

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS, POLS102

## IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE, SPRING, 2019

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### COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

Welcome to our course! We will begin our journey by discussing the origin, development and operation of government and political institutions in the United States. As we continue on, you will learn more about the foundation of the American regime and the ideas, interests, & circumstances that helped shape it. You will also learn to analyze political behavior and the formal structures and institutions that make up the American political system. Throughout this journey, we will engage some of today's most pressing issues: immigration, gun control, and the rise of social media in politics. By the time you have finished this course, you will have an improved understanding of American politics, a more developed political voice, and an increased interest in civic engagement!

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### TEXTS

- Glen Kurtz & Sylvie Waskiewics, *American Government*: ISBN: 1938168178. Hard copies are available at the IVC bookstore/Amazon and **access is FREE** in Canvas and at [www.openstax.org/details/american-government](http://www.openstax.org/details/american-government).
- All other course readings will be posted on Canvas, within each module, so make sure to consult the schedule and/or Canvas.

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### COURSE GRADING & REQUIREMENTS<sup>1</sup>

<b>Midterm (4/1) &amp; Final (6/5)</b>	(40%)
<b>Active Learning Assignments (ALAs)</b>	(20%)
<b>Position Paper Part 1 (4/29)</b>	(10%)
<b>Position Paper Part 2 (5/26)</b>	(25%)
<b>Reading Quizzes</b>	(5%)
<b>Participation</b>	(Extra Credit)

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<sup>1</sup> Please note I reserve the right to make any necessary changes to the above assignments in order to accommodate class progress and/or scheduling changes.

**MIDTERM & FINAL (40%):** You will be given a midterm & final in this course. Each exam may consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, & quote/clause identification. That being said, you should expect exams that ask you to do more than simply memorize content. The final exam will not be cumulative!

**ACTIVE LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS (20%):** Each week there will be an active learning component, which asks you to be in class, engage the material, and be an active participant in your own education. At times you will be asked to work in groups, with a partner, or complete a written task alone—the goal is put you at the center of your educational experience. **All ALAs must be submitted in class and cannot be completed if you are absent that day (even for excused absences).** You will have opportunities to **makeup two missed ALAs**, which will otherwise serve as extra credit.

**READING QUIZZES (5%):** You are also required to complete weekly chapter quizzes via Canvas. The quizzes directly relate to that week's readings and will help you prepare for the course exams, written assignments, & discussions. All reading quizzes will open on the Friday before they are due and must be completed by the date specified on the below class Assignment Schedule. Quizzes cannot be reopened once closed, so do not wait until the deadline! You will have the opportunity to **make up two missed quizzes** at the end of the semester, which will otherwise serve as extra credit.

**POSITION PAPER PART 1 (10%):** One of the goals of this class is to help improve your writing skills & research abilities, so your position paper will be broken up into two parts. **The first part** of this assignment will have you develop a thesis, an introduction, and an outline for what will ultimately become your final position paper. In addition, you will locate three scholarly sources and create a work cited page. The prompt for the position paper will be made available after the midterm.

**POSITION PAPER PART 2 (25%):** After you have had a chance to craft a thesis, outline your paper, and curate appropriate resources, you will flesh out the body of essay and elaborate on your preliminary evidence in the **second part of this assignment** (see paper prompt for more details). This assignment must be 5-6 pages (not including the work cited page) upon completion and must be submitted via Canvas (paper and email submission will not be accepted). Please note that all submissions made via Canvas are **subject to a Vericite inspection**, which checks for all forms of plagiarism. **It is your responsibility to cite appropriately**—instances of plagiarism may result in a 0 for the assignment, an F in the class, and additional college sanctions (see General Policies for more details).

**PARTICIPATION (EXTRA CREDIT):** Each class you will be expected to **come with one question & one comment (Q/C)** about the reading for that day. These will not be collected, but I will **randomly call** on individuals to share their Q/Cs. Students who routinely come to class with quality & well thought out Q/Cs will be giving **extra credit** at the end of the semester, at the instructor's discretion

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## EXPECTATIONS & IMPORTANT POLICIES<sup>2</sup>

### ATTENDANCE

- As you are allowed to makeup two ALAs, please consider these pre-excused absences. Anything beyond this will **require an office visit with myself and supporting documentation**. I will not respond to emails that pertain to absences unless you speak with me in person first.
- Without discussing it with me ahead of time, **if you are more than 5 minutes late or leave more than 5 minutes early, you will not receive credit for any assignments completed in class that day**—please be respectful of **our time**.

### EMAIL POLICY

- Email should be used to schedule an appointment outside of office hours, for short questions clarifying class assignments or specific lecture items. **In-depth questions about course readings or an entire day's lecture, etc. are not appropriate for e-mail**. Questions which are answered on the syllabus **will not receive a response**—for general questions, use the **Canvas Q/A forum** or **consult your peers first**.
- To protect the privacy of student grades, I will not discuss scores of assignments, papers, or exams over the phone or email. Scores of all assignments, papers & exams will be posted on Canvas. If you wish to discuss your grade, please visit me during office hours. My door is always open!

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES & CLASS CONDUCT

- Students using phones during lecture for purposes not related to class activities will be asked to leave class and will likely **not receive credit for any assignments completed in class that day**—please step outside if you must use your phone.
- In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Therefore, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another. Please **respect each other's opinions** and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments **of any kind**.

### MISSING ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE CHALLENGES

- You are responsible for any work lost or late due to technical problems.
- Missing assignments and requests to re-grade must be reported/requested **within one week of the assessment being graded**. Grade challenges must be accompanied with detailed explanation & evidence justifying the request.

### COPYRIGHT & SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER

- My lectures & all course materials are protected by copyright and may not be reproduced or distributed without my written consent. Please be advised that this syllabus is “subject to change,” any changes will be announced via Canvas.

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<sup>2</sup> See end of syllabus for more details on college and course policies

## ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

WK	DATE	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
<b>1</b>	Feb. 11	Intro to Course	Syllabus	
	Feb. 13	<p><b>What is Politics &amp; Why Does it Matter Pt. 1?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain what government is and what it does</li> <li>2. Identify the type of government in the United States and compare it to other forms of government</li> </ol>		
<b>2</b>	Feb. 18	<b>**NO CLASS**</b>		
	Feb. 20	<p><b>What is Politics &amp; Why Does it Matter Pt. 2?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe values that most Americans share, and the political debates that drive partisan divisions in American politics.</li> <li>2. Describe the role and responsibilities of citizens in American politics.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government,</i> pp. 1-34	<b>Quiz #1 Due Feb. 19</b>
<b>3</b>	Feb. 25	<p><b>The Politics of the American Founding</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain what the Articles of Confederation did and failed to do.</li> <li>2. Identify the goals, divisions, and compromises that shaped the Constitution.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government,</i> pp. 35-68	
	Feb. 27	<p><b>How Should We Think about the Framers &amp; the Constitution?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw inferences from Dahl's account &amp; apply them to how we should think about the Constitution</li> <li>2. Identify the Constitution's democratic shortcomings.</li> </ol>	Dahl, <i>How Democratic is the American Constitution,</i> Ch. 1 & 2	<b>Quiz #2 Due Feb. 26</b>

<b>4</b>	March 4	<b>American Federalism</b> 1. Identify the ways in which federalism divides power between national and state governments. 2. Describe the ways in which the national government can influence the states.	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 69-106	
	March 6	<b>Immigration and Federalism</b> 1. Explain the trends in immigration in the US at a state & federal level. 2. Discuss the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments.	Ramakrishnan & Gulasekaram, "Understanding Immigration Federalism"	<b>Quiz #3 Due March 5</b>
<b>5</b>	March 11	<b>Fundamental Liberties Pt. 1</b> 1. Explain how the Bill of Rights relates to the federal government and to the states. 2. Describe how the First Amendment protects both church and state, as well as individuals' religious freedom.	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 107-130	
	March 13	<b>Fundamental Liberties Pt. 2</b> 1. Show how the protections of freedom of speech and of the press have been tested. 2. Discuss the extent of an individual's right to privacy and compare the idea of civil rights with civil obligations.	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 131-152	<b>Quiz #4 Due March 12</b>
<b>6</b>	March 18	<b>Fundamental Liberties Pt. 3</b> 1. Show how the history of guns complicates our understanding of guns in the US 2. Discuss the Second Amendment & the controversy surrounding its interpretation.	Winkler, "The Secret History of Guns"	

	March 20	<b>Public Opinion</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate how well American citizens measure up to notions of an “ideal democratic citizen.”</li> <li>2. Describe different techniques used to gauge public opinion.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 199-240	<b>Quiz #5 Due March 19</b>
7	March 25	<b>The Struggle for Equal Rights Pt. 1</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outline the criteria used by the courts to determine if and when the law can treat people differently.</li> <li>2. Summarize key events and outcomes in the struggle for equality of African Americans.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 153-175	
	March 27	<b>The Struggle for Equal Rights Pt. 2</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the different paths to equality taken by other racial and ethnic groups.</li> <li>2. Identify tools used by citizens to expand the promise of civil rights.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 176-198	<b>Quiz #6 Due March 26</b>
8	April 1	<b>***Midterm***</b>	Study Guide	<b>***Midterm***</b>
	April 3	<b>How to Outline a Paper and Curate References</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go over position paper prompt and how to develop a thesis &amp; outline.</li> <li>2. Visit reference librarian and discuss proper citation/sources</li> </ol>	Paper Outline Handout	
9	April 8	<b>Congress</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking.</li> <li>4. Explain how checks and balances work between the Congress and the executive and judicial branches.</li> <li>5. Discuss the relationship between the people and Congress.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 403-444	

	April 10	<p><b>The Presidency</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compare the modern presidency with the founders' expectations for a limited executive.</li> <li>2. Identify strategies and tools presidents employ to overcome the constitutional limitations of the office.</li> <li>3. Describe the organization and functions of the executive office.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 445-484	<b>Quiz #7 Due April 9</b>
10	April 15	<p><b>The Courts</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate Hamilton's claim that the judiciary was the "least dangerous branch of government" in light of the power it wields.</li> </ol> <p>Outline the institutional rules and political influences that shape the Supreme Court</p>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 485-520	
	April 17	<p><b>Bureaucracy</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain how the characteristics and features of bureaucracy influence decision making.</li> <li>2. Describe the relationship between the federal agencies and the three branches of the federal government.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 557-588	<b>Quiz #8 Due April 16</b>
11	April 22-27	<b>**Spring Break**</b>		
12	April 29	<p><b>Peer Review and Edits</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss how to effectively give and receive peer feedback</li> <li>2. Provide and receive peer feedback on Position Paper outline</li> </ol>	Peer Review Handout	<b>Position Paper Part 1 Due April 29 in class and via Canvas (2pm)</b>

	May 1	<b>Media &amp; Power</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of journalists.</li> <li>2. Describe the link between media and politics.</li> <li>3. Discuss the relationship between citizens and the media.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 287- 326	<b>Quiz #9 Due April 30</b>
13	May 6	<b>Political Parties</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outline the evolution of the party system in the United States.</li> <li>2. Describe political parties and what they do</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 327- 366	
	May 8	<b>Interest Groups</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe how interest groups use lobbying and campaign activities to get the public policy they want.</li> <li>2. Compare public and private interest groups</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 367-402	<b>Quiz #10 Due May 7</b>
14	May 13	<b>Voting and Elections (Pt. 1)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don't vote.</li> <li>2. Explain the Electoral College, how it came to be, and its critics.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 241-486	
	May 15	<b>Voting and Elections (Pt. 2)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Summarize the importance of elections for citizens.</li> <li>2. Discuss dark money, PACS &amp; assess their potential influence in democratic politics.</li> </ol>	Gerken, "The Real Problem With Citizens United"	<b>Quiz #11 Due May 14</b>
15	May 20	<b>Domestic Policy</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain what policy is, who makes it, and how it is made.</li> <li>2. Identify government policy programs that attempt to improve citizens' lives.</li> </ol>	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 589-626	



	May 22	<b>Foreign Policy</b> 1. Identify the basic goals and types of foreign policy. 2. Describe ways in which policy making reflects public opinion.	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 627-658	<b>Quiz #12 Due May 21</b>  <b>Position Paper Due May 26 via Canvas</b>
<b>16</b>	May 27	<b>**No Class**</b>		
	May 29	<b>California State &amp; Local Govt.</b> 1. Outline the unique features of California's state & local government 2. Discuss how one can have an impact on state & local politics	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 521-556	<b>Quiz #13 Due May 28</b>
<b>17</b>	June 3	<b>California State of Mind</b> 1. Review the unique history of California through the lens of Governor Pat Brown 2. Examine the impact that water, infrastructure, and social movements had had on California politics		<b>Extra Credit Documentary Quiz Completed in Class</b>
	June 5	<b>**Final Exam**</b>		

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## GENERAL POLICIES

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

**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. If you do not understand how to correctly 'cite a source', you must ask for help. **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. Anyone caught cheating or 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. Please refer to the General School Catalog for more information on academic dishonesty or other misconduct. Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to the following: (a) plagiarism; (b) copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment ;(c) communicating test information with another person during an examination; (d) allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment, (e) use of a commercial term paper service

### 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 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 see <http://www.imperial.edu/students/student-health-center/> . The IVC Student Health Center is located in the Health Science building in Room 2109, telephone 760-355-6310.

### 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 refer to the IVC General Catalog available at [http://www.imperial.edu/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=4516&Itemid=762](http://www.imperial.edu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4516&Itemid=762)

### INFORMATION LITERACY

Imperial Valley College is dedicated to help students skillfully discover, evaluate, and use information from all sources. Students can access tutorials at <http://www.imperial.edu/courses-andprograms/divisions/arts-and-letters/library-department/info-lit-tutorials/>