

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

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

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.

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

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	D	Social and Behavioral Sciences	Fall 1981	
	F	American Institutions		
CSU GE:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	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		
IGETC:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	4	Social and Behavioral Science	Fall 1981	
	4H	Political Science:Govt and Legal Instutn		
	XB	Constitution and American Ideals		
CSU Transfer:	Transferable		Effective:	Inactive:
			Fall 1981	
UC Transfer:	Transferable		Effective:	Inactive:
			Fall 1981	

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:

Upon completion of this course, students will 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: The expanding 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. 2000-3000 words of out-of-class writing. These may be in the form of analytical essays, research or reaction papers or discussion posts.
5. Optional assignments may include 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 or reaction papers or discussion posts	Writing 25 - 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, additional tests or quizzes	Exams 40 - 70%
Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.	
Class participation, oral presentations and debates	Other Category 0 - 30%

Representative Textbooks and Materials:

American Government. Lenz & Holman. University Press of Florida: 2013
 American Government and Politics Today. (2015-16 edition. Bardes et al. Wadsworth Publishing: 2015
 California's Legislature. E. Dotson Wilson. Chief Clerk of the Assembly: 2011
 California Politics: A Primer. (3rd edition) Van Vechten. CQ Press: 2014
 California Politics Government. (12th edition) Gerston & Christensen. Wadsworth: 2013
 Governing California in the 21st Century. (4th edition) Anagnoson & Bonetto. W.W. Norton: 2013
 MindTap Political Science: American Government. Cengage Learning: 2015
 The Challenge of Democracy, (13th edition), Janda et al. Cengage Learning: 2015
 The Democratic Debate. (6th edition) Miroff et al. Wadsworth Publishing: 2014
 The Struggle for Democracy, (11th edition.), Greenberg & Page. 2014 Election Edition, Pearson: (2015)
 Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Political Issues. (19th edition) Miller. McGraw Hill: 2014
 We the People. (10th edition) Ginsberg & Lowi. W.W. Norton: 2014