

Political Science 102

Introduction to American Government

Political Science 102 | Fall 2017

CRN#: 11037

August 14, 2017 | December 8, 2017

Tues-Thurs: 11:20am-12:45pm | Room 2734

Instructor information:

Ric Epps: Professor

Office: Room 1712

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 1-2pm,
Tuesdays, 1-2pm, and by appt.

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Please phone or email to arrange appointments

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to be an introduction to American government, its historical foundations, institutions and political processes. We will examine how our political system was designed, how it has changed over time and how public opinion, the media and the "information age" have affected our government institutions and public policy. You will learn the role and scope of government as the Founders conceived it, and as it is viewed today. Finally, we will examine current policy issues, weigh the costs and benefits of actions and engage in thoughtful discussion of contemporary policies and actions with a view toward how those issues and actions impact the current political scene. To achieve these objectives, I have chosen a textbook that focuses attention on the role of citizens as key actors in the democratic experiment that we call the United States of America.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND MATERIALS

Christine Barbour & Gerald C. Wright, *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics* (Sage CQ Press, 7th edition Brief, 2016).

Recommended Resources for Additional Exploration

The *Keeping the Republic* student companion website:

[Barbour Student Study Site](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

This site is a particularly good resource for review of course materials.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Access

If you do not have access to a computer off campus, there is a [computer lab on campus](#) you can use to participate in the course. Most public libraries also have computers with internet access that you can use for free.

Computer Requirements

You will need to have an up-to-date browser, operating system, and some additional software on your computer to take this class. Check this Distance Education page for hardware & software requirements. Some of the documents in this course will be available to you in PDF form. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your computer, you can download it by going to <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Each week you will need to complete the following:

- Read the weekly Chapter(s) as required.
- Take the weekly quizzes: Quizzes (KTR) 1-5 by 11pm, the night before Exam 1.
Quizzes (KTR) 6-12 by 11pm, the night before Exam 2.
Quizzes (KTR) 13&14 by 11pm, the night before Final Exam.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to submit multiple assignments throughout the semester. The final course grade will combine the total score of all graded course assignments. Graded assignments will include Discussion Posts, Writing Assignment, Quizzes, and Exams. (See below). This course requires the use of a computer, tablet, or smartphone to complete all required assignments. Please be sure to assess that you have access to a necessary device).

Quizzes = 280 points

Writing Assignment = 100 points

Midterm Exams (2x100) = 200 points

Final Exam = 100 points

Total = 680 Points

Grade Score Breakdown

610 – 680 = A range, 540 – 609 = B range, 465 – 539 = C range, 400 – 464 = D range, Below 400 = F

Writing Assignment

Here are the info and prompt for your paper. Your papers are **due on Monday, November 6th**. the papers should be a minimum of 3 FULL pages, BUT no more than 5 pages. You will need a "work cited" page.

Prompt: You are to select a topic of interest from the questions listed below (See the end of this document). Once you pick a topic-- BE SPECIFIC, you must decide what approach you want to use to analyze your research, for example; comparative analysis, such as, comparing democratic system vs. non-democratic systems, or liberalism vs conservatism, or socialism vs communism, etc. You could also do a position paper, where you research a topic like abortion, climate change, racism, socialism, etc., and you can write your paper based on how you feel about the issue or subject-- In this case you must show both sides of the issue, though you are only supporting one side of the argument. You can also do a general analysis paper, just analyzing an issue without taking a position.

Quizzes

Students are required to complete weekly chapter quizzes for the Barbour textbook. The quizzes directly relate to the chapter content and are utilized to help you prepare for the course exams.

Exams

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. Each will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in's, identifications, and/or short answers. The exams are designed to test your familiarity with the lecture material, reading assignments, and your independent ability to apply what you have learned.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Announcements

Announcements will be posted in CANVAS on a regular basis. They will appear on your CANVAS dashboard when you log in and/or will be sent to you directly through your preferred method of notification from CANVAS. Please make certain to check them regularly, as they will contain any important information about upcoming projects or class concerns.

Email

In this course, we will use the Inbox feature (located on the left-hand side, titled "Inbox") to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the CANVAS system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages regularly. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name, week and message subject. For example YOURNAMEWK2ASSIGNMENT.
- Send email only to "Inbox" and not my personal email account.
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the QUESTION FORUM.
- Do not submit your assignments by messenger.
- Make certain to check your messages frequently.

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 missing more than three class sessions will have **10 points deducted** from their total points for each unexcused absence thereafter. Students who are consistently late will have to meet with me. 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 be counted absent for the day.

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 receive one warning, after which, there will be a full grade deduction for each offence, and you will be removed from class. Also, 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.

MAKEUP AND LATE WORK: The scheduled dates of all exams and written assignments are clearly indicated in this syllabus. No make-up exams or late papers will be accepted or permitted without my prior approval. Also, if you miss an exam you must provide documentation to explain your absence—I will decide if a makeup will be allowed.

CLASSROOM ETTIQUITE

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting a college instructor.

- **Electronic Devices:** Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class, unless otherwise directed by the instructor.
- **Food and Drink** is prohibited in all classrooms. Water bottles with lids/caps are the only exception.
- **Disruptive Students:** Students who disrupt or interfere with a class may be sent out of the room and told to meet with the Campus Disciplinary Officer before returning to continue with coursework.
- **Children in the classroom:** Due to college rules and state laws, no one who is not enrolled in the class may attend, including children.

WEBSITE AND TECHNICAL TOOLS

The Canvas learning management system will be used to deliver the online course. Students need consistent and reliable access to the Internet, preferably using the Chrome, Firefox or Safari web browsers. Students without reliable Internet access should contact their counselor to create a plan to access the course daily.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Online courses require a considerable amount of time. You are expected to follow the pacing guidelines outlined by your teacher. You are not required to log-in to the course at a set interval, time, or day.

However, to be successful in the course, you should plan to spend near five hours per week actively engaged in the class. The amount of time you spend on coursework will vary depending on your skill level and knowledge in a variety of areas. While on vacation or other activities, you are expected to adhere to your instructors pacing guidelines. **MAKEUP AND LATE WORK:** The scheduled dates of all exams, quizzes, and written assignments are clearly indicated in this syllabus. No make-up exams or late papers will be accepted without my prior approval.

NETIQUETTE

What is netiquette? Simply stated, it's network etiquette -- that is, the etiquette of cyberspace. In other words, Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Classes with an online component require the use of good netiquette.

Many online courses use discussion forums. Here are four tips for good netiquette in an online discussion.

1. It's typically a good idea to address the person you're responding to by name, just as if you were speaking to them face-to-face. It's also a good idea to sign your posting. This will make your online discussion more personal, and remind you to be polite!
2. Use care when interacting online, since you don't have the ability to gauge a person's reaction or feelings as you do in a face-to-face conversation. Particularly, humor and sarcasm should always be used very carefully and where needed, labeled as such.
3. It may be ok to disagree with someone depending on your professor's direction for the assignment if you give good reasons for doing so. Remember that people are perfectly entitled to debate both sides of a course idea or topic, and that reasoned argument is an important part of a college education. Your response should never ever attack someone personally. You can disagree with someone, and they with you while remaining respectful.
4. Identify your sources if you use quotes, references, or resources. Your work must always be distinctively your own writing unless you have indicated otherwise.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

IVC expects honesty and integrity from all students. Anyone caught cheating will receive a zero (0) on the exam or assignment, and the instructor may report the incident to the Campus Disciplinary Officer, who may place related documentation in a file. Repeated acts of cheating may result in an F in the course and/or disciplinary action. 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 that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question.

Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to the following:

- Plagiarism is defined as taking and presenting, 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. If you do not understand how to 'cite a source' correctly, you must ask for help.
- 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.
- Using a commercial term paper service.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES- DSPTS (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 DSPTS office is located in [Building 2100](#), telephone [760-355-6313](#) if you feel you need to be evaluated for educational accommodations.

STUDENT COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICES

Students have counseling and health services available, provided by the pre-paid Student Health Fee. We now also have a full-time mental health counselor. For information click [here](#). The IVC Student Health Center is located in the Health Science building in [Room 2109](#), telephone [760-355-6310](#).

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the right to experience a positive learning environment and due process. For further information regarding student rights and responsibilities, please click [here](#) to refer to the IVC General Catalog available online.

INFORMATION LITERACY

Imperial Valley College is dedicated to helping students skillfully discover, evaluate, and use information from all sources. Students can access tutorials by clicking [here](#).

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.

FALL 2017 COURSE CALENDAR: Assignments and Topics

Week #1 Aug. 14 - 19

ASSIGNMENTS: Introduction to Course

TOPICS: Buy textbook(s): Keeping the Republic 7th ed. Barbour
California Politics 4th ed. Van Vechten

Week #2 Aug. 21 - 26

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapters 1 and 2
-Power and Citizenship in American Politics
-The Politics of the American Founding

Week #3 Aug. 28 – Sep. 1

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapters 1 and 2
-Power and Citizenship in American Politics
-The Politics of the American Founding

Week #4 Sep. 4 - 9

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapters 3 and 4
-Federalism
-Fundamental American Liberties

Week #5 Sep. 11 - 16

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 5

-The Struggle for Equal Rights

Week #6 Sep. 18 - 23

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 5

-The Struggle for Equal Rights

****Week #7 Sep. 25 - 30**

ASSIGNMENTS: **Midterm Exam 1 Review & Exam (09/28)**

Week #8 Oct. 2 - 7

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 6 and 7

-Congress

-The Presidency

Week #9 Oct. 9 - 14

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 7 and 8

-The Presidency

-The Bureaucracy

Week #10 Oct. 16 - 21

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 9 and 10

-The American Legal System and the Courts

-Public Opinion

Week #11 Oct. 23 - 28

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 11 and 12

-Parties and Interest Groups

-Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

****Week #12 Oct. 30 – Nov. 4**

ASSIGNMENTS: **Midterm Exam 2 Review & Writing Assignment Due (11/02)**

Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 13

-Media, Power, and Political Communication

****Week #13 Nov. 6 - 11**

ASSIGNMENTS: **Midterm 2 Exam (11/07)**

Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 14

-Domestic and Foreign Policy

Week #14 Nov. 13 - 18

ASSIGNMENTS: Van Vechten:

TOPICS: Read Chapter(s) 1-5

- Introduction
- Critical Junctures
- Direct Democracy
- The State Legislature
- The Executive Branch

****Thanksgiving Week (No Class) Nov. 20 - 25**

Week #15 Nov. 27 – Dec. 2

ASSIGNMENTS: **Final Review (11/30)**

ASSIGNMENTS: Van Vechten:

TOPICS: Read Chapter(s) 6-11

- The Court System
- Other Governments
- The California Budget Process
- Political Parties, Elections, and Campaigns
- Political Engagement
- Concluding Thoughts: Political Paradoxes
- Direct Democracy

****Week #16 Dec. 4 - 8**

ASSIGNMENTS: **Final Exam (12/05)**

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT PAPER TOPICS

Select and answer one of the questions listed below. Your papers should be 3-5pages in length.

1. Compare direct versus representative democracy.
2. Compare the Virginia and New Jersey plans. Explain how these led to the "Great Compromise."
3. Pick one thing about the U.S. Constitution including its amendments that you think should be changed. What modifications would you make? Explain your reasons for making this change.
4. What did Thomas Jefferson mean when he said, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants?" Do you think that this statement still applies in today's world?
5. Should individual states have more or less power compared to the federal government when implementing laws dealing with topics such as legalization of marijuana, gay marriage, and abortion?
6. Outline a program that would get more people to vote in elections.

7. What are the dangers of relying on polling when it comes to voting and presidential elections?
8. Compare the two major political parties in the United States.
9. Why would voters choose to vote for a third party, even though they know that their candidate has virtually no chance of winning?
10. Describe the major sources of money that are donated to political campaigns. Explain why each of these sources would consider donating to the campaign.
11. Should corporations be treated as individuals in terms of being allowed to donate to political campaigns? Defend your answer.
12. Explain why interest groups have grown stronger as the major political parties have grown weaker.
13. Explain why the media has been called the fourth branch of government. Include your opinion of whether this is an accurate portrayal.
14. Should term limits be instituted for members of Congress? Explain your answer.
15. Should members of Congress vote their own conscience or follow the will of the people who elected them into office? Explain your answer.
16. Explain how executive privilege has been used by presidents throughout the history of the U.S.
17. In your opinion, which of the three branches has the most power? Defend your answer.
18. Why did the Equal Rights Amendment fail?
19. Explain how the 14th Amendment has affected civil liberties in the United States from the time of its passage at the end of the Civil War.
20. Do you think that the federal government has enough, too much or just the right amount of power? Defend your answer.