

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE

POLITICAL SCIENCE 102 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Fall 2013 SYLLABUS

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POLS 102 American Government and Politics
Room 412

Textbooks

Giventer, L. L. (2008). *Governing California, Second Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Harrison, B. C., & Harris, J. W. (2010). *A More Perfect Union*. United States: McGraw-Hill.

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. It will also cover an analysis of the democratic values, constitutional framework, and political dynamics of the United Political system with emphasis upon an evaluation of the Congress, Presidency, and Supreme Court.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

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

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|-------------------|--|
| Outcome 1: | Develop an understanding of civic responsibility. |
| Outcome 2: | Participate in activities that promote the public good (e.g., the voting process, jury duty, community service). |
| Outcome 3: | 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 Outcomes.

Core Standards for the Course

1. Students will understand the significance and impact of the Constitution on everyday life.
2. Students will understand the distribution of power in the national, state, and local government in the United States federal system.
3. Students will understand the protection and privileges of individuals and groups in the United States.
4. Students will understand the responsibilities of citizens in the United States.

Objectives of the Course

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the Articles of Confederation and the principal reasons why they were replaced by the Constitution.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the Declaration of Independence concerning American political philosophy.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the amendment process and the evolution of the concept of federalism.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the Bill of Rights and the continuing debate over civil liberties.
5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the role of public opinion, the media, political parties, lobbying, and interest groups within the U.S. political system.
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the election process, including political campaigns and voter behavior.
7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the formal structure of Congress, the committee system, the legislative process, and congressional powers.
8. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the principal powers of the presidency and how they expanded dramatically in the 20th century.
9. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the bureaucracy, the judicial system and how it is affected by critical issues in American society.
10. Students will demonstrate an understanding of organizational structure, powers, and challenges confronting California's state and local governments.

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 Service (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. The DSP&S office is located in Room 2117 of the Health Sciences Building, 760-355-6312.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Dishonesty in the classroom is considered a very serious offense. Any form of cheating, turning in work which is not one's own (plagiarism), is grounds for disciplinary action. The consequences of these actions are severe and may include the possibility of expulsion.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students enrolled. Students are expected to attend every class session. Instructors are expected to take a student's attendance record into account in computing grades. If class attendance is not possible it is your responsibility to notify the instructor. Students with **three unexcused absences** will be dropped from the course by the instructor. Class will begin immediately as scheduled. Three tardies will result in an absence so please plan on being on time. Students are asked that they maintain all electronic devices turned off or on vibrate while attending class. If students leave class early, it will also be counted as an absence, so plan on attending all sessions in full unless other arrangements have been made with the instructor ahead of time. Absences attributed to the representation of the college at officially approved conferences and contests and attendance upon field trips will not be counted as absences.

Maintain control of your own records.

As soon as you know you will not be attending a class, DROP IT by using WebSTAR. **You will receive grades of F for courses you are no longer attending and have not dropped and those grades will remain on your transcript forever.**

DO NOT RELY ON ANYONE ELSE; PROTECT YOUR RECORDS. Instructors MAY drop for nonattendance, but many do not. You are responsible for all classes for which you register. Do not assume you will be dropped for nonattendance. The failing grades you receive will not be changed because you quit attending. **The following deadlines are for full-term classes. Short-term classes have unique deadlines – contact the Admissions and Records Office.**

Deadline to drop without owing fees and/or be eligible for a refund *****August 31, 2013*****
Deadline to drop course without it appearing on your transcript (without W) **September 2nd**
Deadline to drop full-term course *****November 9, 2013*****

CAUTION: Do Not Wait until these deadlines to drop. Some fall on days when the College is closed. If you have problems, no one will be available to assist and exceptions will not be made because you did not drop on time.

Standards of Student Conduct

Imperial Valley College is maintained for the purpose of providing students in the community with programs of instruction in higher education. Students shall assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the college's function as an educational institution. Students shall observe the rules and regulations of the College and shall refrain from conduct which interferes with the College's teaching and administration, or which unreasonably interferes with the rights of others. Please refer to the IVC General Catalog available online for further information regarding student conduct. www.imperial.edu

*****ABSOLUTELY NO CELL PHONES IN CLASS*****

There are too many distractions with the use of cell phones in the classroom. It is not only disruptive to your learning experience but to the learning experience of those around you. If you choose to use your phone in class you may be asked to leave.

Assignments and Grading

Grading is based on your knowledge of the course content. How much effort and dedication you put into the course assignments and readings will be reflected in your grade at the end of the semester. It is encouraged that you stay current with all assignments for the best possible grade.

Grading:

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Points Possible</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Quizzes (2X75) | 150 |
| Term Paper | 100 |
| Mid-Term | 150 |
| Group Activity | 100 |
| Community Service | 100 |
| Class Participation | 50 |
| Final Exam | 200 |
| Total Points Possible | 850 |

Final Grades
765-850 Points= A
680-764 Points= B
595-679 Points= C
510-594 Points= D
000-509 Points= F

| General Grading Rubric for Assignments | |
|---|--|
| A | 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 | 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. |
| C | 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. |
| D | 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. |
| F | 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 errors that block overall understanding. Does not meet assignment requirements. |

Assignments and Grading

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, quizzes, and/or student presentations.

Quizzes:

There will be two quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will be worth **75 points**. Quizzes will be based on your readings and on in-class lectures. Taking notes during lectures is highly encouraged. Quiz dates are listed at the end of the syllabus on the schedule of assignments, readings and exams. There are no make-ups on quizzes unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Mid-Term

The Mid-term will be on the first portion of the semester readings. The readings include chapters 1-8 from Harrison and Harris "A More Perfect Union". The Mid-Term is worth **150 points**. The Mid-Term will take place on **October 7-9, 2013**.

Term Paper:

There will be a term paper due for this class. Students will be required to attend a **Local Government Meeting**. The guidelines for this term paper will be given to students in class. The **Local Government Meeting** term paper is worth **100 points**. This paper is due on **October 23, 2013**.

Group Activity:

A group activity and presentation is scheduled to take place on **November 18&20, 2013**. The instructor will give you further instructions on the requirements for this assignment. The Group Activity/Presentation is worth **100 point**

Class Participation

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. All students are encouraged to participate and voice their opinion in all Political issues. Do not be afraid to engage in an argument. Political opinions can be very controversial, since we each have our own values, traditions and beliefs. Just remember to be respectful of all students. Class participation is worth **50 points**.

Community Service: Date TBA by Instructor

Community service is a requirement for this course and a part of your grade. The community service project will be discussed further in class by the instructor. Community service is worth **100 points**.

Final Examination:

The final examination will be based on the second half of the semester readings. The readings include Chapters 9-15 from Harrison and Harris, "A More Perfect Union". There will be a Final Exam Review one week before the exam, it will be to your own advantage to attend class on this day and take notes to help with the exam. The Final Exam is worth **200 points**. The exam will take place on **December 2&4, 2013**.

| Schedule Readings, Assignments, and Exams | | |
|--|--|--|
| Date: | Readings, Assignments | Exams |
| Week 1 08/19-21/2013 | Introduction to course Ch.1 A More Perfect Union Ch.1 Governing California | In class discussion |
| Week 2 08/26-28/2013 | Ch.2 & 3 A More Perfect Union Ch.2 Governing California | In class discussion |
| Week 3 09/02-04/2013 | NO CLASS Monday, September 02, 2013-Labor Day Wednesday Ch. 4 A More Perfect Union No Reading Governing California | In class discussion |
| Week 4 09/09-11/2013 | Ch. 5 A More Perfect Union Ch. 3 Governing California | In class discussion Quiz Ch. 1, 2, 3,4 |
| Week 5 09/16-18/2013 | Ch. 6 & 7 A More Perfect Union Ch. 4 Governing California | In class discussion |
| Week 6 09/23-25/2013 | Ch. 8 A More Perfect union No Reading Governing California | In class discussion |
| Week 7 09/30-10/02/2013 | Midterm Review | In class discussion |
| Week 8 10/07-09/2013 | MIDTERM | MIDTERM Ch 1-8 |
| Week 9 10/14-16/2013 | Ch. 9 A More Perfect Union Governing California-No Reading | In class discussion |
| Week 10 10/21-23/2013 | Ch. 10 & 11 A More Perfect Union Ch. 5 Governing California Local Government Meeting Paper Due | In class discussion |
| Week 11 10/28-30/2013 | Ch. 12 A More Perfect union Governing California-No Reading | In class discussion |
| Week 12 11/04-06/2013 | Ch. 13 A More Perfect Union Ch. 6 Governing California | Quiz Ch. 9,10, 11,12 In class discussion |
| Week 13 11/11-13/2013 | NO CLASS Monday, September 02, 2013-Veterans Day Wednesday Ch. 14 A More Perfect Union Ch. 7 Governing California | In class discussion |
| Week 14 11/18-20/2013 | A More Perfect union-No Reading Governing California-No Reading Group Activity/Presentation | In class discussion |
| Week 15 11/25-27/2013 | Ch. 15 A More Perfect union Ch. 8 Governing California Final exam Review | In class discussion |
| Week 16 12/02-04/2013 | FINAL EXAM | Final Exam Ch. 9-15 |

Local Government Meeting

Paper Guidelines

Due October 23, 2013

Assignment:

Write a 2-3 page, double-spaced report, in MLA format, of your first-hand observations of a local government meeting.

Examples of appropriate governmental bodies include:

- ❖ a city council/commission meeting
- ❖ a meeting of the county commissioners court
- ❖ a zoning or planning commission meeting
- ❖ a school board meeting
- ❖ a meeting of the board of regents of a public university or community college
- ❖ a meeting of the hospital district
- ❖ a meeting of the water district

The following meetings are **not** appropriate:

- ❖ Any meeting that was held prior to August 19, 2013

If you have any questions about a meeting you would like to attend, please ask me before you attend.

Plan ahead. Many local government meetings occur only once or twice a month. You can usually find information about local meetings in your local newspaper. You can also call a local government and find out when the meetings are and where they are held.

The ideal report includes a record of all verbal and nonverbal interactions among all persons present, does not have spelling or grammatical errors, and includes among others, the following items:

- the time, date, and place of your fieldwork
- A description of the physical layout of the room or meeting place and the presence of any political symbols such as flags, seals, etc.
- information on all formal decisions and the procedures, if any, that were followed
- A summary of all statements made by the speakers, noting their attitude or ideology and their tone (i.e., formal, hostile, liberal, conservative, etc.)
- information on the speakers' personal behaviors and styles (appearance, age, race, and gender)
- a summary of any actions taken and the procedures, if any, that were followed to reach a decision
- an analysis of the range of decisions made, the kind of language used, references to political groups, the requirements of the law, or to other governmental bodies, and the appearance of consensus or discord
- a comparison of the observation to class material and related resources
- a comparison of the different governmental bodies observed by the group members (this is REAL political science)
- a general critique of the observed activity's overall political or policy implications (for example, did the observed officials represent or act on behalf of the general public or on behalf of a particular group, did they take into account the speaker's presentation or did they ignore it?)

Group Project Presentation Guidelines

Due November 18&20, 2013

Group: 3-4 people

Topic:

Each group will be required to create a campaign. Your campaigns focus is to promote an issue that is important to the development of the Imperial Valley. You are required to create a campaign add along with a campaign speech to persuade your audience on the issue at hand. Each member of your group will be required to participate, for you will be presenting your campaign to the class. Remember, this is a group presentation; everyone involved will receive the same grade. It is your responsibility to make sure you make adequate arrangements to meet and work on your presentation for the best grade possible.

Along with your campaign presentation, each group will hand in a one page, double spaced outline of their research on the topic as well as a brief reflection of why their topic of choice is important to the Imperial Valley. The presentation will be presented on 8-10 powerpoint slides which will need to be e-mailed to the instructor one week prior to the due date.