

Basic Course Information

Semester:	Spring 2024	Instructor Name:	Dr. Steven Cauchon
Course Title & #:	POLS 102, American Govt	Email:	Steven.cauchon@imperial.edu
CRN #:		Webpage (optional):	
Classroom:	NA	Office #:	1713
Class Dates:	Spring 2024 Late Start	Office Hours:	M/W 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM & 3:45 - 4:45 PM via Zoom
Class Days:	NA	Office Phone #:	760-355-6288
Class Times:	Asynchronous	Emergency Contact:	
Units:	3	Class Format:	

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!

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

The significance of the Declaration of Independence concerning the American political philosophy.

The Articles of Confederation and the principal reasons why they were replaced by the Constitution.

The significant features of the Constitution and the major ways that the Constitution changes.

The concept of federalism and how it has changed throughout American history.

The significance of the Bill of Rights, and the continuing debate over civil liberties.

The role of public opinion and the media in the American political system.

The importance of the American political parties, lobbying, and interest groups.

The American election process, including political campaigning and voter behavior.

The formal structure of the Congress and the committee system, the legislative process and congressional powers.

The principal powers of the presidency and how they expanded dramatically in the 20th century.

The American bureaucracy.

The American judicial system and how it is affected by critical issues in American society.

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

Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

- *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*

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

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 the final week of class (so there is no need to email why you were unable to post or request for extensions).

COURSE EXAMS (75%): You will be given six 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. All exams are due on Sunday at 11 PM.

Academic Honesty (Artificial Intelligence -AI)

IVC values critical thinking and communication skills and considers academic integrity essential to learning. Using AI tools as a replacement for your own thinking, writing, or quantitative reasoning goes against both our mission and academic honesty policy and will be considered academic dishonesty, or plagiarism unless you have been instructed to do so by your instructor. In case of any uncertainty regarding the ethical use of AI tools, students are encouraged to reach out to their instructors for clarification.

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

<i>Discussion Posts (Weekly)</i>	<i>(25%)</i>
<i>Course Exams (One course exam every Friday)</i>	<i>(75%)</i>

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

MODULE # AND DATE	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
LEARNING UNIT #1			
<p>Module #1 4/15</p>	<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 	<p>Syllabus</p>	<p>Submit initial post to Discussion #1 by 11 pm Weds. to avoid being dropped</p> <p>Get 10/10 on syllabus quiz and update profile picture by 11pm Sunday for extra credit</p>
<p>Module #2 4/22</p>	<p>The Constitution, Its Origins, & American Federalism</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 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. 5. Identify the foundations of American federalism & the ways in which it divides power between national and state governments. 6. Describe the historical expansion of federalism & the ways in which the national government can influence the states. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 2 & 3</p>	<p>Discussion #2 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>



	<p>7. Explain historical trends in immigration at the state & federal level.</p> <p>8. Analyze the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments.</p>		
<p>Module #3 4/29</p>	<p>Fundamental Liberties & The Struggle for Equal Rights</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. 5. Summarize key events and outcomes in the struggle for equality of African Americans. 6. Outline the criteria used by the courts to determine if and when the law can treat people differently. 7. Identify tools used by citizens to expand the promise of civil rights. 8. Explain the different paths to equality taken by other gender, racial, & marginalized groups 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 4 & 5</p>	<p>Discussion #3 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p> <p>Course Exam #1 Due Sun by 11 pm</p>
<p>LEARNING UNIT #2</p>			
<p>Module #4 5/6</p>	<p>Public Opinion, Voting, and Elections</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze how well American citizens measure up to notions of an "ideal democratic citizen." 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 6 & 7</p>	<p>Discussion #4 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 5. Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don't vote. 6. Discuss campaigns, how they are financed, & and their impact on democratic politics 7. Explore how POTUS is elected 8. Analyze how POTUS is really elected 		
<p>Module #5 5/13</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Media & Congress</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. 4. Explain Congressional power and how its internal/external checks & balances work. 5. Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking. 6. Examine how party leadership can influence the legislative process. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 8 & 11</p>	<p>Discussion #5 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>
<p>Module #6 5/20</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Political Parties & Interest Groups</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. 3. Describe how interest groups use lobbying activities to get the public policy they want. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 9 & 10</p>	<p>Discussion #6 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p> <p>Course Exam #2 Due Sun by 11 pm</p>



	4. Compare public and private interest groups.		
LEARNNING UNIT #3			
Module #7 5/28	<p>The Executive & the Bureaucracy</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. Explain the characteristics of what the federal bureaucracy is and does 4. Compare the spoils & civil service system & discuss the attempts to privatize or eliminate parts of the bureaucracy 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapters 12 & 15</p>	<p>Discussion #7 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>
Module #8 6/3	<p>The Courts, California State & Local Gov't</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." 4. Outline the unique features of California's state & local gov't 5. Discuss how one can have an impact on state & local politics 6. Review the unique history of California through the lens of Governor Pat Brown 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 13 & 14</p> <p>Watch California State of Mind Via Canvas</p>	<p>Discussion #8 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p> <p>Take Exit Survey & SLO Survey to open Extra Credit and Final Exam:</p> <p>California State of Mind Extra Credit quiz Sat by 11</p> <p>Course Exam #3 due Sunday by 11 pm</p>



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	7. Examine the impact that water, infrastructure, and social movements had had on California politics		
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*****Subject to change without prior notice*****