

POLS C1000: Introduction to U.S. Government

Instructor: Rev. Michael J. Ludder

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Office: Santa Rosa Campus, Emeritus 1548 (if allowed by the health protocols)

Office hours: fall semester office hours are: MW 9:30-10:30 AM or by email, by phone as needed, and by appointment.

Mailbox: Social Sciences Department Service Center, Emeritus Hall (ground floor)

Required Online Text: Online Reader American Contradictions

The current required online reader can be purchased at www.grlcontent.com

This course is NOT on Canvas.

Each week students will be responsible for reading the assigned online reader sections and articles.

To highlight articles in the online text, you may find it useful to download one of these free applications:

<http://superuser.com/questions/467981/how-to-highlight-and-collect-highlighted-text-fromwebpages-in-chrome>

Required: register for a free subscription to the New York Times go to:
<https://sonomalibrary.org/elibrary/a-z/nyt-remote>

You will need to sign up online for a library card. Then, log into the New York Times. The free pass is good for 72 hours, but you can sign in again at will.

If you live outside Sonoma County, your local library site should have a similar link.

Recommended for students unfamiliar with the American Government

(This is not required. Use only an older edition)

Struggle for Democracy by Greenberg & Page

Attendance Policy: The student is responsible for all materials covered in class, exams, and changes in lecture topics, due dates, exam times and locations. There are no exceptions to this policy. A student may be dropped at the instructor's discretion if he/she is absent more than 10% to the total class hours. A student who fails to attend one of first two class periods in the semester may also be dropped to allow other students to enroll in the course. See:

Attendance Policy (Procedure 8.5.1P):

<http://www.boarddocs.com/ca/santarosa/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=A83PZ466E31A>

Course Evaluation/Grading: There will be three required major exams that will include: multiple choice/fill-in questions (50%). You will receive points for every correctly marked answer and minus points for every marked incorrect answer. In addition, you will have to write, at minimum, six policy-related essays (50%) of over 3000 words. Submit **your** essay and cite your sources. The number of tests and essays are dependent on whether there are unforeseen interruptions in the semester. (See: Academic Integrity Policy below) Points earned over the semester will be placed on a 100-point scale for your final grade. There is no curve. See:

Grading (Procedure 3.10P):

<http://www.boarddocs.com/ca/santarosa/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=A9CN465E0FB4>

Your grade for the course will be based upon a standard format of: A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = 60% or less (no curve).

Late exams and assignments will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. See:

Grading (Policy 3.10):

<http://www.boarddocs.com/ca/santarosa/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=A9CMYV5D94CD>

Optional Activities: Students can increase their grade by 15 points (30 points maximum) with one or more of these optional activities: four hours of community service in an approved public or nonprofit agency; a cop ride along of 4 hours; and/or a three-page (typed, double-spaced) report on an instructor-approved political science book. Students will be limited to only two of these outside optional activities and must obtain **prior approval** before using any of these options. See your instructor for further details or questions.

Standards of Conduct: Students shall conduct themselves in a manner which reflects their awareness of common standards of decency, the rights of others, and District policies. See:

Student Conduct: <https://student-conduct.santarosa.edu/discipline-due-process>

Plagiarism, Cheating, and other acts that violate Academic Integrity:

If plagiarism, cheating, and other acts that violate academic integrity policies occur; the student will, at minimum, receive an "F" on the assignment. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, is prohibited. The use of AI tools is considered plagiarism in this course, and disciplinary actions fall under the plagiarism guidelines. Violations will be reported per District policies and procedures. See:

Academic Integrity (Procedure 3.11P):

<http://www.boarddocs.com/ca/santarosa/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=A63TMC78051C>

Disruptive use of cell phones, tablets, and laptops not related to class work will be seen as a violation of the Code of Student Conduct:

<https://student-conduct.santarosa.edu/discipline-due-process>

Sexual Assault/Harassment: Students and staff are to work and learn together in an atmosphere free of violence, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. For further information and to contact the Title IX coordinator see

<https://titleix.santarosa.edu/resources-and-support>

The **online text and recordings** of the class are the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be used or distributed without his/her written permission.

College Services: Because the campus may have limited face-to-face services, here is the site to connect to College Services:

<https://onlinestudentservices.santarosa.edu/>

SRJC Tutoring: <https://college-skills.santarosa.edu/tutorial-centers-online-tutoring>

On the Santa Rosa Campus students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact **Disability Resources** (527-4278), 3rd floor Bertolini, as soon as possible, to better ensure such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

The **Student Health & Wellness Center** is on the third floor of Bertolini. (527-4445) and is also the site for **Student Psychological Services**. The website is:

<http://shs.santarosa.edu> ; email: studenthealthservices@santarosa.edu

Disability Resources Handbook:

http://online.santarosa.edu/homepage/dept15/forms/DRD_Faculty_Guide.pdf

On the Petaluma Campus the DRD office is in 101 Jacob Hall (778-249) and the Student Health Services is in the Call Building (778-3919).

There are several resources on each campus that might be helpful to you. They include the: Writing Lab, the Tutorial Center, and **in your “My Cubby” is a link for online help @ Smart Thinking Online**. In your online text, look at the “Resources” link and/or the “Search” function (upper righthand corner) link for more information on whatever topic you want to explore.

Please contact your instructor if you need help in connecting with any services.

Safety and Evacuation Guidelines: “Are You Ready?” may be helpful:

<http://www2.santarosa.edu/f/?nDYYyYKQ> OR see:

Emergency Preparedness Handbook:

<https://ehs.santarosa.edu/sites/ehs.santarosa.edu/files/EmergencyHandbook-2008-09.pdf>

Students are also expected to keep abreast of daily political events through television, radio, online, magazines and newspapers reports. This class will stress current issues and topics.

POLS C1000: Course Outline:

This class will look at American political institutions, processes, and behavior, both historical and at present. A special emphasis will be put on how the "theory" of political science is "applied" (experienced) in the real world of politics. Come to class prepared, ready to have your beliefs and values challenged, and to participate in discussions and exercises. Several guest speakers from the field of politics may also be invited to share their experiences and expertise with the class over the semester.

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Research and analyze American political institutions and processes.
2. Assess how government impacts students' daily lives.
3. Engage in discourse about contemporary political problems and issues, applying critical thinking skills and analysis to support a point of view.

Objectives: Statewide Required Objectives/Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Explain the founding and development of the U.S. and California Constitution.
2. Critique governing institutions and political processes within the United States and California.
3. Employ introductory political science research methods to contextualize contemporary political issues and operations in the United States and California
4. Assess civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and subsequent court decisions.
5. Investigate the role of identity and political ideology in shaping public opinion and public policy in the United States and California.
6. Analyze how to effectively participate in politics at the national, state, county, and/or city levels.

Topics and Scope: Statewide Required Topics:

1. The purpose of government and nature of democratic governance
 - a. Political philosophies that underlie democratic government
 - b. Comparison of representative and direct democracy
 - c. The value of, influences on, and consequences of participation and nonparticipation in democratic government
2. The U.S. and California Constitutions as frameworks for government
 - a. Political philosophies of the framers and critics of the U.S. Constitution

- b. Processes for amending and interpreting the U.S. and California Constitutions.
- 3. The theory and practice of federalism in the United States, focusing on California
 - a. The framework and operation of federal, state, and local relations
 - b. Interaction between the federal government and Native American tribes and entities
- 4. The structure and contemporary operations of federal, state, and local governing institutions in the United States and California including the
 - a. Executive branch
 - b. Legislative branch
 - c. Judicial branch
- 5. Civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups
 - a. Civil liberties and rights as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and federal and state court decisions
 - b. Contemporary and historical interactions between government and marginalized populations within the United States based on factors such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, class, ability status, age, citizenship status, language, religion, and/or other forms of identity
- 6. Individual and group behaviors within the context of the U.S. and California constitutions, including
 - a. Elections, campaigns, and voting
 - b. Political parties
 - c. Interest groups
 - d. Social movements
- 7. Factors that shape politics and policymaking including
 - a. Political culture
 - b. Political socialization
 - c. Political ideologies
 - d. Public opinion
 - e. Media
- 8. Political issues and public policies
 - a. Domestic
 - b. Economic
 - c. Foreign Policy
- 9. Introductory research methods used in political science including
 - a. qualitative tools and techniques
 - b. quantitative tools and techniques

Assignments:

- 1. Regular attendance, participation and extensive note taking is expected.
- 2. Read and study 30-50 pages in the text and any additional readings weekly.
- 3. Two to four essay examinations, which may include additional multiple-choice components.

4. Out-of-class writing (3000-5000 words). These may be in the form of analytical essays, research or reaction papers or discussion posts.
5. Quizzes, short review assignments, presentations, and/or debates

Each week students will be responsible for reading the appropriate online reader articles.

Weeks 1-3

Political Values and Political Economy. Orientation. Truth and Lies. Survey Exercises. American Politics. Definitions. Analytical framework. Political Economy, public opinion, polling, political socialization. research methods, tools and techniques.

Reader: Chapters 1 & 2

Weeks 4-5

Federalism. Is power returning to the States? Follow the money. Changing roles/responsibilities of each level of government (Federal, state, and California constitution, budget and California state issues, county, and local governments), budgets, cooperation, conflicts, advantages and disadvantages of federalism, legal and constitutional arguments and outcomes, key current public policy issues will be discussed.

Reader: Chapter 4.

Weeks 5-6

Congress. Does it work? Functions, structure, inner dynamics (polarization and partisanship). Power resides in the committees. Diversity, behavior of, members. How laws are passed or obstructed.

Reader: Chapter 5.

Weeks 7-8

The Presidency. The changing "roles" of president's roles, responsibilities. The powers and abuses of power of the president, checks on presidential power.

Reader: Chapter 6.

Week 9

The Executive Branch. The "fourth" branch of government. Does it serve the public's interest? Common behaviors, structure, independent power (rules and regulations, enforcement and appeal processes), role of lobbyists and special interests.

Reader: Chapter 7.

Weeks 10-11

The Courts. Arbitrators or policymakers? Structure and processes. Crime and punishment statistics and trends. Brown and Roe court decisions. Civil rights and civil liberties.

Reader: Chapter 8.

Week 11 Review and Exam.

Weeks 12-13

Voting/Elections and Political Parties. Does the majority rule? Do the dominant political parties serve the public's interest? Role of political parties. Political participation and behavior, role of media. National and California campaign strategies in primary and general elections, dynamics, including turnout, demobilization techniques, and possible reforms, and related court decisions.

Reader: Chapter 9.

Weeks 14-15

Role of interest groups, the wealthy, corporations, non-profits on campaign finance, laws, court decisions, lobbyists, and their impact on elections and government policy.

Reader: Chapter 10.

Week 16

Current Public Policy Issue: TBA in class

Final Exam review.

Week 17

Final Exam