

POLS A180H: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS HONORS

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	10/30/2024
Top Code	220700 - Political Science
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	54 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 54)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S), • Pass/No Pass (B)
Local General Education (GE)	• Area 4 Social and Behavioral Science (CD1)
Associate Arts Local General Education (GE)	• Area 4 Social and Behavioral Sciences 4A U.S. History and Constitution and American Ideals (OD1)
Associate Science Local General Education (GE)	• Area 4 Social and Behavioral Sciences (OSD)
California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC)	• Cal-GETC 4 Social & Behavioral Sciences (4) • Cal-GETC 4H Political Science (4H)
Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC)	• IGETC 4 Social&Behavioral Sci (4) • IGETC 4H Political Science (4H)
California State University General Education Breadth (CSU GE-Breadth)	• CSU D8 Political Science (D8) • CSU US Constitution & Governmt (US2) • CSU CA State & Local Governmnt (US3)

Course Description

Formerly: PSCI A180H, American Government Honors. This course is an introduction to government and politics in the United States and California. Students examine the constitutions, structure, and operation of governing institutions, civil liberties and civil rights, political behaviors, political issues, and public policy using political science theory and methodology. An introduction to the principles and problems of government with particular emphasis on the American political system at all levels. This course satisfies the state college requirements in the Constitution of the United States, state, and local governments. Enrollment Limitation: POLS C1000; students who complete POLS

C1000H may not enroll in or receive credit for POLS C1000. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC. C-ID: POLS 110.C-ID: POLS 110.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Explain the basic structures of the political system and how selected institutions, procedures, and actors function.
2. Demonstrate critical thinking through analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the course content.
3. Effectively communicate the knowledge and skills gained in this course.

Course Objectives

- 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.
- I Other/Local Course Objectives
 - I. 1. Describe the concepts associated with political organization in general and the United States in particular.
 - I. 2. Compare and contrast elite theory and pluralism and evaluate the evidence for each in the United States.
 - I. 3. Explain the structure and function of the three branches of government and the system of checks and balances.
 - I. 4. Evaluate the contributions of the Founding Fathers and other significant political actors in the United States.
 - I. 5. Distinguish civil liberties from civil rights, identify liberties and rights protected by the United States Constitution, and describe the Supreme Court's interpretation thereof.
 - I. 6. Identify and describe significant social movements in the United States, including the Civil Rights and Women's Movements, and analyze their successes and failures.
 - I. 7. Compare and contrast the dominant political ideologies in the United States.
 - I. 8. Compare the role of political parties and interest groups and identify their strategies.
 - I. 9. Describe the electoral process, discuss voting patterns, and identify other methods of political participation and activism.
 - I. 10. Discuss the importance of the news media in a representative democracy and explain issues surrounding the free press.
 - I. 11. Investigate the powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.
 - I. 12. Contrast the powers of the federal government to those of the states, with an emphasis on the state of California, and discuss the evolution of our federal system over time.
 - I. 13. Using data, graphs, charts, and other types of evidence, examine the effectiveness of public policies adopted by the United States and California.

Lecture Content

The purpose of government and nature of democratic government
 Political philosophies that underlie democratic government Comparison of representative and direct democracy The value of, influences on, and consequences of participation and nonparticipation in democratic government The U.S. and California Constitutions as frameworks for government Political philosophies of the framers and critics of the U.S. Constitution Processes for amending and interpreting the U.S. and California Constitutions The theory and practice of federalism in the United States, focusing on California The framework and operation of federal, state, and local relations Interaction between the federal government and Native American tribes and entities The structure and contemporary operations of federal, state, and local governing institutions in the United States and California including the Executive branch Legislative branch Judicial branch Civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups Civil liberties and rights as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and federal and state court decisions 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 Individual and group behaviors within the context of the U.S. and California constitutions, including Elections, campaigns, and voting Political parties Interest groups Social movements Factors that shape politics and policymaking including Political culture Political socialization Political ideologies Public opinion Media Political issues and public policies Domestic Economic Foreign Introductory research methods used in political science including Qualitative tools and techniques Quantitative tools and techniques Other/Local Course Content Introduction to the study of political science; scope of the field and subject matter involved, objectives, goals. Concepts of political organization and government The study of who gets what, when, and how Elitism Pluralism Types of governments The rule of the one, few, and many Democratic government Types of democracy Limits to governmental power Issues and debates The American Constitutional system Theory, development, and practice of the Federal Constitution Declaration of Independence Articles of Confederation Development of a new framework Ratification Issues and debates Federalism; distribution of powers and interstate relations Defined, origins, purpose, goals Delegated powers: Article 1, sec. 8 Reserved powers: Tenth Amendment Growth of national power Issues and debates Civil Rights and Liberties under the Constitution The Bill of Rights The doctrine of Selective Incorporation of the Bill of Rights Fourteenth Amendment: Equal Protection Fourteenth Amendment: Due Process Issues and debates Institutions of government: Federal Legislative branch Structural characteristics of bicameral system Function and operation Committees and subcommittees Evolving role of Congress Issues and debates Executive branch Formal and informal powers of the President Role of the Vice President President as chief executive: bureaucracy in democracy Foreign policy: ends/means of pursuing national interests Issues and debates Judicial branch Structure and jurisdiction of federal courts United States Supreme Court Structure and functions Second Constitutional revolution Issues and debates Institutions of government: State Legislative branch: structure, function, and process California Assembly California Senate Committee system Types of legislation Executive branch: structure, function, and process The office of governor Administration of the executive branch California's Plural Executive Judicial branch: structure, function, and process California's three-tiered court system Commissions and the Judicial

Council Court procedures Government relationships: federal, state, local Federal Constitution and Article VI California Constitution and Amendment X County administration City administration Power and Politics: Democracy in practice Political ideologies Evolution of political thought Early American foundations Contemporary ideologies Political spectrum Issues and debates Public opinion/opinion makers Media: free speech and free press Elections Political parties Interest groups Issues and debates Democracy in America: Revisited Case study: history of Black subjugation Case study: women's suffrage

Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)
- DE Online Lecture (02X)

Instructional Techniques

1. Daily lesson agendas 2. Lecture and explanation of topics. 3. Verbal feedback to student questions. 4. Written feedback on assignments. 5. Students will work cooperatively to clarify and discuss issues. 6. Organized, general classroom discussion 7. Documentaries to illustrate course material.

Reading Assignments

2 hours of reading per week. Students will be assigned readings outside of class, which may include chapter textbooks, primary sources, and other supplementary material.

Writing Assignments

2 hours of writing assignments per week. Writing assignments will be required of students to demonstrate analysis of the principles of American and/or California government and politics. Students will respond to questions provided by the instructor on paper assignments or in classroom written examinations as the instructor deems appropriate. Said assignments will require student to demonstrate higher-order thinking: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Out-of-class Assignments

2 hours of out-of-class assignments per week. Students will be expected to prepare for class by reading, studying for exams and other in-class assessments, and writing papers or other writing assessments outside of class.

Demonstration of Critical Thinking

Examples of potential methods of evaluation used to observe or measure students achievement of course outcomes and objectives could include but are not limited to quizzes, exams, essays, field journals, projects, critical analysis papers, service learning, simulations, research demonstrations, etc. Other/Local Methods of Student Evaluation There will be a minimum of three exams. Exams may include short answer, essay, multiple choice, or true/false questions. Homework and class work as necessary to reinforce course material. Group work as necessary to reinforce course material. Classroom discussion about current issues and debates in American politics.

Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

Writing assignments will be required of students to demonstrate analysis of the principles of American and/or California government and politics. Students will respond to questions provided by the instructor on paper assignments or in classroom written examinations as the instructor

deems appropriate. Said assignments will require student to demonstrate higher-order thinking: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Eligible Disciplines

Political science: Master's degree in political science, government, or international relations OR bachelor's degree in any of the above AND master's degree in economics, history, public administration, social science, sociology, any ethnic studies, J.D., or LL.B. OR the equivalent. Master's degree required.

Textbooks Resources

1. Required Patterson, Thomas. We the People, 15 ed. McGraw Hill, 2024 2. Required Krutz, G. Waskiewicz, S.. American Government, 3 ed. OpenStax, 2024 3. Required Sidlow, E., Henschen, B.. American Government 12, 12 ed. Cengage, 2025 4. Required Reti, S.. Introduction to California Government and Politics, 1 ed. LibreTexts, 2023 5. Required Van Vechten, R. . California Government: A Primer, 2 ed. CQ Press, 2021

Other Resources

1. Primary and secondary sources will be assigned to enhance student learning of the course material. Students will be required to read various documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, the Antifederalist Papers, Supreme Court opinions, and opinion pieces.