

# **Introduction to American Government**

**Political Science 102 | Fall 2019**

**CRN#: 10596**

**August 19, 2019 | December 14, 2019**

## **Instructor information:**

**Ric Epps, Professor**

**Office: Room 1712**

**Virtual Office Hours:** I will be available for virtual office hours – one morning (Tuesdays, 9-10am) and one evening session (Wednesdays, 6-7pm).

**Campus Office Hours: Tuesdays, 230-330pm, Wednesdays, 10-11am  
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. 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 ***Am Gov: Long Story Short*** (Sage CQ Press, 2019).

### Recommended Resources for Additional Exploration

The ***Am Gov*** student companion website:

[Am Gov: Student Study 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.
- Watch Chapter Videos.
- Review Student Study Site (Sage Website).
- Review Chapter PowerPoints.
- Take the weekly quizzes: **Quizzes (Am Gov) 1-5 by 11pm, the night before Midterm Exam.**  
**Quizzes (Am Gov) 6-10 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 be combining the total score of all graded course assignments. Graded assignments will include, Assignments, 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: = 100 points**

**Assignments (2 x 50pts.): = 100 points**

**Exams (2 x 100pts.): = 200 points**

**Total: = 400 points**

### Grade Score Breakdown:

**350-400 = A range, 300-349 = B range, 250-299 = C range, 200-249 = D range, Below 200 = F**

### 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 exam 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/discussion materials, reading assignments, and your independent ability to apply what you have learned.

## Assignments

You have **two (2)** assignments for the semester. Each assignment will require a brief writing 1-2 pages. Do not let the page length fool you—producing a quality piece of writing on a specific topic with such limited space will NOT be easy. When completed, you must upload an electronic copy to Canvas by the due dates. More info on the assignments will be forthcoming.

## 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 (3) class sessions will have 10 points deducted from their total points for "each" unexcused absence thereafter.** 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. If you have any work issues that prevent your regular attendance—see me asap so we can figure out a plan.

LEAVING CLASS: Students are expected to remain in the classroom throughout the **entire class session—of course you can go to the bathroom!** 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, they will be asked to leave the class, and **there will be a full letter grade deduction from their FINAL GRADE.**

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 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—However, please come and see me if this is an issue for you—I'll do my best to help.

## **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, can utilize the computers in the library, or they 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 or plagiarizing 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 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 2019 COURSE CALENDAR: Assignments and Topics**

### **Week #1 Aug. 19-24**

PREPARATIONS: Buy textbook: Am Gov: Long Story Short. Christine Barbour

ASSIGNMENTS:

TOPICS: Introduction to Course

**Week #2 Aug. 26-31**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 1

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 1

TOPICS: **Politics and Citizenship**

**Week #3 Sept. 2-7**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 2

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 2

TOPICS: **United States Founding**

**Week #4 Sept. 9-14**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 3

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 3

TOPICS: **Civil Liberties and Civil Rights- 1**

**Week #5 Sept. 16-21**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 3

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 3

TOPICS: **Civil Liberties and Civil Rights- 2**

**Week #6 Sept. 23-28**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 3

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 3

TOPICS: **Civil Liberties and Civil Rights- 3**

**\*\*\*Week #7 Sept. 30-Oct. 5 (Assignment 1 Due)**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 4

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 4

Assignment 1 due

TOPICS: **The Legislative Branch**

**\*\*Week #8 Oct. 7-12 (Midterm Exam)**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 5

Review Chp's 1-5 (for Midterm)

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 5

Midterm Exam

TOPICS: **The Executive Branch**

**Week #9 Oct. 14-19**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 6

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 6

TOPICS: **The Judicial Branch**

**Week #10 Oct. 21-26**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 7

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 7

TOPICS: **Parties and Interest Groups**

**Week #11 Oct. 28-Nov.2**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 8

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 8

TOPICS: **Public Opinion, Campaigns, and Elections**

**\*\*Week #12 Nov. 4-9 (Assignment 2 Due)**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 9

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 9

Assignment 2 due

TOPICS: **Media and Political Communication**

**Week #13 Nov. 11-16**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 10

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 10

TOPICS: **Domestic and Foreign Policy-1**

**Week #14 Nov. 18-23**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 10

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 10

TOPICS: **Domestic and Foreign Policy-2**

**\*\*\*THANKSGIVING WEEK HOLIDAY- NO CLASS!!!\*\*\***

**Week #15 Dec. 2-7**

PREPARATIONS: Read Chp. 10

ASSIGNMENTS: Quiz- Chp. 10

TOPICS: **Domestic and Foreign Policy-3**

**\*\*Week #16 Dec. 9-14 (Final Exam)**

PREPARATIONS: Review Chapter's 6-10

ASSIGNMENTS: Final Exam

TOPICS: