

Basic Course Information

Semester:	Summer 2021	Instructor Name:	Dr. Steven Cauchon
Course Title & #:	POLS 102, American Gov't	Email:	Steven.cauchon@imperial.edu
CRN #:		Webpage (optional):	N/A
Classroom:	N/A	Office #:	2131
Class Dates:	6/21-8/1	Office Hours:	By Appointment
Class Days:	N/A	Office Phone #:	760-355-6288
Class Times:	N/A	Emergency Contact:	N/A
Units:	3	Class Format:	Asynchronous

Course Description

Welcome to our course! We will begin our journey by discussing the origin, development and operation of government and political institutions in the United States. As we continue on, you will learn more about the foundation of the American regime and the ideas, interests, & circumstances that helped shape it. You will also learn to analyze political behavior and the formal structures and institutions that make up the American political system. Throughout this journey, we will engage some of today's most pressing issues: immigration, gun control, and the rise of social media in politics. By the time you have finished this course, you will have an improved understanding of American politics, a more developed political voice, and an increased interest in civic engagement!

Course Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)

N/A

Student Learning Outcomes

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

Course Objectives

1. *The significance of the Declaration of Independence concerning the American political philosophy.*
2. *The Articles of Confederation and the principal reasons why they were replaced by the Constitution.*
3. *The significant features of the Constitution and the major ways that the Constitution changes.*
4. *The concept of federalism and how it has changed throughout American history.*
5. *The significance of the Bill of Rights, and the continuing debate over civil liberties.*
6. *The role of public opinion and the media in the American political system.*
7. *The importance of the American political parties, lobbying, and interest groups.*
8. *The American election process, including political campaigning and voter behavior.*
9. *The formal structure of the Congress and the committee system, the legislative process and congressional powers.*
10. *The principal powers of the presidency and how they expanded dramatically in the 20th century.*
11. *The American bureaucracy.*
12. *The American judicial system and how it is affected by critical issues in American society.*

13. *The organizational structure, powers, and challenges confronting California's state and local governments.*

Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

- *Glen Kurtz, American Government 2e: ISBN: 1-947172-66-2. Hard copies are available at the IVC bookstore/Amazon and [access is FREE here](#) (download the pdf version as the Canvas version does not have page numbers to cite).*
- *All other course readings will be posted on Canvas within each module.*

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

COURSE EXAMS (75%): There are six course exams in this course. Each exam will be worth 12.5% of your total grade. All exams will open on the Friday before they are due and must be completed by the following Sunday at 11pm. The exams cover everything from its associated Canvas module (the week's readings, lectures, supplemental videos, and discussion topics). Exams cannot be reopened once closed, so do not wait until the deadline! Moreover, unreliable internet connections and personal computer issues that result in an incomplete exam are reviewed at the instructor's discretion. Makeup exams are typically in essay format and are also granted at the instructor's discretions. Further instructions regarding the exam are available in Canvas

DISCUSSION POSTS (25%): As members of a democratic society, it is important that we engage in deliberative exchanges. To help facilitate said exchanges, I will ask you to participate in weekly discussion via Canvas. Discussion forums will open the Monday of each new module—initial topic replies are due the following Wednesday at 11pm and peer replies are due the following Sunday at 11pm. I will ensure that our discussions are respectful, interactive, and enjoyable. Strict plagiarism standards will be used for these posts, so please be aware that you will need to show originality of thought. Discussion posts cannot be made up, so don't wait until the deadlines!

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

- **Course Exams: 75%**
- **Discussion Posts: 25%**

Course Policies

Communication

- ***The best way to contact me is through email.*** I will generally respond to emails Monday – Friday between 7am – 5:30pm within 24 hours of receiving them. If you do not receive a response, please resend or call my office: 760-355-6288.
- *Email should be used to schedule online office appointments, for short questions clarifying assignments or specific lecture items. **In-depth questions about course readings, an entire lecture, etc. are appropriate for office hours, not e-mail.** For general questions, please consult the syllabus first and/or use the **Cougar Courses Q/A forum** or **consult your peers first.***
- *Scores of all assignments & exams will be posted on Cougar Courses. If you wish to discuss your grade, please communicate via Cougar Courses or office hours.*
- *If you need accommodations due to disabilities, unforeseen circumstances, etc. be proactive—I can better assist you before, rather than after assignments are due.*

Drop policy

- *In distance education, our coursework is used to determine your attendance. Students who fail to submit substantive coursework by due dates or **complete assignments on the first day may be dropped from the class.** Please refer to the class schedule for specific attendance & effective coursework requirements.*

Student conduct & Online Netiquette

- *In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Therefore, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another. Please **respect each other's opinions** and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments **of any kind.***
- *Netiquette is internet manners, online etiquette, and digital etiquette all rolled into one word. Our rules of netiquette: (1) identify yourself, (2) include a subject line, (3) avoid sarcasm, (4) respect others' opinions and privacy, (5) acknowledge and return messages promptly, (6) copy with caution, (7) do not spam or junk mail, (8) be concise, (9) use appropriate language, (10) use appropriate emoticons (emotional icons) to help convey meaning, and (11) use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning [do not use ALL CAPS or multiple exclamation marks (!!!!)].*

Late work policy

- *Extensions are granted under extenuating circumstances. Excuses that may prove acceptable include serious injury & family emergencies, serious accident, or the observance of a religious holiday. In order to be excused, you will need to email the original documentation. Unexcused late work may be accepted, but at my discretion.*

Missing assignments & grade challenges

- *You are responsible for any work lost or late due to technical problems.*
- *Missing assignments and requests to re-grade must be reported/requested **within one week of the assessment being graded.** Grade challenges must be accompanied with detailed explanation & evidence justifying the request.*

IVC Student Resources

IVC wants you to be successful in all aspects of your education. For help, resources, services, and an explanation of policies, visit <http://www.imperial.edu/studentresources> or click the heart icon in Canvas.

Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #1	WEEK #1	WEEK #1	WEEK #1
Monday 6/21	Introduction to Our Course	Syllabus	Complete Syllabus Quiz & Intro Discussion by 11pm
Tuesday 6/22	<p>What is Politics & Why Does it Matter Pt. 1?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what government is and what it does/ought do 2. Discuss source and solutions to collective action problems & conflict 3. Describe American political culture & the power of ideas, narratives, and authority 	<i>American Government, Chapter 1</i>	



	4. Discuss the is/ought distinction & apply it to American inequality		
Wednesday 6/23	The Constitution & Its Origins 1. Explain what the Articles of Confederation did and failed to do. 2. Identify the goals, divisions, and compromises that shaped the Constitution.	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 2	Discussion Post 1.1 due by 11pm
Thursday 6/24	How Should We Think about the Framers & the Constitution? 1. Draw inferences from Dahl's account & apply them to how we should think about the Constitution 2. Identify the Constitution's democratic shortcomings.	Dahl, <i>How Democratic is the American Constitution</i> , Ch. 1 & 2	
Sunday 6/27			Discussion Post 1.2 & Course Exam due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #2	WEEK #2	WEEK #2	WEEK #2
Monday 6/28	American Federalism 1. Identify the foundations of American federalism & the ways in which it divides power between national and state governments. 2. Describe the historical expansion of federalism & the ways in which the national government can influence the states.	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 3	
Tuesday 6/29	Immigration and Federalism 1. Explain historical trends in immigration at the state & federal level. 2. Analyze the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments.	Ramakrishnan & Gulasekaram, "Understanding Immigration Federalism"	
Wednesday 6/30	Fundamental Liberties Pt. 1	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 4	Discussion Post 2.1 due by 11pm



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how the Bill of Rights relates to the federal government and to the states. 2. Describe how the First Amendment protects both church and state, as well as individuals' religious freedom. 3. Show how the protections of freedom of speech and of the press have been tested. 4. Discuss the extent of an individual's right to privacy and compare the idea civil obligations. 		
Thursday 7/1	<p>Fundamental Liberties Continued</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore how the "secret history of guns" in the US might complicate our understanding of Second Amendment rights. 2. Discuss the Second Amendment & the controversy surrounding its interpretation. 	Winkler, "The Secret History of Guns"	
Sunday 7/4			Discussion Post 2.2 & Course Exam #2 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #3	WEEK #3	WEEK #3	WEEK #3
Monday 7/5	No Class		Extra Credit Assignment in Canvas due Thursday by 11pm
Tuesday 7/6	<p>Public Opinion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze how well American citizens measure up to notions of an "ideal democratic citizen" 2. Describe the principle-agent problem in American politics 3. Discuss how Americans become politically socialized 4. Describe & evaluate different techniques used to gauge public opinion. 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 6	



Wednesday 7/7	<p>The Struggle for Equal Rights</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summarize key events and outcomes in the struggle for equality of African Americans. 2. Outline the criteria used by the courts to determine if and when the law can treat people differently. 3. Identify tools used by citizens to expand the promise of civil rights. 4. Explain the different paths to equality taken by other gender, racial, & marginalized groups 	<i>American Government, Chapter 5</i>	
Thursday 7/8	<p>Congress</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking. 2. Explain how checks and balances work between the Congress and the executive and judicial branches. 3. Discuss the relationship between the people and Congress. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 11</i>	Discussion Post 3.1 due by 11pm
Sunday 7/11			Discussion Post 3.2 & Course Exam #3 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #4	WEEK #4	WEEK #4	WEEK #4
Monday 7/12	<p>The Presidency</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare the modern presidency with the founders' expectations for a limited executive. 2. Identify strategies and tools presidents employ to overcome the constitutional limitations of the office. 3. Describe the organization and functions of the executive office. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 12</i>	
Tuesday 7/13	<p>The Courts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate Hamilton's claim that the judiciary was the "least dangerous branch of government" in light of the power it wields. 2. Outline the institutional rules and political influences that shape the Supreme Court 	<i>American Government, Chapter 13</i>	



Wednesday 7/14	<p>Bureaucracy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the characteristics of what the federal bureaucracy is and does 2. Compare the spoils & civil service system & discuss the attempts to privatize or eliminate parts of the bureaucracy 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 15	Discussion Post 4.1 due by 11pm
Thursday 7/15	<p>Media & Power</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of journalists. 2. Describe the link between media and politics. 3. Discuss the relationship between citizens and the media. 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 8	
Sunday 7/18			Discussion Post 4.2 & Course Exam #4 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #5	WEEK #5	WEEK #5	WEEK #5
Monday 7/19	<p>Political Parties</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe political parties and what they do 2. Outline the evolution of the party system in the United States. 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 9	Extra Credit Assignment in Canvas due Thursday by 11pm
Tuesday 7/20	<p>Interest Groups</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how interest groups use lobbying activities to get the public policy they want. 2. Compare public and private interest groups 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 10	
Wednesday 7/21	<p>Voting and Elections</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don't vote. 2. Summarize the importance of elections for citizens. 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 7	Discussion Post 5.1 due by 11pm
Thursday 7/22	<p>Voting and Elections (Continued)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss dark money, PACS & assess their potential influence in democratic politics. 2. Explain the Electoral College, how it came to be, and its critics. 	Gerken, "The Real Problem With Citizens United"	



Sunday 7/25			Discussion Post 5.2 Course Exam #5 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #6	WEEK #6	WEEK #6	WEEK #6
Monday 7/26	<p>Domestic Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what policy is, who makes it, and how it is made. 2. Identify government policy programs that attempt to improve citizens' lives. 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 16	
Tuesday 7/27	<p>Foreign Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the basic goals and types of foreign policy. 2. Describe ways in which policy making reflects public opinion. 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 17	
Wednesday 7/28	<p>California State & Local Govt.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outline the unique features of California's state & local government 2. Discuss how one can have an impact on state & local politics 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 14	Discussion Post 6.1 due by 11pm
Thursday 7/29	<p>California State of Mind</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the unique history of California through the lens of Governor Pat Brown 2. Examine the impact that water, infrastructure, and social movements had had on California politics 	Watch Entire Video Via Canvas	Extra Credit Quiz due by 11pm
Sunday 8/1			Discussion Post 6.2 Course Exam #6 due by 11pm

Subject to change without prior notice