

San José State University
Department of Political Science
Pols 15-18- Essentials of U.S. & California Government

FALL 2021 (Online & Synchronous)

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Halil Yenigun, Ph.D. (he/his/you can call me Hal)
Email:	halil.yenigun@sjsu.edu
Zoom Office Hours (OH):	Thursdays 4:00 - 5:00 pm; additional hours by appointment
OH Personal Zoom Meeting ID:	507-083-7903 Join URL: https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/5070837903 Password: lovepols
Synchronous Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:45 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Zoom Meeting ID: 814 7597 8876 Join URL: https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/81475978876?pwd=YnFocFpESklITIZWT29zVmZXY0l4Zz09 Password: lovepols
Canvas Course Link:	https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1467150
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	American Institutions (US23); D

Course Format

Online and Synchronous Course

This course was traditionally designed as a lecture type course that included in-class discussions and viewing of visual materials, enhanced by [Canvas Learning Management System](http://sjsu.instructure.com) (<http://sjsu.instructure.com>) for additional readings, uploading assignments, and possibly for other functions that could enhance learning in this course.

Since the Fall 2020 semester, most courses have gone fully online. Accordingly, our course will be conducted through **regular synchronous meetings** to cover the course materials. Although this is a direct outcome of the crisis days and shelter-in-place we are going through, the online nature of this course should not be taken as simply moving the in-class activities to remote format as much as the current technology allows. Instead, it is designed to be an online course in its own right with unique characteristics and extra opportunities online learning technologies and learning management systems can contribute to our learning experience.

We will essentially rely on two online platforms for this course: i) Zoom ii) Canvas.

Although some online courses have no synchronous online sessions and they are based on only the instructor's video recordings and other online videos, I believe we can develop a more meaningful interaction through synchronous sessions where I can clarify any points right on point and you can participate in the discussions with your classmates. Thus we will hold 2 online sessions per week, at the original time slots that were assigned to this course. We will hold a total of 29 zoom meetings in this manner.

You should be able to have access to a computer or a smart phone capable of accessing our course page on Canvas. You will need to use your student ID information to log in to our course. For help with using Canvas, see [Canvas Student Resources](http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources) page (http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources).

For possible collaborative work on Canvas, you may need to access SJSU provided Google Drive. **For this purpose, you will need to use your sjsu.edu email address instead of your personal account in order to protect the privacy of the shared material.**

If there are any circumstances that pose a serious impediment for your equal access to this course, please feel free to reach out to me and we will discuss about accommodation options.

If you have not already done so, please set your notifications on Canvas and Canvas mobile app to receive all the updates on time, as you may miss critical information conveyed through Canvas announcements. As of this semester, You should be able to have access to a computer or a smart phone capable of accessing this page at <https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1467150>. You will need to use your student ID information to log in to our course's Canvas page.

You are also responsible for regularly checking with the announcements on Canvas and messaging system through MySJSU on [Spartan App Portal http://one.sjsu.edu](http://one.sjsu.edu) .Please set your notifications on Canvas accordingly as you may miss critical information conveyed through Canvas announcements.

Course Description (from the [university catalog](#))

From the SJSU Catalog: Treatment of essentials of U.S. and California government. Satisfies the American Institutions (US23) and the GE Area D: Social Sciences requirements.

Satisfies D (formerly GE Area D3) + US23: Social Sciences and US Constitution and California Government.

Further information from the course catalog on American Institutions (AI) requirement: "Courses in American Institutions should expose students to alternative interpretations of the historical events and political processes that have shaped the social, economic, and political systems in which we live."

Department of Political Science Learning Outcomes

The Political Science Department has the following objectives for its students:

- **Breadth**

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

- **Application and Disciplinary Methods**

Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

- **Communication Skills**

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

- **Citizenship**

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

GELO 1 (US2): Explain how political decisions are made, their consequences for individuals and society, and how individuals and groups may affect the decision-making process. Analyze the meaning and content of the democratic process as it has evolved in the United States and California, and describe the foundations of the political system and the evolving institutions of government, the links between the people and government, and the operations of California government.

Online quizzes on the U.S. federal and California government, as well as midterm and final exams are going to assess learning outcomes on these learning objectives.

GELO 2 (US3): Identify the tools of political action and collective decision making at the local, state, national and global level, and articulate the values and assumptions that inform their civic engagement.

Online quizzes on the U.S. federal and California government, policy brief, as well as midterm and final exams are going to assess learning outcomes on these learning objectives.

GELO 3 (D3): Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.

Online quizzes on the U.S. federal and California government, policy brief, Canvas discussions, as well as midterm and final exams are going to assess learning outcomes on these learning objectives.

GELO 4 (D3): Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.

Online quizzes on the U.S. federal and California government, as well as midterm and final exams are going to assess learning outcomes on this learning objective.

GELO 5 (D3): Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

The policy brief assignment and the essay questions on final exams are going to assess learning outcomes on this learning objective.

GELO 6 (D3): Apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national and international levels.

The policy brief assignment and the essay questions on final exams are going to assess learning outcomes on this learning objective.

***Note that** you are expected to complete the writing equivalent of ~1500 words or more in this class. Essay questions on the midterm and final exams, and in particular the policy brief assignment, will fulfill this requirement.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

Each dimension of the course (i.e. U.S. and California) will be addressed primarily by one of the two textbooks listed below. You are expected to complete the readings prior to the lectures that will cover them by slides and class discussions. **You will be tested on your readings before the Zoom session by multiple choice quizzes.**

You may purchase your own print or e-book copies at the campus bookstore, directly from the publisher, or any other in person or online vendors. You can order the textbooks online through the campus bookstore by entering the course information on this page:

<https://sjsu.bncollege.com/shop/sjsu/page/find-textbooks>

- Lowi, Theodore J. and Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, Stephen Ansolabehere. (2021) *American Government: A Brief Introduction*, 16th edition, New York: W.W. Norton, ISBN: 978-0-393-53897-7 or 978-0-393-53895-3

The publisher gives these options should you choose to buy it through them:

Ebook Direct: <https://digital.wwnorton.com/amgov16brief> (\$39.95)

Ebook Order Card: 978-0-393-53895-3 (\$39.95 net)

Loose-leaf: 978-0-393-53898-4 (\$59.20 net)

Paperback: 978-0-393-53897-7 (\$74.00 net)

- League of Women Voters of California (2015) *Guide to California Government*, 16th edition, League of Women Voters of California Education Fund: Sacramento, CA, 2015, ISBN: 9780963246523.

Other Readings and Audio-visual material:

As needed to discuss and elaborate certain current policies and political debates, the readings from the required textbooks will be complemented by several other book chapters, journal, newspaper, magazine, web portal pieces, short and longer videos or podcasts. These additional readings will be posted on Canvas under the relevant modules.

Library Liaison:

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help to learn how to use the library's online resources for research:

Paul Kauppila

University Librarian (Political Science Liaison)

Phone: (408) 808-2042

Email: Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu

The Political Science subject guide is also a useful resource for finding library sources relevant to this class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or other course related activities. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus. More information on student workload can be found at [University Syllabus Policy S16-9](#).

Per the GE requirements this course fulfills, you will have written approximately **1500** words throughout this class. Apart from the policy brief assignment there will be essay questions in your midterm and final exams. Your writing in this course will be assessed in terms of both form and content. You will be given detailed guidelines about standards and expectations on writing assignments for this course on separate writing guidelines sheets.

- i) **Online Quizzes on Canvas (2 points each, 20 points total):** In most modules, prior to starting the module you will be take online quizzes on Canvas based on the assigned readings of the textbook(s). These will be in multiple choice and true-false format. Your total quiz grade will be based on the highest-scored **10** quizzes.
- ii) **Meet your Peers Assignment, Syllabus Quiz, and Discussion Participation on Canvas (a total of 13 points).** Your participation in **Canvas Discussions is not only encouraged but also graded.** You need to participate in these online discussions for at least 5 of the discussion topics.
- iii) **Midterm Exam (18 points):** You will have a midterm exam on **October 21-22**, after we complete the 8th Module. The midterm will be available for 48 hours that week. It will be a combination of multiple choice, true and false, fill in the blank and essay questions. Possible essay question choices will be provided in advance.
- iv) **1 Policy Brief (25 points total):** After covering enough ground on U.S. and California institutions and policy-making processes, you will write a 1000 word policy brief. This policy piece will be addressed to local, state, or federal level of the U.S. government. Alternatively, it could be written to be submitted to an inter-governmental organization (IGO) or national/transnational non-governmental organization (NGO). For the policy brief you will pick a policy area on local, state, federal, or international level, e.g., immigration, energy, healthcare, education, foreign policy, or environment, in order to outline and **propose** a certain policy. More information on this assignment will be provided through the paper guidelines sheet.

You will upload your brief to the dedicated assignment page for Policy Brief on our Canvas page under "Assignments." **Uploads will be due by 11:59 p.m. on the very last day of the semester, Monday, December 6, 2021.**

v) **Documentary Reviews** for Selected Policy Issues: You will also write short reaction pieces (around 100 words) to 2 or 3 PBS Frontline documentaries. The titles will be given by the instructor. For the guidelines on writing a reflection or reaction paper, see the Files section of Canvas. These short pieces will be graded as Incomplete/Complete.

vi) **Online Final Examination** (24 points) (scheduled by the university for Thursday, December 9 9:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m., but will not be limited to only those 135 minutes; read on).

You will have a final exam per [University policy S17-1](#). It will be a combination of essay and other forms of questions just like the midterm, and there will be a study guide to help you prepare.

The designated time frame above is provided by the university. I will post the final exam online around that time and you will have the chance to take the exam within 2 days/48 hours from that time onward and once you start taking it you will have 2 hours to finish the exam.

The final paper will constitute your "final exam" per [University policy S17-1](#).

Students who may require accommodations for make-up exams must contact the [Accessible Education Center](#) in advance to make appropriate arrangements. Make-ups are given only for emergencies and will be held after the scheduled exam time per the university policy document linked above.

Grading Information

The [University Policy F13-1](#) states that "All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades."

Determination of Grades (Due to a combination of factors in my grading system that cannot be coded into Canvas's grading algorithm, please calculate your grade manually and do not rely on its calculation.)

This course will evaluate your performance based on the following criteria:

- **Quizzes:** 2 points or 2% each; 20 points or 20% total
- **Canvas Discussion Participation:** 10 points or 10% total.
- **Meet your Peers and Syllabus Quiz:** 3 points or 3% total.
- **Midterm exam:** 18 points or 18%
- **Policy brief** 25 points or 25%.
- **Final exam** 24 points or 24%

Total: 100 points or 100% of the final score

Grading Scale will be as follows:

Grade	Percentage
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<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>99 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>93 to 98%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

Extra Credits

You will have extra credit options from extra credit documentary reviews or designated Zoom or in person event participations accompanied by event reports. You can receive up to **4 extra credit points** throughout the semester. Per [Academic Senate policy](#), any extra credit opportunities must be extended to all students in the class. In other words, you may not request individual extra assignments for additional credit.

Late Paper Policy

You will be graded down by one letter grade (e.g. from A minus to B plus) for each day your policy brief or paper is overdue. Extensions will be provided only if you contact me latest by 24 hours before the submission deadline with a specific new deadline.

Zoom and Online Discussion Protocol

Apart from the netiquette shared in the Orientation module, each one of you is expected to be attending these sessions with your camera on. If, for any reason, you cannot make it to the meetings on time or you cannot turn your camera on, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss your situation. If you cannot keep it on, please email me to explain the circumstances that do not allow it and to ask for accommodation, unless it is private information that you cannot share. As your professors, we all understand personal circumstances you might be facing and we try our best to accommodate you. However, all blank screens for 75 minutes are not exactly how your professors can do their best to teach a class and it definitely impedes the interactive quality of the course.

Recordings of lectures will be made available for those who have schedule conflict. You must send an email in advance to inform me about your schedule conflicts or other engagements that do not allow you to attend the Zoom session on time.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#).

Pols 15-18- Essentials of U.S. & California Government

Adjustments could be made on the schedule with fair notice and they will be reflected by the updates and announcements on Canvas.

Course Schedule

MODULE	Class Zoom Session	Date	Topics, Assignments, Deadlines	Readings: Lowi et. al	Readings: LWVC
	1	08/19 R	Course Introduction		
1	2-5	08/24-09/02	Democracy & Constitution Selected pages from Chapters 1-2 of Smith, Raymond (2011) <i>The American Anomaly: U.S. Politics and Government in Comparative Perspective</i> , Smith, Raymond A. <i>The American Anomaly: U.S. Politics and Government in Comparative Perspective</i> . 3rd ed. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 9780203067482 E-book freely available in our library holdings at: (Library access credentials required) https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780203067482	Ch 1-2	Ch 12
2	6-7	09/07-09	Separation of Powers & Federalism Selected pages from Smith (2011), Ch 3-4	Ch 3	
3	8-9	09/14 T-09/16R	Rights & Liberties <i>*Supplemental reading on civil rights and liberties to be added.</i>	Ch 4	
4	10-11	09/21-23	The Executive Branch	Ch 6	Ch 5
5	12-13	09/28-30	The Legislative Branch	Ch 5	Ch 4
6	14	10/05 T	The Judicial Branch	Ch 8	Ch 6
7	15-16	10/07-12	Political Participation I: Political Parties	Ch 11	Ch 6
8	17-18	10/14-19	Political Participation II: Elections Selected pages from Smith (2011), Chapter 9.	Ch 10	Ch 1-2-3
	19(M. Review)	10/21 R	MIDTERM (OCTOBER 21-22)		
9	20	10/26 T	Political Participation III: Interest Groups & Social Movements Selected pages from Smith (2011), Chapter 8.	Ch 12	
10	21	10/28 R	Political Participation IV: Public Opinion & The Media	Ch 9	

MODULE	Class Zoom Session	Date	Topics, Assignments, Deadlines	Readings: Lowi et. al	Readings: LWVC
11	22	11/02 T	Bureaucracy & Policy-Making	Ch 7	
12	23-25	11/04 R-11/16 T	Economic & Social Policy O'Connor, Brendon. 2004. "Liberalism and Welfare: The Ideological and Political Roots of the American Welfare System," in <i>A Political History of the American Welfare System: When Ideas Have Consequences</i> . NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 27-48.	Ch 13	Ch 10
13	26	11/18 R	Policy Areas I: Immigration Policy brief/paper reading assignment to be added.		
14	26	11/18 R	Policy Areas II: Educational Policy		Ch11
14	27	11/23 T	Policy Areas III: Environmental Policy Environmental Policies Popovich Nadja, Livia Albeck-Ripka and Kendra Pierre-Louis "The Trump Administration Rolled Back More Than 100 Environmental Rules. Here's the Full List." <i>The New York Times</i> , updated January 20, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html Hejny, Jessica. "The Trump Administration and environmental policy: Reagan redux?" <i>Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences</i> 8, no. 2 (2018): 197-211. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-018-0470-0		
15	28-29	11/30 T-12/02 R	Policy Areas IV: Foreign Policy Selected opinion pieces on U.S. foreign policy to be added.	Ch 14	
		12/06 M	POLICY BRIEFS DUE MONDAY, 12/06		
		12/09-10 R-F	FINAL EXAM: THU-FRI DECEMBER 09-10, 2021(Online on Canvas)		