

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS, POLS102

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE, FALL, 2019

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COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES¹

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!

TEXTS & SUPPLIES

- 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.
- All other course readings will be posted on Canvas, within each module, so make sure to consult the schedule and/or Canvas.
- 882E Scantron & pencil for midterm/final exams

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Develop an understanding of civic responsibility
- Participate in activities that promote the public good (e.g. the voting process, jury duty, community service)
- Examine the election and voting process

¹ 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. In addition, **this is a 'web enhanced' class**, so **students will need access to internet & Canvas to participate fully**. If you are unable to do so, please contact me immediately so accommodations can be worked out.

COURSE GRADING & REQUIREMENTS

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| Midterm (10/8) & Final (12/12) | (40%) |
| Active Learning Assignments (ALAs) | (10%) |
| Position Paper Part 1 (11/6) & Part 2 (12/2) | (35%) |
| Reading Quizzes | (5%) |
| Participation | (10%) |

PARTICIPATION (10%): So we can hone our political voice, become more comfortable expressing our struggles, and learn from each other's experiences, each week (unless specified otherwise) you will develop **one question & one comment (Q/C)** about the reading. You must submit this assignment in Canvas no later **the following Saturday at 11 pm**. The following week, I will **randomly call** on individuals to share their Q/Cs at the beginning of each lecture. You only have to share once, but if you are absent the day I randomly choose your response, you will only have one more chance going forward. **Failure to share will result in a 1/3 total grade penalty.**

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, which that ask you to do more than simply memorize content. The final exam will not be cumulative!

ACTIVE LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS (10%): 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 QUIZES (5%): We also have weekly chapter quizzes via Canvas. The quizzes directly relate to that week's readings/lectures and will help you prepare for the course exams, written assignments, & discussions. All reading quizzes will open on the Monday before they are due and must be completed by the dates specified below. Quizzes cannot be reopened once closed, but you will have the opportunity to **make up two** at the end of the semester, which will otherwise serve as extra credit.

POSITION PAPER PART 1 (10%): To help improve your writing skills & research abilities, your position paper is broken up into two parts. **The first part** of this assignment will have you locate three scholarly sources, develop a thesis, an introduction, and an outline for what will ultimately become your final position paper. Details will be made available after the midterm. In **Part 2 (25%) of this assignment, you will flesh out your outline.** This assignment must be 5-6 pages (not including the work cited or cover page) and must be submitted via Canvas (**subject to a plagiarism inspection**)—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).

EXPECTATIONS & IMPORTANT POLICIES²

ATTENDANCE

- 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**. If you have to take public transportation, work, or any other commitments which do not allow you to come to our class on time, I encourage you to pick another class that better suits your schedule and needs.
- Life happens (cars explode, people pass on, etc.). Rather than adjudicate minor absences, I will provide **extra credit opportunities that will allow you to make up lost points**. Please consider these pre-excused absences—**no need to email me about minor issues**. For family or medical emergencies, please contact me **ahead of time**, then set up **an office visit with supporting documentation** so we can discuss potential extensions and makeups.

EMAIL POLICY

- Emails should include your name and **class meeting day/time** (e.g. T/Th, 8 AM)
- Email should be used to schedule meetings, for short questions clarifying class assignments, or specific lecture items. **In-depth questions about course readings or an entire day's lecture are not appropriate for e-mail**. Questions which are answered on the syllabus **will likely not receive a response**—for general questions, please consult the **Canvas Q/A forum** or **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. Grades & comments will be posted on Canvas and can be discussed 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.
- No recording or photography of any kind is permitted without prior authorization.
- In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Therefore, please appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another, **respect each other's opinions** and refrain from personal attacks **of any kind**.

MISSING ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE CHALLENGES

- You are responsible for any work lost or late due to technical/internet 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.

² 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. Violation of any of the below policies may result in being dropped, dismissed and/or receiving an F in the class. See end of syllabus for more details on college and course policies

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

| WK | DATE | TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES | READING | ASSIGNMENT |
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| 1 | Aug. 20 | Intro to Course | Syllabus | |
| | Aug. 22 | What is Politics & Why Does it Matter Pt. 1? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what government is and what it does/ought do 2. Discuss source and solutions to collective action problems & conflict | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 1-34 | |
| 2 | Aug. 27 | What is Politics & Why Does it Matter Pt. 2? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe American political culture & the power of ideas, narratives, and authority 2. Discuss the is/ought distinction & apply it to American inequality | | Quiz #1 Due Aug. 26 |
| | Aug. 29 | The Constitution & Its Origins <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what the Articles of Confederation did and failed to do. 2. Identify the goals, divisions, and compromises that shaped the Constitution. | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 35-68 | Q&C #1 Due Aug. 31 |
| 3 | Sep. 3 | | | Quiz #2 Due Sep. 4 |
| | Sep. 5 | How Should We Think about the Framers & the Constitution? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw inferences from Dahl's account & apply them to how we should think about the Constitution 2. Identify the Constitution's democratic shortcomings. | Dahl, <i>How Democratic is the American Constitution</i> , Ch. 1 & 2 | Q&C #2 Due Sep. 7 |
| 4 | Sep. 10 | American Federalism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the foundations of American federalism & the ways | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 69-106 | Quiz #3 Due Sep. 11 |

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| | | <p>in which it divides power between national and state governments.</p> <p>2. Describe the historical expansion of federalism & the ways in which the national government can influence the states.</p> | | |
| | Sep. 12 | <p>Immigration and Federalism</p> <p>1. Explain historical trends in immigration at the state & federal level.</p> <p>2. Analyze the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments.</p> | Ramakrishnan & Gulasekaram, "Understanding Immigration Federalism" | Q&C #3 Due Sep. 14 |
| 5 | Sep. 17 | <p>Fundamental Liberties Pt. 1</p> <p>1. Explain how the Bill of Rights relates to the federal government and to the states.</p> <p>2. Describe how the First Amendment protects both church and state, as well as individuals' religious freedom.</p> | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 107-130 | Quiz #4 Due Sep. 18 |
| | Sep. 19 | <p>Fundamental Liberties Pt. 2</p> <p>1. Show how the protections of freedom of speech and of the press have been tested.</p> <p>2. Discuss the extent of an individual's right to privacy and compare the idea civil obligations.</p> | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 131-152 | Q&C #4 Due Sep. 21 |
| 6 | Sep. 24 | <p>Fundamental Liberties Pt. 3</p> <p>1. Explore how the "secret history of guns" in the US might complicate our understanding of Second Amendment rights.</p> <p>2. Discuss the Second Amendment & the controversy surrounding its interpretation.</p> | Winkler, "The Secret History of Guns" | Quiz #5 Due Sep. 25 |

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| | Sep. 26 | Public Opinion <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze how well American citizens measure up to notions of an “ideal democratic citizen” 2. Describe the principle-agent problem in American politics 3. Discuss how Americans become politically socialized 4. Describe & evaluate different techniques used to gauge public opinion. | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 199-240 | Q&C #5 Due Sep. 28 |
| 7 | Oct. 1 | The Struggle for Equal Rights Pt. 1 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summarize key events and outcomes in the struggle for equality of African Americans. 2. Outline the criteria used by the courts to determine if and when the law can treat people differently. | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 153-175 | Quiz #6 Due Oct. 2 |
| | Oct. 3 | The Struggle for Equal Rights Pt. 2 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify tools used by citizens to expand the promise of civil rights. 2. Explain the different paths to equality taken by other gender, racial, & marginalized groups. | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 176-198 | Q&C #6 Due Oct. 5 |
| 8 | Oct. 8 | ***Midterm*** | Study Guide | ***Midterm*** |
| | Oct. 10 | How to Outline a Paper and Curate References <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go over position paper prompt and how to develop a thesis & outline. 2. Visit reference librarian and discuss proper citation/sources | Paper Outline Handout | |
| 9 | Oct. 15 | Congress <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking. 4. Explain how checks and balances work between the Congress and | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 403-444 | Quiz #7 Due Oct. 16 |

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| | | <p>the executive and judicial branches.</p> <p>5. Discuss the relationship between the people and Congress.</p> | | |
| | Oct. 17 | <p>The Presidency</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare the modern presidency with the founders' expectations for a limited executive. 2. Identify strategies and tools presidents employ to overcome the constitutional limitations of the office. 3. Describe the organization and functions of the executive office. | <p><i>American Government</i>, pp. 445-484</p> | <p>Q&C #7 Due Oct. 19</p> |
| 10 | Oct. 22 | <p>The Courts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate Hamilton's claim that the judiciary was the "least dangerous branch of government" in light of the power it wields. 2. Outline the institutional rules and political influences that shape the Supreme Court | <p><i>American Government</i>, pp. 485-520</p> | <p>Quiz #8 Due Oct. 23</p> |
| | Oct. 24 | <p>Bureaucracy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the characteristics of what the federal bureaucracy is and does 2. Compare the spoils & civil service system 3. Discuss the attempts to privatize or eliminate parts of the bureaucracy | <p><i>American Government</i>, pp. 557-588</p> | <p>Q&C #8 Due Oct. 26</p> |
| 11 | Oct. 29 | <p>Media & Power</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of journalists. 2. Describe the link between media and politics. 3. Discuss the relationship between citizens and the media. | <p><i>American Government</i>, pp. 287- 326</p> | <p>Quiz #9 Due Oct. 30</p> |

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| | Oct. 31 | Political Parties 1. Describe political parties and what they do 2. Outline the evolution of the party system in the United States. | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 327- 366 | Q&C #9 Due Nov. 2 |
| 12 | Nov. 5 | Interest Groups 1. Describe how interest groups use lobbying activities to get the public policy they want. 2. Compare public and private interest groups | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 367-402 | Quiz #10 & Position Paper Part 1 Due Nov. 6 via Canvas (11pm) |
| | Nov. 7 | Peer Review and Edits 1. Discuss how to effectively give and receive peer feedback 2. Provide and receive peer feedback on Position Paper outline | Peer Review Handout | Print and Bring to Class Position Paper Part 1 Q&C #10 Due Nov. 9 |
| 13 | Nov. 12 | | | |
| | Nov. 14 | Voting and Elections (Pt. 1) 1. Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don't vote. 2. Summarize the importance of elections for citizens. | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 241-486 | Quiz #11 Due Nov. 13 Q&C #11 Due Nov. 16 |
| 14 | Nov. 19 | Voting and Elections (Pt. 2) 1. Discuss dark money, PACS & assess their potential influence in democratic politics. 2. Explain the Electoral College, how it came to be, and its critics. | Gerken, "The Real Problem With Citizens United" | Quiz #12 Due Nov. 20 |
| | Nov. 21 | California State & Local Govt. 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 | Q&C #12 Due Nov. 23 |

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| 15 | Nov. 25-30 | ***BREAK*** | | Position Paper Due Dec. 2, 11PM, via Canvas |
| 16 | Dec. 3 | Domestic Policy 1. Explain what policy is, who makes it, and how it is made. 2. Identify government policy programs that attempt to improve citizens' lives. | <i>American Government</i> , pp. 589-626 | |
| | Dec. 5 | Foreign Policy 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 | Quiz #13 Due Dec. 4 Q&C #13 Due Dec. 7 |
| 17 | Dec. 10 | California State of Mind 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 | | Extra Credit Documentary Quiz Completed in Class |
| | Dec. 12 | **Final Exam** | | **Final Exam** |

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

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-and-programs/divisions/arts-and-letters/library-department/info-lit-tutorials/>