



Basic Course Information

Semester:	F25	Instructor Name:	Dr. Steven Cauchon
Course Title & #:	POLS 102	Email:	Steven.cauchon@imperial.edu
CRN #:		Webpage (optional):	
Classroom:	N/A	Office #:	1713
Class Dates:	F25 8 week	Office Hours:	M: 9-10 am and 1-4 pm
Class Days:	N/A	Office Phone #:	760-355-6288
Class Times:	N/A	Emergency Contact:	
Units:	3	Class Format/Modality:	Asynchronos

Course Description

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!

Course Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)

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



Course Objectives

- The significance of the Declaration of Independence concerning the American political philosophy.
- The Articles of Confederation and the principal reasons why they were replaced by the Constitution.
- The significant features of the Constitution and the major ways that the Constitution changes.
- The concept of federalism and how it has changed throughout American history.
- The significance of the Bill of Rights, and the continuing debate over civil liberties.
- The role of public opinion and the media in the American political system.
- The importance of the American political parties, lobbying, and interest groups.
- The American election process, including political campaigning and voter behavior.
- The formal structure of the Congress and the committee system, the legislative process, and congressional powers.
- The principal powers of the presidency and how they expanded dramatically in the 20th century.
- The American bureaucracy.
- The American judicial system and how it is affected by critical issues in American society.
- The organizational structure, powers, and challenges confronting California's state and local governments.

Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

- Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewiz, *American Government 3e*: ISBN-13: 978-1-951693-38-1. Hard copies are available at the IVC bookstore/Amazon and [access is FREE here](#)

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

DISCUSSION POSTS (25%): 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. To ensure that we are presenting claims/positions based on evidence, **your posts are expected to cite our textbook and/or the module's associated video(s) in your initial post** (see assignment instructions in Canvas). Please let me know if you encounter any post that violate our netiquette policy (see below). Strict plagiarism standards and software is used to check these posts. Please note that I grade whatever initial post students submit to gain access to the discussion forum (even if it is blank, incomplete, etc.) and that posts are not editable, once submitted. **Discussion posts cannot be made up, so please don't wait until the deadlines, or ask for extensions.** However, recognizing that life happens, **we will have an extra credit opportunity that will allow you to make up these points during Module #16.**



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COURSE EXAMS (75%): You will be given three course exams for this course. Each exam may consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, & quote/clause identification. **The material you will be tested on will be drawn from the readings, lectures, and any supplemental videos associated with the Learning Unit in which each exam is located** (see Assignment Schedule below). Honorlock will proctor your exams this semester—an online proctoring service that allows you to take our exams remotely. You DO NOT need to create an account or schedule an appointment in advance. Honorlock and Honorlock support is available 24/7, and all that is required is a compatible computer and stable internet connection (you will NOT need a camera or identification for any of our exams). You have until Sunday at 11 pm during exam weeks to complete all exams. However, **if you chose to take the exam during the weekend, you do so at your own risk as I am not available via email** and IVC support services are limited during this time. Further Honorlock and exam details are available in Canvas (**see below schedule for due dates**).

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Discussion Posts (Weekly)	(25%)
Course Exam #1 (Module #6)	(25%)
Course Exam #2 (Module #11)	(25%)
Course Exam #3 (Module 16)	(25%)

Academic Honesty (Artificial Intelligence -AI)

IVC values critical thinking and communication skills and considers academic integrity essential to learning. Using AI tools as a replacement for your own thinking, writing, or quantitative reasoning goes against both our mission and academic honesty policy and will be considered academic dishonesty, or plagiarism unless you have been instructed to do so by your instructor. In case of any uncertainty regarding the ethical use of AI tools, students are encouraged to reach out to their instructors for clarification.

Accessibility Statement

Imperial Valley College is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students, regardless of course modality. Every effort has been made to ensure that this course complies with all state and federal accessibility regulations, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. However, if you encounter any content that is not accessible, please contact your instructor or the area dean for assistance. If you have specific accommodations through **DSPS**, contact them for additional assistance.

We are here to support you and ensure that you have equal access to all course materials.

Course Policies

Communication

- **The best way to contact me is through email.** 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, please resend, or call my office: 760-355-6288.

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- Email should be used to schedule online office appointments, for short questions clarifying assignments or specific lecture items. **In-depth questions about course readings, an entire lecture, etc. are appropriate for office hours, not e-mail.** For general questions, please consult the syllabus first and/or 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 office hours.
- If you need accommodations due to disabilities, unforeseen circumstances, etc. be proactive—I can better assist you before, rather than after assignments are due.

Drop policy

- In distance education, our coursework is used to determine your attendance. Students who fail to submit substantive coursework by due dates or **complete assignments on the first day may be dropped from the class**. Please refer to the class schedule for specific attendance & effective coursework requirements.

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 are 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 at my discretion.

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.

Other Course Information

Financial Aid

Your Grades Matter! In order to continue to receive financial aid, you must meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement. Making SAP means that you are maintaining a 2.0 GPA, you have successfully completed 67% of

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your coursework, and you will graduate on time. If you do not maintain SAP, you may lose your financial aid. If you have questions, please contact financial aid at finaid@imperial.edu.

IVC Student Resources

IVC wants you to be successful in all aspects of your education. For help, resources, services, and an explanation of policies, visit <http://www.imperial.edu/studentresources> or click the heart icon in Canvas.

Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

MODULE # and DATE	TOPIC & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	READING	ASSIGNMENT
	LEARNING UNIT #1		
Module #1 8/11	What is Politics & Why Does it Matter? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what government is and what it does/ought do 2. Discuss sources 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 	Syllabus	<p>Submit initial post to Discussion #1 by 11 pm Weds. to avoid being dropped</p> <p>Get 10/10 on syllabus quiz and update profile picture by 11pm</p>
Module #2 8/12	The Constitution & Its Origins <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically think about circumstances & narratives about the founding of the United States 2. Examine the Articles of Confederation and identify the goals, divisions, & compromises that shaped Constitution. 3. Briefly review key aspects of the U.S. Constitution. 4. Reflect on how we should think about the Constitution and its democratic shortcomings today. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 2</i>	

<p>Module #3 8/12</p>	<p>American Federalism</p> <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. 2. Describe the historical expansion of federalism & the ways in which the national government can influence the states. 3. Explain historical trends in immigration at the state & federal level. 4. Analyze the restrictive & integrative approaches used by states & local governments. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 3</p>	<p>Discussion #2 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>
	<p>Fundamental Liberties</p> <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 bear arms. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 4</p>	
<p>Module #5 8/18</p>	<p>Political Parties, & Interest Groups</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe political parties and what they do. 2. Outline how parties operate as an organization, in government, and in the electorate. 3. Describe how interest groups use lobbying activities to get the public policy they want. 	<p><i>American Government,</i> Chapter 9 & 10</p>	<p>Discussion #3 Wed/Sat by 11 pm</p>

	4. Compare public and private interest groups.		
Module #6 8/25	Course Exam #1		Course Exam #1 Due Sun by 11 pm
	LEARNING UNIT #2		
Module #7 8/25	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, Chapter 6</i>	Discussion #4 Wed/Sat by 11 pm
Module #8 9/2	Voting & Elections <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the reasons why Americans vote—or don’t vote. 2. Discuss campaigns, how they are financed, & and their impact on democratic politics 3. Explore how POTUS is elected 4. Analyze how POTUS is really elected. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 7</i>	
Module #9 9/2	The Media <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of journalists. 2. Describe the link between media and politics. 	<i>American Government, Chapter 8</i>	Discussion #5 Wed/Sat by 11 pm

	3. Discuss the relationship between citizens and the media.		
Module #10 9/8	<p>The Struggle for Equal Rights</p> <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> Chapter 5	Discussion #6 Wed/Sat by 11 pm
Module #11 9/8	***Course Exam #2***		Course Exam #2 Due Sun by 11 pm
	LEARNING UNIT #3		
Module #12 9/15	<p>Congress</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain Congressional power and how it's internal/external checks & balances work. 2. Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking. 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 11	

	3. Examine how party leadership can influence the legislative process.		
Module #13 9/15	The Executive & the Bureaucracy <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. Explain the characteristics of what the federal bureaucracy is and does 4. Compare the spoils & civil service system & discuss the attempts to privatize or eliminate parts of the bureaucracy 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapters 12 & 15	Discussion #7 Wed/Sat by 11 pm
Module #14 9/22	The Courts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how the courts operate. 2. Outline the institutional rules and political influences that shape the Supreme Court. 3. Evaluate Hamilton's claim that the judiciary was the "least dangerous branch of government." 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 13	
Module #15 9/22	California State & Local Gov't <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outline the unique features of California's state & local gov't 2. Discuss how one can have an impact on state & local politics 3. Review the unique history of California through the lens of Governor Pat Brown 4. Examine the impact that water, infrastructure, and social 	<i>American Government,</i> Chapter 14 Watch California State of Mind Via Canvas	Discussion #8 Wed/Sat by 11 pm Take Exit Survey & SLO Survey to open Extra Credit: California State of Mind Extra Credit quiz Sat by 11



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	movements had had on California politics		
Module #16 9/29	***Final Exam***		Course Exam #3 due Sunday by 4 pm

*****Subject to change without prior notice*****