

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS, POLS102

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE, WINTER (2020, ONLINE)¹

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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!

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.
- All other course readings will be posted on Canvas within each module, so make sure to consult the schedule and/or Canvas.

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

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COURSE GRADING & REQUIREMENTS²

Midterm (1/21) & Final (2/6)	(70%)
Discussion Posts	(10%)
Politics in the News	(20%)

- **MIDTERM & FINAL (70%):** There two course exams in this course. I will provide you with 5-7 essay questions in advance of the exam to review and consider how to best demonstrate what you have learned from the course. When you open the exam link, only two of these questions will be randomly selected (you are to answer whichever question is generated for you - you will not all get the same question). Once you start the exam you will have 90 minutes to complete it—not nearly enough time to write two quality essay, so the **only workable approach is to have thorough answers already prepared for each possible question in advance**. Strict plagiarism standards will be used for these exams. I will announce when the exam study guides and the exams will be available via Canvas.
- **DISCUSSION POSTS (10%):** As members of a democratic society, it is important that we engage in deliberative exchanges. To help facilitate said exchanges, I will ask you to participate in weekly discussion via Canvas. Discussion forums will open the Monday of each new module—**initial topic replies are due the following Wednesday at 11pm** and **peer replies are due the following Saturday at 11pm**. I will ensure that our discussions are respectful, interactive, and enjoyable. Strict plagiarism standards will be used for these posts, so please be aware that you will need to show originality of thought. **Discussion posts cannot be made up**, so don't wait until the deadlines!
- **POLITICS & NEWS (P&N) (20%):** A key component of genuine learning is applying course content to what is going on outside of our digital classroom. With this in mind, you will be responsible for writing a one-page reflection on *how* one of the previous week's key concept, topic, or idea relates to a news article **published during the same two weeks** (see below schedule or Canvas for due dates). Please see Canvas for specific details and grading rubric.

² 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.

EXPECTATIONS & IMPORTANT POLICIES³

COMMUNICATION

- **The best way to contact me is through Canvas email (do not use assignment comment option, as I may not respond).** I will generally respond to emails Monday – Friday between 7am – 5:30pm within 24 hours of receiving them. If you do not receive a response, resend, use my email or call my office: 760-355-6288.
- Email should be used to schedule online office appointments, for short questions clarifying assignments or specific lecture items. **In-depth questions about course readings or an entire lecture, etc. are not appropriate for e-mail.** Questions which are answered on the syllabus **will typically not receive a response**—for general questions, use the **Canvas Q/A forum** or **consult your peers first**.
- Scores of all assignments & exams will be posted on Canvas. If you wish to discuss your grade, please communicate via Canvas or schedule office hours with me

DROP POLICY

- In distance education, coursework is used to determine your attendance (e.g. class discussions, completed assignments, etc.). Students who fail to submit substantive coursework by due dates, engage in regular & effective coursework (see class schedule) or **complete the first day assignment may be dropped from the class.**

STUDENT CONDUCT & ONLINE NETIQUETTE

- 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**.
- Netiquette is internet manners, online etiquette, and digital etiquette all rolled into one word. Our rules of netiquette: (1) identify yourself, (2) include a subject line, (3) avoid sarcasm, (4) respect others' opinions and privacy, (5) acknowledge and return messages promptly, (6) copy with caution, (7) do not spam or junk mail, (8) be concise, (9) use appropriate language, (10) use appropriate emoticons (emotional icons) to help convey meaning, and (11) use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning [do not use ALL CAPS or multiple exclamation marks (!!!)].

LATE WORK POLICY

- Extensions will only be granted under extenuating circumstances. Excuses that may prove acceptable include: serious injury & family emergencies, serious accident, or the observance of a religious holiday. In order to be excused, you will need to email the original documentation. Unexcused late work may be accepted, but will incur a 1/2 grade penalty for each 24-hour period or part thereof.

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.

³ See end of syllabus for more details on college and course policies

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #1	WEEK #1	WEEK #1	WEEK #1
Monday 1/6	Introduction to Our Course	Syllabus	Complete Syllabus Quiz & Intro Discussion by 11pm
Tuesday 1/7	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 3. Describe American political culture & the power of ideas, narratives, and authority 4. Discuss the is/ought distinction & apply it to American inequality 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 1-34	
Wednesday 1/8	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	Discussion Post 1.1 due by 11pm
Thursday 1/9	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	
Friday 1/10	American Federalism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the foundations of American federalism & the ways in which it divides power between national and state governments. 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 69-106	

	2. Describe the historical expansion of federalism & the ways in which the national government can influence the states.		
Saturday 1/11			Discussion Post 1.2 & P&N #1 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #2	WEEK #2	WEEK #2	WEEK #2
Monday 1/13	Immigration and Federalism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain historical trends in immigration at the state & federal level. 2. Analyze the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments. 	Ramakrishnan & Gulasekaram, "Understanding Immigration Federalism"	
Tuesday 1/14	Fundamental Liberties Pt. 1 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 3. Show how the protections of freedom of speech and of the press have been tested. 4. Discuss the extent of an individual's right to privacy and compare the idea civil obligations. 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 107-152	
Wednesday 1/15	Fundamental Liberties Continued <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore how the "secret history of guns" in the US might complicate our understanding of Second Amendment rights. 2. Discuss the Second Amendment & the controversy surrounding its interpretation. 	Winkler, "The Secret History of Guns"	Discussion Post 2.1 due by 11pm

Thursday 1/16	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	
Friday 1/17	The Struggle for Equal Rights <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. 3. Identify tools used by citizens to expand the promise of civil rights. 4. Explain the different paths to equality taken by other gender, racial, & marginalized groups 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 153-198	
Saturday 1/18			Discussion Post 2.2 & P&N #2 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #3	WEEK #3	WEEK #3	WEEK #3
Monday 1/20	**Holiday**		
Tuesday 1/21	***MIDTERM***		Due online by 11pm
Wednesday 1/22	Congress <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking. 2. Explain how checks and balances work between the Congress and the executive and judicial branches. 3. Discuss the relationship between the people and Congress. 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 403-444	Discussion Post 3.1 due by 11pm

Thursday 1/23	The Presidency <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 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 445-484	
Friday 1/24	The Courts <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 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 485-520	
Saturday 1/25			Discussion Post 3.2 & P&N #3 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #4	WEEK #4	WEEK #4	WEEK #4
Monday 1/27	Bureaucracy <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 & discuss the attempts to privatize or eliminate parts of the bureaucracy 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 557-588	
Tuesday 1/28	Media & Power <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. 	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 287- 326	

Wednesday 1/29	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	Discussion Post 4.1 due by 11pm
Thursday 1/30	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	
Friday 1/31	Voting and Elections 1. Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don't vote. 2. Summarize the importance of elections for citizens. 3. Discuss dark money, PACS & assess their potential influence in democratic politics. 4. Explain the Electoral College, how it came to be, and its critics.	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 241-284 Gerken, "The Real Problem With Citizens United"	
Saturday 2/1			Discussion Post 4.2 & P&N #4 due by 11pm
DAY	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK #5	WEEK #5	WEEK #5	WEEK #5
Monday 2/3	Domestic & Foreign 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. 3. Identify the basic goals and types of foreign policy. 4. Describe ways in which policy making reflects public opinion.	<i>American Government</i> , pp. 589-658	

Tuesday 2/4	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	
Wednesday 2/5	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	Watch Entire Video Via Canvas	Discussion Post 5.1 due by 11pm Extra Credit Quiz due by 11pm
Thursday 2/6	***Final Exam***		Due online by 11pm
Saturday 2/8			Discussion Post 5.2 & P&N #5 due by 11pm

GENERAL POLICIES & INFORMATION

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.

- **[Student Health Center](#)**. A Student Health Nurse is available on campus. In addition, Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District provide basic health services for students, such as first aid and care for minor illnesses. Contact the IVC **[Student Health Center](#)** at 760-355-6128 in Room 1536 for more information.
- **[Mental Health Counseling Services](#)**. Short-term individual, couples, family and group counseling services are available for currently enrolled students. Services are provided in a confidential, supportive, and culturally sensitive environment. Please contact the IVC Mental Health Counseling Services at 760-355-6310 or in the building 1536 for appointments or more information.

ATTENDANCE

- A student who fails to attend the first meeting of a class or does not complete the first mandatory activity of an online class will be dropped by the instructor as of the first official meeting of that class. Should readmission be desired, the student's status will be the same as that of any other student who desires to add a class. It is the student's responsibility to drop or officially withdraw from the class. See **[General Catalog](#)** for details.
- Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students. A student whose continuous, unexcused absences exceed the number of hours the class is scheduled to meet per week may be dropped. For online courses, students who fail to complete required activities for two consecutive weeks may be considered to have excessive absences and may be dropped.
- Absences attributed to the representation of the college at officially approved events (conferences, contests, and field trips) will be counted as 'excused' absences.

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.imrial.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/>

VETERANS CENTER

The mission of the IVC Military and Veteran Success Center is to provide a holistic approach to serving military/veteran students on three key areas: 1) Academics, 2) Health and Wellness, and 3) Camaraderie; to serve as a central hub that connects military/veteran students, as well as their families, to campus and community resources. Their goal is to ensure a seamless transition from military to civilian life. The Center is located in Building 600 (Office 624), telephone 760-355-6141.

EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM AND SERVICES (EOPS)

The Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) offers services such as priority registration, personal/academic counseling, tutoring, book vouchers, and community referrals to qualifying low-income students. EOPS is composed of a group of professionals ready to assist you with the resolution of both academic and personal issues. Our staff is set up to understand the problems of our culturally diverse population and strives to meet student needs that are as diverse as our student population. Also under the umbrella of EOPS our CARE (Cooperative Agency Resources for Education) Program for single parents is specifically designed to provide support services and assist with the resolution of issues that are particular to this population. Students that are single parents receiving TANF/Cash Aid assistance may qualify for our CARE program, for additional information on CARE please contact Lourdes Mercado, 760-355- 6448, lourdes.mercado@imperial.edu.

EOPS provides additional support and services that may identify with one of the following experiences:

- Current and former foster youth students that were in the foster care system at any point in their lives
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Formerly incarcerated students

To apply for EOPS and for additional information on EOPS services, please contact Alexis Ayala, 760-355-5713, alexis.ayala@imperial.edu.

STUDENT EQUITY PROGRAMS

- The Student Equity Program strives to improve Imperial Valley College's success outcomes, particularly for students who have been historically underrepresented and underserved. The college identifies strategies to monitor and address equity issues, making efforts to mitigate any disproportionate impact on student success and achievement. Our institutional data provides insight surrounding student populations who historically, are not fully represented. Student Equity addresses disparities

and/or disproportionate impact in student success across disaggregated student equity groups including gender, ethnicity, disability status, financial need, Veterans, foster youth, homelessness, and formerly incarcerated students. The Student Equity Program provides direct supportive services to empower students experiencing insecurities related to food, housing, transportation, textbooks, and shower access. We recognize that students who struggle meeting their basic needs are also at an academic and economic disadvantage, creating barriers to academic success and wellness. We strive to remove barriers that affect IVC students' access to education, degree and certificate completion, successful completion of developmental math and English courses, and the ability to transfer to a university. Contact: 760.355.5736 or 760.355.5733 Building 100.

- The Student Equity Program also houses IVC's Homeless Liaison, who provides direct services, campus, and community referrals to students experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act. Contact: 760.355.5736 Building 100.