for rent through the IVC Bookstore**

- 2. Giventer:** Governing California, 2nd Edition, McGraw-Hill Publishing, 2008.
Author: Giventer, Lawrence.
ISBN #978-0-07-352633-1.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO's) FOR THE COURSE

Outcome 1:	Develop an understanding of civic responsibility.
Outcome 2:	Participate in activities that promote the public good (e.g., the voting process, jury duty, community service).
Outcome 3:	Examine the election and voting process.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THE COURSE	
Objective 1	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the early history of the United States of America including the history, meaning, and significance of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
Objective 2	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history of federalism and its continuing importance in the United States today.
Objective 3	Students will demonstrate an understanding of past and present conflicts over the meaning and protection of Civil Liberties.
Objective 4	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the role of public opinion and the media in the American political system.
Objective 5	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of American political parties, lobbying, and interest groups.
Objective 6	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the American election process, including political campaigning and voter behavior.
Objective 7	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the formal structure of Congress and the committee system, the legislative process and congressional powers.
Objective 8	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the principal powers of the executive branch of the United States government including the ever expanding power of the president and the federal bureaucracy.
Objective 9	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the American judicial system and how it is affected by critical issues in American society.
Objective 10	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the organizational structure, powers, and challenges confronting California's state and local governments.

COURSE EVALUATION:

ASSIGNMENT:

POINTS:

Three non-cumulative exams	450 (150 each)
One slightly shorter exam on California politics	100
Weekly quizzes	150
Weekly assignments	150
Weekly discussion board posts	150
Optional writing assignment	50 (extra credit)
Documentation of community service	50 (extra credit)

Exams:

You will be required to complete three major non cumulative exams on American politics and one slightly smaller exam on California politics throughout the semester. You cannot retake these timed online tests nor stop and come back to them, so be sure not to begin one unless you are prepared to finish it in one sitting. All quizzes and exams in this course are open note. Feel free to utilize your text, online resources, etc., but all work must be your own. You may not consult with other people when taking your quizzes and exams. Review sheets, vocabulary lists and PowerPoint presentations are all available as study aids in the Review Materials section of the course on Blackboard.

Quizzes:

You will be assigned to read fourteen chapters from the Harrison and Harris text. Each week you will complete one chapter in this textbook and take the online quiz for that chapter. (Your final quiz of the course will cover readings from the Giventner text.) You cannot retake these timed online quizzes nor stop and come back to them, so be sure not to begin one unless you are prepared to finish it in one sitting. All quizzes and exams in this course are open note. Feel free to utilize your text, online resources, etc., but all work must be your own. You may not consult with other people when taking your quizzes and exams.

Assignments:

Each week you will be required to complete an assignment related to the topics being covered that week. The nature of the assignment varies from week to week. Please refer to the individual weekly assignments posted in Blackboard for detailed instructions on what is required and information on how each assignment will be graded.

Discussion Board Participation:

You will be required to **meaningfully** contribute to our online discussion board on a regular basis. Every week you should respond to each question posted by the instructor for that week AND respond to comments made by at least two of your classmates on each of those instructor questions. The objective should be open and friendly conversation about American politics. Students usually report that the online discussion is their favorite part of class (so long as the goal is conversation, not just meeting minimum requirements). Also, please note that while you are encouraged to comment on any posted discussion topic at any time throughout the course, you must comment on each of the week's instructor questions by 11:59 PM Wednesday and you must respond to your fellow student's posts by 11:59 PM Sunday.

Extra Credit Opportunities:

You have the option of completing a 1,000-2,000 word essay and/or engaging in community outreach and service projects throughout the semester as a way to earn up to an additional 100 points of credit in this course (50 per assignment). Details on these assignments may be found in the assignments tab in blackboard (listed below all the other required assignments).

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION:

Online communication with the instructor should be written as you would write a business letter, not a text to a friend or a tweet. Any email sent to the instructor should have the course and section number as well as your full name appearing in the subject line (e.g. POLS 102-001 Adam Ekins) and all email communication for this class must be done through your IVC email account. I do not know who sexygurl25@aol.com may be, and I will not read any emails he tries to send me. While I try to respond to emails quickly, you should usually plan on a 48 hour response time (longer over the weekend) before you hear back from me.

Remember to be courteous towards all other students in the online discussion board. Flaming, trolling, and other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. If you don't know what flaming and trolling are, Google them. ☺ I reserve the right to kick you out of the course with a failing grade if I feel your behavior merits such action.

LATE WORK:

My general policy is that I do not accept late work, period. In rare circumstances when I feel there are justifiable reasons for finishing something late I may still allow you to turn in late work with whatever penalty I deem appropriate. Do not count on this. Turn your work in on time.

ATTENDANCE:

If for any reason you choose to withdraw from this course it is your responsibility to withdraw from the course by the withdrawal deadline. If you fail to do so you will receive an F, not a W, for the course, and you will not be refunded your tuition. Individuals who have not yet participated in class by the tenth day of the semester may also be dropped from the course.

A WARNING ABOUT CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:

If any student is caught cheating or engaging in plagiarism in my class at any time or in any way that student will immediately be issued a failing grade for the entire course. If any student is caught helping another student to cheat or engage in plagiarism that student will also immediately be issued a failing grade for the entire course. I will also report cheaters and plagiarists to the college administration and do everything in my power to get them expelled from IVC. If you have ANY question about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism then speak to me immediately. I will not listen to excuses and justifications after the fact and I will not show mercy. **DO NOT test me on this issue.**

DISABLED STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Every effort has been made to ensure that this course is accessible to all students, including students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor and the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. The DSP&S office is located in Building 2100, telephone 760-355-6312.

TECH SUPPORT:

Often I can answer simple tech support questions, but for harder questions (problems logging in, etc.) or for faster service, you may be better served by contacting Student Support Services:
<http://www.imperial.edu/students/technology-support>

REGULAR EFFECTIVE CONTACT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION:

As you may know, online courses are meant to be equivalent to face to face courses both in terms of work load, materials covered, student-to-teacher interaction and student-to-student interaction. Encouraging interaction among students and between students and the instructor can be particularly challenging in online classes. It is easy to feel that you are alone. I want to make sure that this is not the case. With this in mind, please consider the following resources:

Discussion Board:

The discussion board can and should be so much more than a place to post answers to questions posted by the instructor. The goal of all discussion board interaction should be conversation, so you are highly encouraged to do more than the minimum requirements here. In addition to the weekly discussion questions described previously, our discussion board includes a forum for getting to know one another better where students are encouraged to talk about anything and everything going on in their lives. You're required to post a short introduction there, but you're encouraged to do much more. Feel free to post photos, videos, links to your favorite websites, whatever. Make sure what you post is appropriate, but feel free to get creative. Additionally, there is a forum provided for asking and answering questions about the course. Often you can get a quicker response to a simple question through this forum than through an email to the instructor. (You'll find the Introductions and Q & A Forums listed at the top of our Discussion Board - accessible by clicking on the Discussion Board Tab.) Additionally, if there's a topic of interest you'd like to discuss, go ahead and create a new thread in the discussion board to do so. (Feel free to contact me and request that I add a new thread instead if you're more comfortable with that.) I'll be reading and posting responses to your posts on the board (academic or otherwise) and may occasionally create my own new threads to discuss important current events or other topics of interest. The discussion board should be the heart of our class and feel more like friends talking in a classroom than strangers posting anonymously online. I'm committed to making it that way, but I need your help to accomplish that goal.

Email:

Email can be used the same way as the discussion board, to talk about the class, current events, personal interests, or whatever. Follow the etiquette and protocols described above, but please **DO NOT HESITATE TO SEND ME AN EMAIL ABOUT WHATEVER**. Though I ask for 48 hours to respond to emails, like you, I actually check my email multiple times a day (ok, I admit it, multiple times an hour) and will often respond very quickly. I don't want you to be confused about any element of the course. If you're lost, or just want to talk more about a topic somewhere other than on the discussion board, email is a great option.

Phone:

Yes, phone. You have one. You remember how they work. And certain things are best accomplished in a good old fashioned phone conversation. That's my office phone up top that I answer most of the day M-Th. If you want to talk to me over the phone on the weekend, send me an email with your number and I'll give you a call.

Virtual office hours:

I'm an adjunct instructor at IVC, which means I have a full-time job elsewhere (that's why I don't have regular office hours on campus). However, I am available for online communication every morning M-Th. Send me an email or give me a call and we can set up whatever kind of interaction you're most comfortable with. I'm happy to chat through blackboard or some other program you're familiar with. Or we can talk "face to face" using Facetime or Skype. If there's some other format you'd like to try, just let me know. I want to be as flexible as possible because I'd like to talk with you as much as possible. Again PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ME. I would really like to hear from you. And I know many of you aren't necessarily available from 9-10 am on a weekday, so if you want to talk online some other time, just let me know in an email and we'll figure something out.

Face to face office hours:

Sometimes you just need to talk to a person face to face. I'm happy to meet you on campus or in El Centro somewhere, but it'll probably have to be in the evening or on a Friday. Call or email me and I'll be happy to set up a meeting.

Other instructor communication

In addition to the above, you'll be hearing from me in a number of other formats. I'll give you feedback on your discussion board posts and assignments on a weekly basis. I'll also post weekly course announcements to keep you up to date on the latest happenings and to remind you that, "oh yeah, I have some online assignments to complete." And of course you'll find my instructions to you scattered throughout the course. I try to be as clear and precise as possible in my explanations of how to complete assignments and how they'll be evaluated, but I do assume most of you are generally comfortable with computers and online classes and I try not to make you read long tutorials on stuff you already know how to do. That said, and I'll write this big so you actually read it....

If you're ever confused, if you ever need help, if you ever want clarification on any element of the course...

CONTACT ME!

I'd really like to hear from you.

ONLINE COURSE ORGANIZATION

All our “lecture” materials and assignments are organized in the online course into four Units.

Unit I is focused mostly on important historical information and covers learning objectives 1-3, Chapters 1-5 in the Harrison and Harris text and the first five weeks of class.

Unit II is focused on explaining how democracy functions in the United States today and covers learning objectives 4-6, Chapters 6-10 in the Harrison and Harris text and the next five weeks of class.

Unit III is focused on examining each of the three major branches of government in the United States: the Executive (including the bureaucracy), Legislative, and Judicial branches. This Unit covers learning objectives 7-9, Chapters 11-14 in the Harrison and Harris text and the next four weeks of class.

Unit IV is focused on politics in California and it covers learning objective 10, the entire Giventner text, and the last two weeks of class. It gives us an opportunity to review all that has gone before in the class and apply our knowledge to state politics rather than national politics.

Each of the units is divided up by week with a list of tasks for you to accomplish each week.

In general, during each week you will:

Complete the posted reading and view any posted videos or other online material, PowerPoint presentations, etc.

Power Point presentations may be accessed via links within the relevant Unit tab or by clicking on the Review Materials tab. Please note that these presentations are outlines only (which I also use in my face to face classes), and while they help to draw attention to important concepts in the readings and other materials they are a supplement to those materials and should be studied alongside those other readings and materials

Take a quiz on those readings and materials

Quizzes may be accessed via links within the relevant Unit tab or by clicking on the Quizzes and Exams tab. Each is worth 10 points. Generally these quizzes are limited to multiple-choice and true/false questions though the occasional fill in the blank or essay response may be required to complete them.

Post in the discussion board in response to questions regarding those readings and materials

The discussion board may be accessed via links within the relevant Unit tab or by clicking on the Discussion Board tab. Each week you are required AT A MINIMUM to respond to the instructor question and two of your fellow students. Your posts will be graded according to the following rubric.

	Satisfactory 4-5 pts.	Needs Improvement 1-3 pts.	No credit 0 pts.
Response to Instructor	Completely answers all questions asked. Opinions are supported by facts and arguments from course materials.	Only partially answers questions or fails to support opinions expressed or shows no evidence that the student has read/viewed relevant course materials	No post
Response to other students	At least two responses to other student posts which demonstrate thoughtful analysis	Only one response or two or more responses that do not demonstrate thoughtful analysis	No post

You can receive up to 5 points for your response to the instructor question and up to 5 points for your responses to other students for a total of 10 points per week.

Please remember that your discussion board posts, while they may be informally phrased, should reflect quality writing with few spelling and grammar errors. Always back up your opinions with arguments and facts (from the readings when possible) and always be respectful of others with differing opinions.

Complete the posted assignment associated with those readings and materials

Assignments may be accessed via links within the relevant Unit tab or by clicking on the Assignments tab. Each assignment is worth 10 points, but assignments may vary considerably from week to week. Each assignment will have its own grading rubric explaining what is required and how the assignment will be graded. Assignments must be turned in through Blackboard, not emailed directly to the instructor.

Unit Exams:

At the end of each unit you will complete a unit exam covering all the materials for that unit. These exams may be accessed via links within the relevant Unit tab or by clicking on the Quizzes and Exams tab. Each of the exams for units I-III is worth 150 points and the unit IV exam is worth 100 points

Review materials for these exams including review sheets, vocabulary lists, and PowerPoint presentations may be accessed by clicking on the Review Materials tab. If you have any difficulty viewing these materials please contact me. If you do not have PowerPoint there are free online PowerPoint viewers that you may download from the internet quite easily.

Extra Credit:

You may earn extra credit in this course by writing an essay and/or engaging in community service activities. Details regarding extra credit opportunities may be found by clicking on the Assignments tab and scrolling to the bottom of the page.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TASK LIST

Unit I Week I	Introduction to Course and Politics in America Required Reading: H&H Chapter 1 Tasks: Chapter 1 Quiz, Week 1 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 1 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, January 26
Unit I Week II	The US Constitution Required Reading: H&H Chapter 2 Tasks: Chapter 2 Quiz, Week 2 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 2 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, February 2
Unit I Week III	Federalism Required Reading: H&H Chapter 3 Tasks: Chapter 3 Quiz, Week 3 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 3 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, February 9
Unit I Week IV	Civil Liberties Required Reading: H&H Chapter 4 Tasks: Chapter 4 Quiz, Week 4 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 4 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, February 16
Unit I Week V	Civil Rights Required Reading: H&H Chapter 5 Tasks: Chapter 5 Quiz, Week 5 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 5 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, February 23
UNIT I EXAM	Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, February 23
Unit II Week VI	Political Socialization & Public Opinion Required Reading: H&H Chapter 6 Tasks: Chapter 6 Quiz, Week 6 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 6 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, March 2
Unit II Week VII	Interest Groups Required Reading: H&H Chapter 7 Tasks: Chapter 7 Quiz, Week 7 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 7 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, March 9
Unit II Week VIII	Political Parties Required Reading: H&H Chapter 8 Tasks: Chapter 8 Quiz, Week 8 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 8 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, March 16

Unit II Week IX	Elections, Campaigns & Voting Required Reading: H&H Chapter 9 Tasks: Chapter 9 Quiz, Week 9 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 9 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, March 23
Unit II Week X	The Media Required Reading: H&H Chapter 10 Tasks: Chapter 10 Quiz, Week 10 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 10 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, March 30
UNIT II EXAM	Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, March 30
Unit III Week XI	Congress Required Reading: H&H Chapter 11 Tasks: Chapter 11 Quiz, Week 11 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 11 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, April 6
Unit III Week XII	The President Required Reading: H&H Chapter 12 Tasks: Chapter 12 Quiz, Week 12 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 12 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, April 13
Unit III Week XIII	The Bureaucracy Required Reading: H&H Chapter 11 Tasks: Chapter 13 Quiz, Week 13 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 13 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, April 20 (Happy Easter!)
Unit III Week XIV	The Courts Required Reading: H&H Chapter 14 Tasks: Chapter 14 Quiz, Week 14 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 14 Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, May 4
UNIT III EXAM	Complete by 11:59 PM Sunday, May 4
Unit IV Weeks XV & XVI	California Required Reading: Giventner (full text) Tasks: California Quiz, Week 15 Discussion Board Posts & Assignment 15 Complete by 11:59 PM FRIDAY, May 16
UNIT IV EXAM	Complete by 11:59 PM FRIDAY, May 16
EXTRA CREDIT	Complete by 11:59 PM FRIDAY, May 16