

Basic Course Information

Semester:	W26	Instructor Name:	Dr. Steven Cauchon
Course Title & #:	POLS 110	Email:	Steven.cauchon@imperial.edu
CRN #:		Webpage (optional):	
Classroom:	N/A	Office #:	1713
Class Dates:	W26	Office Hours:	N/A
Class Days:	N/A	Office Phone #:	760-355-6288
Class Times:	N/A	Emergency Contact:	
Units:	4	Class Format/Modality:	Asynchronos

Course Description

This course is designed for students to study the basic concepts in the political and historical traditions of America and California by analyzing national, state, and local political institutions from colonial times to the present. The course examines the evolution of concepts and ideas that are fundamental to our political culture. It emphasizes the concepts citizens should understand in order to vote intelligently and otherwise effectively participate in the political process. This course is designed specifically to satisfy the CSU History, Constitution, and American Ideals requirement. The course is not open to students with credit in POLS 102.

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

Student Learning Outcomes

- Describe different instruments of US foreign policy, give examples of their use, explain the role of different institutions in crafting foreign policy, describe different explanations for why a particular policy was made, and evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of that policy.
- Describe the system of checks and balances in American government and evaluate how it affects legislation.
- Identify, compare, and contrast the various positions on the ideological spectrum, and apply the core values and beliefs of each position to contemporary political issues.

Course Objectives

- Assess the contribution of the American colonial experience to contemporary American political culture
- Analyze the motivations of the founders of the Constitution
- Distinguish among and analyze federal, confederate, and unitary forms of government; analyze the use of each in U.S. history
- Analyze the civil liberties and the civil rights and relate them to historical and contemporary political issues
- Distinguish among the major issues regarding slavery from the colonial period to the adoption of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments

- Analyze American pluralism from its ethnic, gender, and socio-economic perspectives
- Analyze the role played in American politics historically and contemporarily by major ethnic minority groups and people of both genders
- Analyze the evolution of the political party system as it relates to specific historical issues, differentiate between liberal and conservative policy options, and analyze the basic motivations in public policy-making
- Differentiate among the various components of the American electoral machinery and analyze how various ethnic and socio-economic groups relate to them.
- Analyze the development, importance, and effects of public opinion polling and the media in American politics
- Analyze the evolution, political power, and functions of interest groups
- Assess the importance and the influence of the media on the American political process, past and present
- Analyze the legislative, executive, and judicial branches from the perspective of their historical development and as to how they relate to the diverse citizenry
- Analyze the development of the function and the power of the bureaucracy and its interaction with politicians and the public
- Analyze fiscal and monetary policy from the perspective of their political and social consequences
- Analyze the evolution of the American economy and the economic and social consequences of industrialization
- Analyze the evolution of social policy from political and social perspectives
- Analyze American foreign policy in its expansionist and imperialist era through its current superpower status
- Analyze the historical development of California through its Spanish, Mexican, and American eras
- Assess the social consequences and the public policy implications of California's evolving economic and demographic patterns
- Analyze and distinguish among state, county, city, and special district government.

Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

- Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewiz (2019), *American Government 3e*: ISBN-13: 978-1-951693-38-1. [Access to the text is free here](#) and via Canvas.
- Thomas Reeves (2000), *Twentieth-Century America: A Brief History (1st ed.)*. ISBN 0195044843. Access is free via IVC Library digital reserves via Canvas.
- Steven Reti (2021). *Introduction to California Government and Politics*. Access to PDF is free to access via Canvas.

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

DISCUSSION POSTS (20%): Discussion forums open each Monday with **initial posts due Wednesday by 11:00 PM** and **peer replies due Saturday by 11:00 PM**. To ensure our conversations are grounded in evidence, your initial post must **cite the textbook and/or the module's associated video(s)** (see Canvas for specific instructions). Please be aware that **your first submitted post is the one that will be graded**, even if it is blank or incomplete, and posts cannot be edited after submission. **Plagiarism and AI-detection tools** are used for all discussion posts. Because discussion forums are time-sensitive and depend on peer interaction, **missed posts cannot be made up**. However, to support you throughout the semester, **your lowest discussion post grade will be dropped automatically**. Students requesting an extension or makeup for this assignment will be referred to the syllabus policy.

COURSE EXAMS (75%): Exams may include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short-answer questions drawn from the readings, lectures, and supplemental videos for that Learning Unit. Exams are taken through a Canvas-supported online proctoring system; further instructions will be provided in Canvas. Students must have a compatible computer or laptop and stable internet connection, though no camera, microphone, or personal identification is required. Except for the final Course Exam, each exam remains open until the next exam becomes available, and a late penalty is automatically applied each day it is late; because this applies to all situations, **do not message about missed deadlines as all extension or make-up request messages will be referred to this policy.** If you experience technical issues before or during the exam, you must first contact Canvas Support and then provide me with the case number so I can investigate. Once an exam is started, it cannot be reset or made up, and **personal technical issues are not grounds for accommodation.** For reliable computers and internet access, I strongly recommend using the campus library. For due dates, please see the Assignment Schedule

CA STATE & LOCAL GOV'T CAPSTONE (5%): Students will complete a capstone project in which they research a state or local gov't agency and develop a solution to a related public problem, applying key concepts and historical perspectives from the course. This assignment requires students to appear on camera. Additional instructions will be provided in Canvas after Course Exam #1.

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Discussion Posts (Weekly)	(20%)
Course Exams (Weekly)	(75%)
CA State & Local Gov't Capstone	(5%)

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.

Accessibility Statement

Imperial Valley College is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students, regardless of course modality. Every effort has been made to ensure that this course complies with all state and federal accessibility regulations, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. However, if you encounter any content that is not accessible, please contact your



instructor or the area dean for assistance. If you have specific accommodations through **DSPS**, contact them for additional assistance.

We are here to support you and ensure that you have equal access to all course materials.

Course Policies

Communication

- **The best way to contact me is through Canvas Inbox.** I will generally respond to messages 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. Make sure your phone message is also sent via Canvas Inbox as my ability to respond to voicemails and texts are limited.
- Canvas Inbox is for short questions clarifying assignments, grading inquiries, or specific lecture items. For general questions, please **consult the syllabus first** and use the **Canvas Q/A forum to consult your peers.**
- Scores of all assignments & exams will be posted on Canvas. If you wish to discuss your grade, please communicate via Canvas. Once grades are posted, **use Inbox, not “assignment comments,” in Canvas to communicate as I no longer see these comments after an assignment is graded.**
- If you need accommodations due to disabilities, unforeseen circumstances, etc. be proactive—I can better assist you before, rather than after assignments are due. Any disability accommodation must have approval from our disability services office before the assignment becomes available for it to be applicable.

Drop policy

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

Student conduct & Online Netiquette

- 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 must 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 & missing assignments

- Students are responsible for any work lost or late due to technical problems. Please see each assignment’s detailed policy above.



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- Students can't makeup or submit late assignments that are due in final week of our course due to grade submission deadlines. Any accommodation for this week must be submitted before the end of the final week, via Inbox.

Other Course Information

Financial Aid

Your Grades Matter! In order to continue to receive financial aid, you must meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement. Making SAP means that you are maintaining a 2.0 GPA, you have successfully completed 67% of your coursework, and you will graduate on time. If you do not maintain SAP, you may lose your financial aid. If you have questions, please contact financial aid at finaid@imperial.edu.

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 & MODULE #	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
	LEARNING UNIT #1 (1/5 – 1/9)		
MONDAY Module #0	Introduction to the Course <ol style="list-style-type: none">Discuss how to be successful in this courseLearn about your instructor and your fellow peers	Syllabus	Complete syllabus quiz to avoid being dropped
TUESDAY Module #1	What is Politics & Why Does it Matter? <ol style="list-style-type: none">Explain what government is and what it does/ought doDiscuss sources and solutions to collective action problems & conflictDescribe American political culture & the power of ideas, narratives, and authorityDiscuss the is/ought distinction & apply it to American inequality	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 1	Discussion Wed/Sat by 11 pm
WEDNESDAY Module #2	The Constitution & Its Origins	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 2	

Updated 11/2024



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	<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 key aspects of the U.S. Constitution. 4. Reflect on how we should think about the Constitution and its democratic shortcomings today. 5. Examine how progressivism was beginning to capture the nation's attention in the early 1900s 	Reeves, Chapter 1	
THURSDAY Module #3	American Federalism & Progressivism <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. 3. Explain historical trends in immigration at the state & federal level. 4. Analyze the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments. 5. Identify the early trials and triumphs of American Progressivism. 	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 3 Reeves Chapters 2 & 3	
FRIDAY	COURSE EXAM #1		Complete Course Exam #1 by 11 pm Sunday
	LEARNING UNIT #2 (1/12 – 1/16)		
MONDAY Module #4	Fundamental Liberties & WWI	<i>American Government</i> , Chapter 4	Discussion Wed/Sat by 11 pm



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	<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 bear arms.5. Analyze the impact of WWI on American politics.	<i>Reeves, Chapter 4</i>	
TUESDAY Module #5	Political Parties <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe political parties and what they do.2. Outline how parties operate as an organization, in government, and in the electorate.	<i>American Government, Chapter 9</i>	
WEDNESDAY Module #6	Interest Groups & the Roaring 20s <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.3. Examine how the "Roaring 20's" led to the belief that American prosperity was limitless.	<i>American Government, Chapter 10</i> <i>Reeves, Chapter 5</i>	

<p>THURSDAY Module #7</p>	<p>Public Opinion & the Great Depression</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. 5. Examine the impact of the Great Depression on American social and economic policy 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 6</p> <p>Reeves, Chapter 6</p>	
<p>FRIDAY</p>	<p>COURSE EXAM #2</p>		<p>Complete Course Exam #2 by 11 pm Sunday</p>
	<p>LEARNING UNIT #3 (1/20 – 1/23)</p>		
<p>TUESDAY Module #8</p>	<p>Voting, Elections, & WWII</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don’t vote. 2. Discuss campaigns, how they are financed, & and their impact on democratic politics 3. Explore how POTUS is elected 4. Analyze how POTUS is really elected. 5. Explore how WWII cemented the US’s status as a global superpower. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 7</p> <p>Reeves, Chapter 7</p>	<p>Discussion Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY Module #9</p>	<p>The Media & Post WWII Challenges</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. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 8</p> <p>Reeves, Chapter 8</p>	



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	4. Examine the challenges facing the US after WWII.		
THURSDAY Module #10	The Struggle for Equal Rights & the So-called Best Years 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 5. Analyze how the so-called Best Years depended on one's racial and socio-economic status.	<i>American Government, Chapter 5</i> <i>Reeves, Chapters 9 and 10</i>	
FRIDAY	COURSE EXAM #3		Complete Course Exam #3 by 11 pm Sunday
	LEARNING UNIT #4 1/26-1/30		
MONDAY Module #11	Congress & the Era of Upheaval 1. Explain Congressional power and how it's 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. 4. Explore how the political and social upheaval of the 60s lead to the rise of Richard Nixon	<i>American Government, Chapter 11</i> <i>Reeves, Chapters 11 and 12</i>	Discussion #11 Wed/Sat by 11 pm

<p>TUESDAY Module #12</p>	<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. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 12</p>	
<p>WEDNESDAY Module #13</p>	<p>The Bureaucracy and Dynamic Conservatism</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 3. Analyze how the so-called Years of Disillusionment lead to the rise of Dynamic Conservatism. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapters 15</p> <p><i>Reeves, Chapter 13</i></p>	
<p>THURSDAY Module #14</p>	<p>The Courts & The Close of the 20th Century</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. Examine how the end of the 20th Century relates to ongoing issues in the 21st. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 13</p> <p><i>Reeves, Chapters 14 and 15</i></p>	

FRIDAY	COURSE EXAM #4		Complete Course Exam #4 by 11 pm Sunday
	LEARNING UNIT #5 (2/2 – 2/4)		
MONDAY Module #15	California State & Local Gov't <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outline the unique features of California's state & local gov't 2. Discuss how one can have an impact on state & local politics 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 14 Reti, Chapters 1 and 10	Discussion Wed/Sat by 11 pm
TUESDAY Module #16	California State of Mind <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	
WEDNESDAY	CA Gov't Capstone COURSE EXAM #5		CA Capstone & Course Exam due Wed by 11 pm

Subject to change without prior notice