

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS, POLS102

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE, WINTER (2021, ONLINE)¹

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COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

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!

TEXTS

- Glen Kurtz and Sylvie Waskiewiz, *American Government 3e*: ISBN-13: 978-1-951693-38-1. Hard copies are available at the IVC bookstore/Amazon and [access is FREE here](#)
- All other course readings will be posted on Canvas within each module.

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

¹ My lectures & all course materials are protected by copyright and may not be reproduced or distributed without my written consent. Please be advised that this syllabus is "subject to change," any changes will be announced via Canvas.

COURSE GRADING & REQUIREMENTS²

Discussion Posts (Weekly)	(25%)
Course Exams (One course exam every Friday)	(75%)

DISCUSSION POSTS (25%): Each week I will post a discussion question pertaining to the readings, lectures, and/or film. The questions are designed to foster informed conversation about the issues raised in each topic area and film. I will provide the animating question(s) and steer the subsequent conversation, when and if necessary. Your role is to engage in the conversation by responding to the prompt, interact with your peers, and demonstrate you have an understanding of how the discussion questions(s) relates to our course content. **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 Saturday at 11pm.** I will ensure that our discussions are respectful, interactive, and enjoyable. To ensure that we are presenting claims/positions based on evidence, **your posts are expected to cite our textbook and/or the module’s associated film** (see assignment instructions in Canvas for further details). Strict plagiarism standards and software is used to check these posts. Please note that I grade whatever initial post students submit to gain access to the discussion forum (even if it is blank, incomplete, etc.) and that posts are not editable, once submitted. **Discussion posts cannot be made up, so please don’t wait until the deadlines or ask for extensions.** However, recognizing that life happens, **we will have an extra credit opportunity that will allow you to make up these points during Week #16** (so there is no need to email why you were unable to post or request for extensions).

COURSE EXAMS (75%): You will be given five course exams for this course. Each exam may consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, & quote/clause identification. **The material you will be tested on will be drawn from the readings, lectures, and any supplemental videos associated with the Learning Unit in which each exam is located** (see Assignment Schedule for further details). That being said, you should expect exams that ask you to do more than simply memorize content. Consequently, you will have an entire week to review, prepare for and take the exam, via Canvas, at your own pace (**all exams are due on Sunday at 11 PM**).

GRADE SCALE

A+ = 100 – 97%	B = 86.9 – 84%	C- = 73.9 – 70%
A = 96.9 – 94%	B- = 83.9 – 80%	D+ = 69.9 – 67%
A- = 93.9 – 90%	C+ = 79.9 – 77%	D = 66.9 – 60%
B+ = 89.9 – 87%	C = 76.9 – 74%	F = 59.9% and Below

EXPECTATIONS & IMPORTANT POLICIES³

² Please note I reserve the right to make changes to the below assignments in order accommodate class progress and/or scheduling changes. Check Canvas for more details about each assignment.

³ See end of syllabus for more details on college and 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.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
	Learning Unit #1 1/3 – 1/7		
MONDAY	<p>Introduction to the Course</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss how to be successful in this course 2. Learn about your instructor and your fellow peers 	Syllabus	Submit initial post to Discussion #1 by 11 pm to avoid being dropped
TUESDAY	<p>What is Politics & Why Does it Matter?</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 4. Discuss the is/ought distinction & apply it to American inequality 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 1	
WEDNESDAY	<p>The Constitution & Its Origins</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically think about circumstances & narratives about the founding of the United States 2. Examine the Articles of the Confederation and identify the goals, divisions, & compromises that shaped Constitution. 3. Briefly review keys aspects of the U.S. Constitution. 4. Reflect on how we should think about the Constitution and its democratic shortcomings today. 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 2	Discussion #2 Wed/Sat by 11 pm
THURSDAY	<p>American Federalism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Explain historical trends in immigration at the state & federal level. 4. Analyze the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments. 		
FRIDAY	Course Exam #1		Complete exam by 11pm
Learning Unit #2 1/10 – 1/14			
MONDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">Fundamental Liberties</p> <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 of civil rights with civil obligations. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 4</i>	
TUESDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">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>	
WEDNESDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">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. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 6</i>	Discussion #3 Wed/Sat by 11 pm

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss how Americans become politically socialized. Describe & evaluate different techniques used to gauge public opinion. 		
THURSDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">Voting and Elections</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don't vote. Summarize the importance of elections for citizens. Discuss dark money, PACS & assess their potential influence in democratic politics. Explain the Electoral College, how it came to be, and its critics. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 7</i>	
FRIDAY	Course Exam #2		Complete exam by Sunday 11pm
Learning Unit #3 1/18 – 1/21			
MONDAY	***HOLDIAY***		
TUESDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">The Media</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the roles and responsibilities of journalists. Describe the link between media and politics. Discuss the relationship between citizens and the media. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 8</i>	
WEDNESDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">Political Parties</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe political parties and what they do. Outline the evolution of the party system in the United States. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 9</i>	Discussion #4 Wed/Sat by 11 pm
THURSDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">Interest Groups</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how interest groups use lobbying activities to get the public policy they want. Compare public and private interest groups. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 10</i>	

FRIDAY	Course Exam #3		Complete exam by Sunday 11pm
Learning Unit #4 1/24 – 1/28			
MONDAY	<p>Congress</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain Congressional power and how its internal/external checks & balances work. 2. Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking. 3. Examine how party leadership can influence the legislative process. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 11</i>	
TUESDAY	<p>The Executive</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. 	<i>American Government, Chapters 12</i>	
WEDNESDAY	LINCOLN	Watch Lincoln Via Canvas	<p>Discussion #5 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p> <p>Extra credit Discussion Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>
THURSDAY	<p>the 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, Chapters 15</i>	
FRIDAY	Course Exam #4		Complete exam by Sunday 11pm
Learning Unit #5 1/31 – 2/3			

MONDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">The Courts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how the courts operate. 2. Outline the institutional rules and political influences that shape the Supreme Court. 3. Evaluate Hamilton’s claim that the judiciary was the “least dangerous branch of government.” 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 13	
TUESDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">California State & Local Gov’t</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	
WEDNESDAY	<p style="text-align: center;">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 California State of Mind Via Canvas	<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion #6 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">California State of Mind Extra Credit quiz by 11 pm</p>
THURSDAY	Course Exam #5		Complete exam by Sunday 11pm

GENERAL POLICIES & INFORMATION

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Plagiarism is to take and present as one’s own the writings or ideas of others, without citing the source. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking exams and preparing written materials. If you do not understand how to correctly ‘cite a source’, you must ask for help. **Cheating** is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials, or assisting others in using materials, which are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question. Anyone caught cheating or will receive a zero (0) on the exam or assignment, and the

instructor may report the incident to the Campus Disciplinary Officer, who may place related documentation in a file. Repeated acts of cheating may result in an F in the course and/or disciplinary action. Please refer to the General School Catalog for more information on academic dishonesty or other misconduct. Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to the following: (a) plagiarism; (b) copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment ;(c) communicating test information with another person during an examination; (d) allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment, (e) use of a commercial term paper service

DISABLED STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. The DSP&S office is located in Building 2100, telephone 760-355-6313 if you feel you need to be evaluated for educational accommodations.

STUDENT COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICES

Students have counseling and health services available, provided by the pre-paid Student Health Fee.

- [Student Health Center](#). A Student Health Nurse is available on campus. In addition, Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District provide basic health services for students, such as first aid and care for minor illnesses. Contact the IVC [Student Health Center](#) at 760-355-6128 in Room 1536 for more information.
- [Mental Health Counseling Services](#). Short-term individual, couples, family and group counseling services are available for currently enrolled students. Services are provided in a confidential, supportive, and culturally sensitive environment. Please contact the IVC Mental Health Counseling Services at 760-355-6310 or in the building 1536 for appointments or more information.

ATTENDANCE

- A student who fails to attend the first meeting of a class or does not complete the first mandatory activity of an online class will be dropped by the instructor as of the first official meeting of that class. Should readmission be desired, the student's status will be the same as that of any other student who desires to add a class. It is the student's responsibility to drop or officially withdraw from the class. See [General Catalog](#) for details.
- Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students. A student whose continuous, unexcused absences exceed the number of hours the class is scheduled to meet per week may be dropped. For online courses, students who fail to complete required activities for two consecutive weeks may be considered to have excessive absences and may be dropped.
- Absences attributed to the representation of the college at officially approved events (conferences, contests, and field trips) will be counted as 'excused' absences.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the right to experience a positive learning environment and due process.

For further information regarding student rights and responsibilities please refer to the IVC General Catalog available at http://www.imperial.edu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4516&Itemid=762

INFORMATION LITERACY

Imperial Valley College is dedicated to help students skillfully discover, evaluate, and use information from all sources. Students can access tutorials at <http://www.imperial.edu/courses-andprograms/divisions/arts-and-letters/library-department/info-lit-tutorials/>

VETERANS CENTER

The mission of the IVC Military and Veteran Success Center is to provide a holistic approach to serving military/veteran students on three key areas: 1) Academics, 2) Health and Wellness, and 3) Camaraderie; to serve as a central hub that connects military/veteran students, as well as their families, to campus and community resources. Their goal is to ensure a seamless transition from military to civilian life. The Center is located in Building 600 (Office 624), telephone 760-355-6141.

EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM AND SERVICES (EOPS)

The Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) offers services such as priority registration, personal/academic counseling, tutoring, book vouchers, and community referrals to qualifying low-income students. EOPS is composed of a group of professionals ready to assist you with the resolution of both academic and personal issues. Our staff is set up to understand the problems of our culturally diverse population and strives to meet student needs that are as diverse as our student population. Also under the umbrella of EOPS our CARE (Cooperative Agency Resources for Education) Program for single parents is specifically designed to provide support services and assist with the resolution of issues that are particular to this population. Students that are single parents receiving TANF/Cash Aid assistance may qualify for our CARE program, for additional information on CARE please contact Lourdes Mercado, 760-355- 6448, lourdes.mercado@imperial.edu.

EOPS provides additional support and services that may identify with one of the following experiences:

- Current and former foster youth students that were in the foster care system at any point in their lives
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Formerly incarcerated students

To apply for EOPS and for additional information on EOPS services, please contact Alexis Ayala, 760-355-5713, alexis.ayala@imperial.edu.

STUDENT EQUITY PROGRAMS

- The Student Equity Program strives to improve Imperial Valley College's success outcomes, particularly for students who have been historically underrepresented and underserved. The college identifies strategies to monitor and address equity issues, making efforts to mitigate any disproportionate impact on student success and achievement. Our institutional data provides insight surrounding student populations who historically, are not fully represented. Student Equity addresses disparities and/or disproportionate impact in student success across disaggregated student equity groups including gender, ethnicity, disability status, financial need, Veterans, foster youth, homelessness, and formerly incarcerated students. The Student Equity Program provides direct supportive services to empower students experiencing insecurities related to food, housing, transportation, textbooks, and shower access. We recognize that students who struggle meeting their basic needs are also at an academic and economic disadvantage, creating barriers to academic success and wellness. We strive to remove barriers that affect IVC students' access to education, degree and certificate completion, successful completion of developmental math and English courses, and the ability to transfer to a university. Contact: 760.355.5736 or 760.355.5733 Building 100.
- The Student Equity Program also houses IVC's Homeless Liaison, who provides direct services, campus, and community referrals to students experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act. Contact: 760.355.5736 Building 100.