

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE
Political Science

POLS 102: American Government & Politics
CRN 10689 – Fall 2014 – 3.0 Units
MW 01:30pm – 02:55pm
Room 202

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BLACKBOARD ENHANCED
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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 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.

“I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.”

~Thomas Jefferson (1820)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (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:

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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.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE COURSE

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

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

CLASSROOM NORMS

Students are expected to comply with the following classroom norms:

- Arrive to class on time, with all electronic equipment turned off and put away. Exception: Unless otherwise directed, laptops and iPads may be used during class for note taking purposes only (refer to Attendance Policy on page 4).
- Remain in the classroom during each class session until excused by the instructor.
- Be respectful of fellow students, the instructor, and any guests.
- Actively listen during class, and participate in class activities and/or discussions.
- Use English for all course-related activities, on and off campus

TEXTBOOKS

The following two textbooks are required for this course:

- 1. Harrison:** American Democracy Now, Third Edition, McGraw-Hill Publishing, 2013.
Authors: Harrison, Harris & Dearborn.
ISBN #978-1-259-42837-1
- 2. Giventer:** Governing California, 2nd Edition, McGraw-Hill Publishing, 2008.
Author: Giventer, Lawrence.
ISBN #978-0-07-352633-1.

These are your main textbooks for the course. The questions contained on the exams will come from the books, videos, and classroom discussions--**so read and study it carefully**. This textbook takes an in-depth look at the American federal system of government.

The **Harrison** textbook companion website has many helpful tools to enhance your learning experience. You should bookmark the following website for easy access:

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/007352638x/student_view0/.

The **Giventer** textbook is required for California state and local government. This textbook takes an in-depth look at the issues facing California state and local governments.

The **Giventer** textbook companion website has many helpful tools to enhance your learning experience. You should bookmark the following website for easy access:

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073526339/student_view0/.

WEB-ENHANCEMENT

This course is presented in a web-enhanced format, available through the Imperial Valley College Distance Education Program. For more information regarding the IVC online Blackboard system go to <http://www.imperial.edu/courses-and-programs/distance-education/about/>.

NETIQUETTE

Netiquette is a combination of the words "network" and "etiquette." Basically, it describes things you should and shouldn't do while communicating with other people online. This is especially important in a classroom environment. Here are some examples:

- Don't capitalize all letters while posting a thought or emailing someone. THIS IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING, AND IT IMPLIES THAT YOU ARE ANGRY. Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading.
- Never use profanity or make hurtful comments toward someone or when referring to someone's work. This is considered flaming.
- Be careful when using humor or sarcasm; you never know how someone else will interpret it.
- Be respectful of diverse opinions.

You can learn more about Netiquette by viewing the Core Rules of Netiquette available at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>, as excerpted from the book *Netiquette* by Virginia Shea. Also, you can test your knowledge by taking the Netiquette Quiz at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/netiquiz.html>. (Both links courtesy of Albion.com).

Overall, please be courteous to the instructor and to your fellow classmates. If you see postings that are inappropriate, please bring them to the instructor's attention. If a problem occurs, you should be aware of the IVC Student Conduct and Complaint policy, accessible on pages 41-44 of the [IVC General Catalog](#).

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. I will allow **25 points of extra credit for participation and attendance**. Grades will be assigned on the basis of the following weights:

| POSSIBLE POINTS | | FINAL GRADES | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| Assignment 1 | 50 points | 315 - 350 points = | A |
| Assignment 2 | 50 points | 280 - 314 points = | B |
| Assignment 3 | 50 points | 245 - 279 points = | C |
| Midterm Exam | 100 points | 210 - 239 points = | D |
| Final Exam | 100 points | 239 or less points = | F |
| Total | 350 points | | |

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to arrive to class on time, with all electronic devices turned off and put away. Since participation in classroom work and discussion is an important part of this course, students will have **10 points deducted** from their class points for each unexcused absence. Students having three unexcused absences may be dropped from the class. Students who are tardy three times will be considered as having been absent once. 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.

LEAVING CLASS: Students are expected to remain in the classroom throughout the entire class session. Students leaving the class early, without obtaining approval from the instructor prior to the start of class, will have **5 points deducted** from their total class points each occurrence.

CELL PHONES and ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class, with the exception of laptops or tablets for note taking purposes only. Students violating this policy during a class period will have **5 points deducted** from their class points. Students caught doing non-course related work during class will get one warning; a 2nd offense will result in **one full letter grade deduction** from your final grade.

ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to complete three Video Assignments during the semester. Assignments are worth **50 points** each. Information regarding the assignments will be available through the course Blackboard site.

EXAMS

Two exams will be given during the course, each worth **100 points**. Each exam is objective and will cover material discussed in class and presented in the readings. Late exams are not allowed, unless *prior* approval has been obtained from the instructor.

GRADING RUBRIC

The following grading rubric will be used when grading student assignments. Remember to use proper English and grammar when preparing your assignments, and to follow all guidelines and directives of the instructor.

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 discussion may be simplistic or repetitive. Evidence is provided which supports 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 impede overall understanding. Does not respond appropriately to the assignment.
- F** Minimal effort by student. Unfocused, underdeveloped, and/or rambling. May be unduly brief. Evidence is not used to support conclusions. May contain serious grammatical errors that block overall understanding. Does not meet assignment requirements.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

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.

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 do 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 note the book or article or website and page number from the source of your quote. If you paraphrase something, you must also cite the source of your information. *If cheating or plagiarism is discovered, the assignment will be given "0" points. Violations will be reported to the IVC Dean of Student Affairs.*

STUDENT COUNSELING & HEALTH SERVICES

Students have counseling and health services available, provided by the pre-paid Student Health Fee. You can find out more about services available for students at <http://www.imperial.edu/students/student-health-center/>. The IVC Student Health Center is located in the Health Science building in Room 2109, telephone 760-355-6196.

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.

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.

ACCESSIBILITY

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.

| Course Schedule | | | |
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| Readings, Assignments, and Exams | | | |
| Date: | Readings / Assignments | Class Activity | |
| Week 1 | Introduction to course and Orientation | In-class discussion | |
| Week 2 | People, Politics, and Participation | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 1 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 1 Governing California | | |
| Week 3 | The Constitution | In-class discussion | |
| ** Holiday | Ch.2 American Democracy Now | | |
| Mon. class only | Ch.2 Governing California | | |
| Week 4 | Federalism | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 3 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 3 Governing California | | |
| | Civil Liberties | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 4 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 4 Governing California | | |
| Week 5 | Civil Rights | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 5 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 5 Governing California | | |
| Week 6 | Political Socialization and Public Opinion | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 6 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Interest Groups | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 7 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Governing California-No Reading | | |
| Week 7 | Political Parties | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 8 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Governing California-No Reading | | |
| Week 8 | MIDTERM EXAM - CHP'S 1-8 | | |

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|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|--|
| Week 9 | Elections, Campaigns, and Voting | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 9 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Governing California-No Reading | | |
| Week 10 | The Media | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 10 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Governing California-No Reading | | |
| | | | |
| Week 11 | Politics and Technology | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 11 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 5 Governing California | | |
| | | | |
| | Congress | | |
| | Ch. 12 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 6 Governing California | | |
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| Week 12 | The Presidency | | |
| | Ch. 13 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 7 Governing California | | |
| | | | |
| | The Bureaucracy | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 14 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 5 Governing California | | |
| | | | |
| Week 13 | The Judiciary | | |
| ** Holiday | Ch. 15 American Democracy Now | | |
| Tues class only | Ch. 6 Governing California | | |
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| Week 14 | Economic Policy | In-class discussion | |
| | Ch. 16 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 7 Governing California | | |
| | | | |
| | Domestic Policy | | |
| | Ch. 17 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 7 Governing California | | |
| | | | |
| Week 15 | Foreign Policy & National Security | In-class discussion | |
| **Thanksgiving Holiday | Ch. 18 American Democracy Now | | |
| | Ch. 5 Governing California | | |
| | | | |
| Week 16 | Presentations | In-class | |
| | | | |
| Week 17 | Final Exams | In-class | |