

## **Introduction to American Government**

**Political Science 102 | Winter 2018**

**CRN#: 10587**

**ONLINE**

**January 2,2018 | February 2, 2018**

### **Instructor information:**

**Ric Epps, Professor**

**Office: Room 1712**

**Office Hours:** I will be available for virtual office hours by appointment, or one morning (Wednesdays, 9-10am) and one evening session (Mondays, 5-6pm).

**Phone: 760-355-6284**

**Email: [richard.epps@imperial.edu](mailto:richard.epps@imperial.edu)**

**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. We will discuss 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 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain how government impacts your daily life;
- Recognize and evaluate the basic debates and issues in American government and American political history;

- Explain and critically assess the formal and informal political institutions and their respective roles in American politics;
- Identify and describe the key functions of the three branches of government; and
- Assess the causes and consequences of different forms of political participation, and outline the ways in which individuals and groups can affect political outcomes in the United States.

### **COURSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

This course will consist of a combination of online lectures, discussion post, assigned readings, videos, individual projects, online quizzes, and exams. ***The mutual sharing of ideas and respect for diversity of opinions will be encouraged and safeguarded.***

Students are advised to take notes from the online lectures and PowerPoint lectures as lecture materials are stressed on exams and assignments. Student discussion groups are also required.

### **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 lesson(s). This will be available every Sunday at 8am PST until the following Monday at noon PST.
- Post in the weekly Discussion Forum by Friday at 11pm PST.
- Respond to two other students' posts in the Discussion Forum by the following Sunday at 11:00PM PST.
- Complete the lesson assignments in each course lesson by the following Sunday at 11:00PM PST.
- Take the weekly self-assessment by the following Monday at noon PST.

### **GRADED ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will be required to submit multiple assignments throughout the semester. The final course grade will be 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 = 360 points

Writing Assignment = 100 points

Discussion Posts = 150 points

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**Total = 610 Points**

### **Grade Score Breakdown**

**540 – 610 = A range, 475 – 539= B range, 400 – 474= C range, 350 – 399= D range, Below 350= F**

### **Discussion Posts**

Discussions are an important part of this course. The posts require a response to specific questions that result in collaborative conversations with classmates which builds and expands your learning and knowledge of the course. You must support your discussion postings and responses with evidence from course materials by citing from the textbook, reading or outside materials.

- Unless noted otherwise, your discussion postings do not have a set length, but they must demonstrate a depth of understanding and be substantial. Your posts should be specific, concise, and academic in tone. You are required to respond to each assigned discussion and provide a minimum of ONE response to classmates in the following ways:

1. Suggest how or why you might see things differently/offer a different point of view
  2. Ask clarifying questions.
  3. Share an insight after reading another the classmate's posting.
  4. Support a classmate's idea with evidence from class materials.
  5. Expand on a classmate's posting.
- Unless stated otherwise, your initial post is due by the due date on your assignment calendar. Please adhere to this due date so that there are plenty of posts for you and your classmates to respond.
  - Be respectful of your classmates and their ideas. Failure to do so will result in a reduction in points for that discussion assignment.

### **Writing Assignment**

Here is the info and prompt for your paper. Your papers are **due on Friday, January 26th**. the papers should be a minimum of 2-3 FULL pages, BUT no more than 5 pages maximum. You will need a "work cited" page. They will also be checked for plagerism.

Prompt: You are to select a topic of interest from a list of questions that I will provide. 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 write 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 one midterm exam and a final exam. Each will be a combination of multiple choice, true/ false, fill-in's, identifications, and 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 message.
- Make certain to check your messages frequently.

## **Questions**

In online courses, it is normal to have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments, course materials, or assessments. Please post these in the QUESTION FORUM which you can access by clicking the DISCUSSIONS button in the course navigation links. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other. For each clear and comprehensive answer you give, you can receive 1 extra credit point for the course (up to 5 points maximum).

## **Discussion Forums**

Discussion Forums are a way for you to engage with each other about the course content. Each lesson module will have a question that links to a forum. You can also access each forum by clicking on the DISCUSSIONS button in the course navigation links. In order to get full credit for each discussion, you will need to post a thoughtful, well-written response to the question and respond to two of your classmates' answers.

## **Virtual Office Hours**

Twice a week I will be available for virtual office hours – one morning (Wednesdays, 9-10am) and one evening session (Mondays, 5-6pm) using CANVAS "Inbox". Click "Inbox" in the course navigation links. I will also be available by appointment.

## **Turnaround/ Feed back**

During the week (M-F) I will check conversations and monitor the discussion board several times. If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within two days.

## **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 login 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 teacher's 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**

When posting on the discussion boards and chat rooms it is important to understand how to interact with one another online, 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- DSPS (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 DSPS 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 fulltime 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 Jan. 2 - 6**

ASSIGNMENTS: [Introduction to Course](#)

TEXTBOOK: Keeping the Republic 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Barbour

TOPICS: Read Chapters 1

- Power and Citizenship in American Politics

### **Week #2 Jan. 8 - 13**

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapters 2,3,4

- The Politics of the American Founding
- Federalism
- Fundamental American Liberties

### **Week #3 Jan. 15 - 20**

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapter 5,6,7

- The Struggle for Equal Rights
- Congress
- The Presidency

**Week #4 Jan. 22 - 27**

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapters 8,9,10,11

- The Bureaucracy
- The American Legal System and the Courts
- Public Opinion
- Parties and Interest Groups

**ASSIGNMENT: Writing Assignment Due! Jan. 27**

**Week #5 Jan. 29 - Feb. 2**

ASSIGNMENTS: Barbour: Keeping the Republic

TOPICS: Read Chapters 12,13,14

- Voting, Campaigns, and Elections
- Media, Power, and Political Communication
- Domestic and Foreign Policy