

**POLS 1 Course Outline as of Fall 2021****CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: POLS 1 Title: INTRO TO U.S. GOVERNMENT  
 Full Title: Introduction to United States Government  
 Last Reviewed: 10/12/2020

Units		Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks	Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	6	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade or P/NP

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly:

**Catalog Description:**

Principles and problems of government with emphasis on national, state and local governments in the United States.

**Prerequisites/Corequisites:****Recommended Preparation:**

Eligibility for ENGL 1A or equivalent or appropriate placement based on AB705 mandates

**Limits on Enrollment:****Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: Principles and problems of government with emphasis on national, state and local governments in the United States. (Grade or P/NP)

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 1A or equivalent or appropriate placement based on AB705 mandates

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

**ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:**

<b>AS Degree:</b>	<b>Area</b>		<b>Effective:</b>	<b>Inactive:</b>
	D	Social and Behavioral Sciences	Fall 1981	
	F	American Institutions		
<b>CSU GE:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b>		<b>Effective:</b>	<b>Inactive:</b>
	D	Social Science	Fall 2011	
	D8	Political Science, Govt, Legal Instutns		
	X2	Constitution and American Ideals		
	D	Social Science	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
	D2	Economics		
	D4	Gender Studies		
	D8	Political Science, Govt, Legal Instutns		
	X2	Constitution and American Ideals		
	D	Social Science	Fall 1981	Fall 2010
	D2	Economics		
	D4	Gender Studies		
	X2	Constitution and American Ideals		

<b>IGETC:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b>		<b>Effective:</b>	<b>Inactive:</b>
	4	Social and Behavioral Science	Fall 1981	
	4H	Political Science:Govt and Legal Instutn		
	XB	Constitution and American Ideals		

**CSU Transfer:** Transferable      Effective:      Fall 1981      Inactive:

**UC Transfer:** Transferable      Effective:      Fall 1981      Inactive:

**CID:**  
CID Descriptor: POLS 110      Introduction to American Government and Politics  
SRJC Equivalent Course(s):      POLS1

**Certificate/Major Applicable:**  
Major Applicable Course

**COURSE CONTENT**

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

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

1. Analyze American political institutions and processes.
2. Assess how government impacts their 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:**

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

1. Formulate and examine their own political values and beliefs.
2. Research contemporary political issues drawing on diverse sources.
3. Assess and distinguish between factual and interpretive sources of information.
4. Trace how and why American political structures and institutions at the state and federal levels have evolved over time and discuss current controversies in light of these developments.
5. Evaluate different forms of political communication and the methods employed to shape public opinion.
6. Assess the influence of political institutions on the American population and the methods by which citizens can participate in the political process and shape policy outcomes.

## **Topics and Scope:**

### **I. Foundations of U.S. Government**

#### **A. The Study of Politics**

1. Approaches and tools of Political Science
2. Core concepts, such as liberty and theories of democracy

#### **B. The Founding Era**

1. The legacy of British Rule
2. Philosophical influences, such as Locke and Montesquieu
3. The Declaration of Independence
4. The Articles of Confederation
5. The Constitutional Convention

#### **C. The U.S. Constitution**

1. The Preamble (the goals of government)
2. The Articles (government institutions, federalism, amending)
3. The Federalist Papers (selling the document)
4. The Bill of Rights

#### **D. Federalism**

1. Constitutional provisions (definitions and rationale)
2. Historical evolution from the Founders to the present
3. Advantages and disadvantages of a federal system

#### **E. California Government and Politics**

1. The State of California (constitution, institutions, direct democracy)
2. Local Government and Politics

### **II. Linkage Institutions**

#### **A. Public Opinion**

1. Political Socialization
2. Ideology
3. Polling (techniques and uses)

#### **B. The Media**

1. Evolution of media from the founding era to the present
2. Biases in media coverage in the U.S.
3. Evaluating sources of information

#### **C. Political Participation**

1. Voting behavior, trends and reforms
2. Alternative methods of participation

#### **D. Political Parties**

1. The functions of parties
2. The evolution of the party system

3. Why a two-party system?
- E. Campaigns and Elections
    1. The nominating process (primaries and caucuses)
    2. The general election (electoral college)
    3. Campaign finance
    4. Electoral strategies
  - F. Interest Groups
    1. Their composition and activities
    2. The pros and cons of group politics
- III. Government Institutions
- A. The Legislative Branch
    1. A bicameral legislature (differences in the House and Senate)
    2. Functions of Congress (representation, legislation, oversight)
    3. The structure of congressional leadership and committees
    4. The legislative process
  - B. The Executive Branch
    1. The Constitutional Presidency (formal powers)
    2. The expansion of presidential power (causes and consequences)
    3. The bureaucracy (presidential advisors, government agencies)
  - C. The Judicial Branch
    1. Structure of the judiciary (federal and state)
    2. Judicial Review
    3. Judicial appointments
    4. The judicial decision making process
- IV. Citizens and the State
- A. Civil Liberties
    1. Incorporating the Bill of Rights within state constitutions and laws
    2. Judicial rulings on rights (such as speech, press, religion)
  - B. Civil Rights
    1. The Civil Rights Movement
    2. Landmark civil rights legislation and judicial rulings
    3. Ongoing inequalities and the search for "equal justice under law."
- V. Policy-Making (optional)
- A. Domestic Policy
  - B. Foreign Policy
  - C. Economic Policy

**Assignment:**

1. Read and study 30-50 pages in the text or additional readings weekly.
2. Regular attendance, participation and extensive note taking is expected.
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. Optional quizzes, presentations, and/or debates

**Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:**

**Writing:** Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Analytical essays, research papers, reaction papers, and/or discussion posts

Writing  
30 - 50%

**Problem Solving:** Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

None

Problem solving  
0 - 0%

**Skill Demonstrations:** All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

None

Skill Demonstrations  
0 - 0%

**Exams:** All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Two to four essay exams, optional quizzes

Exams  
40 - 60%

**Other:** Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Class participation, oral presentations, and/or debates

Other Category  
0 - 15%

### **Representative Textbooks and Materials:**

American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials 2017-2018. 19th ed. Bardes, Barbara and Shelley, Mack and Schmidt, Steffen. Cengage. 2018

The Struggle For Democracy. 12th ed. Greenberg, Edward and Page, Benjamin. Pearson. 2019

We the People: Essentials. 12th Ed. Ginsberg, Benjamin and Lowi, Theodore. W.W. Norton. 2018

American Politics Today: Essentials. 6th ed. Bianco, William and Canon, David. W.W. Norton. 2018

California Politics: A Primer. 5th ed. Van Vechten, Renee. Sage Publishing. 2018