

**IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE**  
**Political Science 102**  
**American Government & Politics**

**Instructor: Norma M. Villicana, MPA**  
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**Thursdays 6:55 to 10:05 p.m.**  
**Building 200 – Room 208**  
**CRN: 10356**

**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 main 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. Another goal is that through this course you will learn to enjoy politics, see that it can be interesting, dynamic, exciting and relevant to your life and those around you. In order to achieve this goal, you will be expected to follow the news and current events and be prepared to discuss these in class.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME (SLOs)**

**Course SLOs:** Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are written statements that represent faculty and departmental learning goals for students. During this course, students will:

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

**Institutional SLOs:** Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) are areas of learning that students, faculty, staff and administrators work toward and assess on a regular basis. After successful completion of a program or degree at Imperial Valley College, students are expected to have measurable improvement in the following areas: **ISLO1** - Communication Skills, **ISLO2** – Critical Thinking Skills, **ISLO3** – Personal Responsibility, **ISLO4** – Information Literacy and **ISLO5** – Global Awareness.

POLS 102 American Government & Politics will provide students with learning opportunities to improve in all five of the Institutional Student Learning Objectives.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate and understanding of the following course objectives:

<b>Objective 1</b>	The Articles of Confederation and the principal reasons why they were replaced by the Constitution.
<b>Objective 2</b>	The significance of the Declaration of Independence concerning the American political philosophy.
<b>Objective 3</b>	The significant features of the Constitution and the major ways that the Constitution changes.
<b>Objective 4</b>	The concept of federalism and how it has changed throughout American history.
<b>Objective 5</b>	The significance of the Bill of Rights, and the continuing debate over civil liberties.
<b>Objective 6</b>	The role of public opinion and the media in the American political system.
<b>Objective 7</b>	The importance of the American political parties, lobbying, and interest groups.
<b>Objective 8</b>	The American election process, including political campaigning and voter behavior.
<b>Objective 9</b>	The formal structure of the Congress and the committee system, the legislative process and congressional powers.
<b>Objective 10</b>	The principal powers of the presidency and how they expanded dramatically in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
<b>Objective 11</b>	The American bureaucracy.
<b>Objective 12</b>	The American judicial system and how it is affected by critical issues in American society.
<b>Objective 13</b>	The organizational structure, powers, and challenges confronting California's state and local governments.

## TEXTBOOKS

***A More Perfect Union***, by Brigid Harrison and Jean W. Harris, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2010 (**REQUIRED**)

- Textbook Website: [www.mhhe.com/harrisonampule](http://www.mhhe.com/harrisonampule)
- ISBN: 978-0-07-352638-6, Available as a bookstore rental

This is your main textbook for the course. The questions contained in the exams will come from this book (and the **Giventer** book), so read and study it carefully. This textbook takes an in-depth look at the American federal system of government.

***Governing California***, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2008, by Lawrence L Giventer (**REQUIRED**)

- Textbook Website: [www.mhhe.com/giventer2](http://www.mhhe.com/giventer2)
- ISBN:978-0-07-352633-1

This is the required textbook for California state and local government. The questions contained in the exams will come from this book (and the **Harrison** book), so read and study it carefully. This textbook takes an in-depth look at the issues facing California state and local governments.

## **CLASS LEARNING FORMAT**

This course will focus on collaborative learning. The lecture-discussion format will be emphasized along with videos, group activities, guest lectures and out-of-class assignments. ***The mutual sharing of ideas and respect for diversity of opinion will be encouraged and safeguarded.***

Students are expected to arrive promptly at each class session having completed the assigned readings. Students are advised to take notes from lectures as lecture material is stressed on graded assignments. Student study groups are also encouraged.

## **GRADES**

How much you learn in the course, as well as your final grade, depends on the effort you put into the readings, assignments, and class preparation. Grades will be assigned on the basis of the following weights:

<b>POSSIBLE POINTS</b>		<b>FINAL GRADES</b>
Exams (4 @ 40 pts. – lowest score dropped)	120 points	315 – 350 points = A
Assignments (4 @ 20 pts.)	80 points	280 – 314 points = B
Final	100 points	245 – 279 points = C
Class Participation	<u>50 points</u>	210 – 244 points = D
<b>Total</b>	<b>350 points</b>	Zero – 209 points = F

<b>General Grading Rubric for Assignments</b>	
<b>A</b>	Focused and clearly organized. Contains advanced critical thinking and content analysis. Convincing evidence is provided to support conclusions. Language is precise and ideas are clearly communicated. Clearly meets or exceeds assignment requirements.
<b>B</b>	Generally focused and contains some development of ideas, but the writing may be simplistic or repetitive. Evidence is provided to support conclusions. May have occasional grammatical errors. Meets assignment requirements.
<b>C</b>	May be somewhat unfocused, underdeveloped, or rambling, but it does have some coherence. Some evidence is provided which supports conclusions. May have several grammatical errors. Meets minimum assignment requirements.
<b>D</b>	Unfocused, underdeveloped, and/or rambling. Minimal evidence is used to support conclusions. May contain serious grammatical errors that prevent an overall understanding. Does not respond appropriately to the assignment.
<b>F</b>	Minimal effort by student. Unfocused, underdeveloped, and/or rambling. May be too short or brief. Evidence is not used to support conclusions. May contain serious grammatical error that block overall understanding. Does not meet assignment requirements.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all sessions of the classes for which they are registered. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding any absences. Students whose absences exceed the number of hours a class meets per week may be dropped by the instructor. Three (3) late arrivals to class are the equivalent of one (1) class absence. Students leaving class early, without prior instructor approval, will have five points deducted from their class points.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Do not be afraid to engage in a discussion. Political opinions can be very controversial so remember to be respectful of all students. Class participation is worth 50 points.

## **CONDUCT**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting a college. All electronic devices or phones **must** be turned off or set on silent/vibration mode during class. It is the student's responsibility to pay all fees, process add codes and manage drops.

## **EXAMS**

Four (4) exams will be given. Exams will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer essay questions from the textbook, lectures, and videos. I will take the three (3) exams with the highest scores to determine your points. Since the lowest exam score will be thrown out, **no make-up exams will be given.** Each exam will be worth 40 points.

## **TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS**

Four (4) take-home assignments will be given during the semester. The assignments must be submitted on the due date and will be worth 20 points. **No late work will be accepted.**

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

During the semester, various options for extra credit will be made available to students. Students may earn 10 extra credit points by attending a public meeting and submitting a one-page summary of the meeting or volunteering in a community service activity approved by the instructor. The maximum number of extra points any one student may earn during the semester is **20 points.**

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Cheating and plagiarism are violations of academic honesty and **will not** be tolerated. A student handing in work other than his/her own will receive no-credit on that assignment, may fail the course, and may be charged with student misconduct. Disciplinary action can result in academic probation, suspension, or expulsion according to District policy. *Student may not turn in work previously submitted in other classes.*

**Plagiarism** is to use the writings of others as your own, without citing the source. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking exams and preparing written materials.

**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, such as:

- Copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment;
- Communicating test information with another person during an examination;
- Allowing others to complete an assignment or portion of an assignment, including the use of a commercial term paper service.

Basically, you cannot copy anything directly from any source, including your textbooks or the Internet, **unless** you are using a quotation. You must cite the book or article or website and page number from the source of your quote.

## **DISABLED STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Students with disabilities at Imperial Valley College are eligible for accommodations related to their disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. IVC recommends that 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 Room 2117 of the Health Sciences Building, (760) 355-6312.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students have the right to experience a positive learning environment; students who disrupt that environment can be asked to leave the class. Faculty and students also have the right of due process. For further information regarding student rights and responsibilities please refer to the IVC General Catalog available online at [www.imperial.edu](http://www.imperial.edu).


## **ACCESSABILITY**

Every effort has been made to ensure that this course is accessible to all students, including students with disabilities. If you encounter a problem accessing any portion of this course, please contact the instructor immediately.

The following schedule is subject to change as the instructor deems necessary in order to more fully integrate the objectives of the course, and to accommodate the scheduling of lectures, guest speakers, and videos.

<b>SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>	<b>Assignments/Exams</b>
08-23-12	Introduction to Course	
	<b>Part I – Foundations of American Democracy</b>	
08-30-12	<i>People, Politics, and Participation</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapter 1 <u>Giventer</u> : Chapter 1 Video: <i>I.O.U.S.A - One Nation, Under Stress, In Debt</i>	
09-06-12	<i>The Constitution and Federalism</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapter 2 and 3 <u>Giventer</u> : Chapter 2	<b>Assignment #1 Due</b>
	<b>Part II – Fundamental Principles</b>	
09-13-12	<i>Civil Liberties</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapter 4	<b>Exam #1</b> <b>Chapters 1-3 (Harrison)</b> <b>Chapters 1-2 (Giventer)</b>
09-20-12	<i>Civil Rights</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapter 5 <u>Giventer</u> : Chapter 6 Video: <i>Unconstitutional – The War on our Civil Liberties</i>	
	<b>Part III – People and the Government</b>	
09-27-12	<i>Political Socialization &amp; Public Opinion and Interest Groups</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapters 6 & 7 Video: <i>American Blackout</i>	<b>Assignment #2 Due</b>
10-04-12	<i>Political Parties</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapters 8	<b>Exam #2</b> <b>Chapters 4-7 (Harrison)</b> <b>Chapter 6 (Giventer)</b>
10-11-12	<i>Elections, Campaigns and Voting and the Media</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapters 9-10 <u>Giventer</u> : Chapter 3 Video: <i>Uncounted: The New Math of American Elections</i>	
	<b>Part IV – Institutions of Government</b>	
10-18-12	<i>Congress</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapters 11 <u>Giventer</u> : Chapter 7	<b>Assignment #3 Due</b>
10-25-12	<i>The President</i> Readings: <u>Harrison</u> : Chapters 12 <u>Giventer</u> : Chapter 8	<b>Exam #3</b> <b>Chapters 8-11 (Harrison)</b> <b>Chapters 3, 7, 8 (Giventer)</b>

**SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY  
READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS**

Date	Readings and Assignments	Assignments/Exams
11-01-12	<i>The Bureaucracy</i> Readings: <u>Harrison:</u> Chapters 13 <u>Giventer:</u> Chapter 5	VOTE! 
11-08-12	<i>The Judiciary</i> Readings: <u>Harrison:</u> Chapters 14 <u>Giventer:</u> Chapter 4	<b>Exam #4</b> <b>Chapters 12-14 (Harrison)</b> <b>Chapters 4 and 5 (Giventer)</b>
<b>11-10-12</b>	<b>LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COURSE WITH A "W"</b>	
11-15-12	<i>Economy Policy</i> Readings: <u>Harrison:</u> Chapter 15	
11-22-12	<b>Thanksgiving Day Holiday</b>	
11-29-12	Final Exam Review	<b>Assignment #4 Due</b>
12-06-12	<b>Final Exam</b>	

