



San José State University
Department of Political Science
POLS 15 Sec. 04: *Essentials of U.S. and California Government*
Fall 2022

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Class days/time: Mondays and Wednesdays 3pm-4:15pm
Classroom location: Washington Square Hall 207
GE/SJSU Studies Category: US2, US3, D3
Office Hours: Mondays 4:20pm-5:20pm (or via appointment).

Course Description:

Treatment of essentials of U.S. and California government. Satisfies the American Institutions requirements in U.S. Constitution (US2) and California Government (US3), and the Core GE requirement in Social Sciences: Social Issues (D3). GE Area: D3, and American Institution Requirement: US2 and US3.

In this course we will learn about structures and systems of the U.S. and California governments, their historical development and context in which they were formed, discuss the key components of American politics and how they influence policy issues, and debate the current state of our nation's politics.

Throughout this course, we will be discussing many topics and current events concerning American politics, so it is important that you stay up-to-date with state, national and international events.

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements:

In accordance with SJSU policy, “[s]uccess 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 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course-related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Course Format:

We will meet in-person twice a week at the designated class times and in the designated class room (above). Readings and assignments will be posted on the course Canvas page unless directed. Most assignments, including quizzes, discussion boards, and short essays, will be submitted for grading through our course Canvas page. The Midterm and Final Exam will be in-person, in class. Office hours will be held in person, but can be scheduled online if needed.

Attendance: While attendance in-class itself is not graded or monitored, there is going to be material in lecture, not presented in the assigned texts, that will be covered on assignments. Further, our in-class meetings are meant to facilitate lively-discussion and provide an opportunity to ask questions about the material, raise topics for discussion, and engage in review for assignments.

Technology in the classroom:

You may use your laptop/tablet/phone to take notes, look at text-book, or look up information for discussion, however, this should be the extent to your activity on your device. Activity beyond the purpose of the class will not only prove distracting to yourself but to your fellow classmates as well. During small-group assignments that may be assigned in class, you may use your technology to access reading assignments, look up relevant information online, etc.

Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material: Consistent with SJSU policy, because course material is my intellectual property, recording in this class is allowed only with my written permission, and will be granted only on a class-by-class basis if the student justifies the need to record the lectures. Similarly, students must obtain written permission from any guest speaker and every class member in order to record presentations or class discussions.

Contacting Me:

I will be available through a number of different channels. The best method will be through Canvas Inbox or via email at joseph.bergee@sjsu.edu. I will always do my best to respond promptly. During the week I will usually respond within 24 hours, though often much quicker than that. When you send me an email, please put your class section information (eg. ‘POLS15 Sec. #04 @ 3:00pm’) in the Subject line. You may also leave me a voice mail at the number listed above, though I may be slower in responding via phone.

Course and GE Learning Objectives (CLOs and GELOs):

Upon successful completion of this GE 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.

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.

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

GELO 4 (D3): Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.

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

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

Students' achievement of these learning outcomes will be assessed as follows:

GE Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
GELO 1	Quizzes, Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Exam, Discussion Boards, and Two Short Essays
GELO 2	Quizzes, Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Exam, and Two Short Essays
GELO 3	Reading Quizzes, Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Exam, and Two Short Essays
GELO 4	Quizzes and Two Short Essays
GELO 5	Discussion Boards and Two Short Essays
GELO 6	Discussion Boards and Two Short Essays

GE Writing Requirement (1,500 words)	Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Exam, and Two Short Essays
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Political Science Program Learning Outcomes (PSPLOs):

Successful completion of this course satisfies the following Political Science Program Learning Outcomes:

- 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.

Required Textbooks:*

Please obtain the following, both of which should be available from the SJSU bookstore and/or available for purchase online:

- *American Government and Politics Today* by Barbara Bardes, Mack Shelley II, and Steffen Schmidt (Brief). Either the 10th or 11th edition is fine. (10th edition: ISBN-13: 9781337559706; 11th edition looseleaf: ISBN-13: 9780357459133; 11th edition paperback: ISBN-13: 9780357459065.)
- *California Politics: A Primer*, 6th edition, by Renee B. Van Vechten: CQ Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-1544388670

Other brief readings and videos may be assigned throughout the course; links will be provided.

*As shown in Course Schedule, you will need at least the first text for our Week 2 readings.

Library Liaison:

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help learning using the library’s online resources for research:

Paul Kauppila
 University Librarian (Political Science Liaison)
 408.808.2042
Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu

Grading Breakdown:

Grading Scale:

Assignment	Point Value
Reading Quizzes	20
Discussion Boards	30
Short Essays (2)	40 (20 each)
Midterm	50
Final Exam	60
Total Points Possible:	200

A plus	97 to 100 percent	193 to 200 points
A	92 to 96 percent	183 to 192 points
A minus	90 to 91 percent	179 to 182 points
B plus	87 to 90 percent	173 to 179 points
B	82 to 86 percent	163 to 172 points
B minus	80 to 81 percent	160 to 162 points
C plus	77 to 80 percent	153 to 160 points
C	72 to 76 percent	143 to 152 points
C minus	70 to 71 percent	140 to 142 points
D plus	67 to 70 percent	133 to 140 points
D	62 to 66 percent	123 to 132 points
D minus	60 to 61 percent	120 to 124 points

Assignments:*

Reading Quizzes: There is a total of 4 (four) reading quizzes (each worth 5 points) to complete, each one will be given in 4 designated weeks throughout the quarter (as shown in “Course Schedule” below). You will submit them via our Canvas course page under “Quizzes.” The quizzes will be due by Sunday night at 11:59pm on the designated weeks.

Discussion Boards: There is a total of 6 (six) discussion boards to participate in throughout the course. They will be posted on alternating weeks with the reading quizzes, i.e. you will not have to complete a reading quiz AND a discussion board in the same week. A topic of discussion will be posted on Canvas, and you will each post a comment, question, argument, etc. under that post. You may create your own thread of response or respond directly to your fellow classmates. You may also post more than once per discussion board. The discussion boards will be due by Sunday night at 11:59pm on the designated weeks.

Midterm: The midterm will cover the material covered in the first half of the class (Week 1 – Week 9). This is an in-person, in-class exam that will take place on October 19th during our regularly scheduled class time. You will need a Blue Books for in order to take your exam, so please make sure you have one, maybe an extra, before you arrive to take the exam. We will spend time during our prior class session to do midterm review (October 17th). The midterm will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and 2 short essay questions.

Two Short Essays: There are two short (2-3 pages) essays to complete. They will be on topics related to current events, historical events/developments, and/or policy questions, and will be derived from material covered in class. The prompts will be posted on our Canvas course page and will be submitted via our course page as well. (Schedule for these essays are found in “Course Schedule” below).

Final Exam: The final exam will be cumulative (based on all material covered throughout the course), and will be on December 8th from 12:15-2:30pm in class. We will spend time during our prior class session to do final exam review (December 5th). It will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple short essay questions.

*All assignments, except the Midterm Exam and Final Exam, are going to be turned in via Canvas, do not email me any assignments as attachments.

Late Policy:

All assignments are expected to be completed and submitted by their respective due dates in order to pass the class. It is understood that life has its complications and the ability to complete assignments can be inhibited, and certain exceptions to due dates may be granted, if warranted, because of a serious illness, religious holiday, pre-approved university-sanctioned event or activity, military orders, or family emergencies. All of these can be accommodated, but **you must notify me in writing (email) before the assignment is due.** Only medical emergencies

will excuse a missing assignment without pre-approval, if it is a documented. Please take care to plan ahead to ensure you are managing your time to complete this course’s assignments and readings, as well as those for your other classes. Exceptions will not be granted if you “forgot” or “ran out of time.” That being said, you are permitted to turn in late assignments, excluding Reading Quizzes and Discussion Boards, up to a certain time, but will incur a 5% decrease for an assignment grade for each day it is late. The Midterm and Finals Exams cannot be made up without a documented excuse, so you need to be there in-person, in-class to take it during the scheduled time.

On Writing:

Students should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count. The ability to form a coherent and concise argument is a skill worth developing for this class and beyond. Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct, which carries serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website [here](#). For assistance with writing, please see me or contact the [Writing Center](#).

All work should be original to this course and not “borrowed” from previous assignments from other classes. If you wish to build on previous work, you need to discuss this with me first during office hours.

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](#). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule:*

Dates	Discussion Topics/Assignment Due dates	Reading/Watching Assignments (Complete these before the scheduled class)
Week 1 August 22 nd and 24 th	Course Introduction; Syllabus Review Introduction to Government and Politics.	Syllabus; and full text of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Declaration of Independence; (also in textbook Appendix A) • Jefferson’s “original

		<p>Rough draft” of the Declaration of Independence.</p> <p>And watch this video. (3:49)</p>
<p>Week 2 August 29th and 31st</p>	<p>The American Founding; The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.</p> <p>DUE by August 28th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Reading Quiz #1 (on assigned readings for this week)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch 1 (until the section entitled “Political Ideologies”(pg. 13 in 10th ed.; pg. 14 in 11th ed.) & 2 (all), and the full texts of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Articles of Confederation. (text starts under “Transcript”) • The U.S. Constitution; (also in textbook Appendix B) • the Bill of Rights. (text toward bottom of page)
<p>Week 3 (No class on September 5th, Labor Day Observed). September 7th</p>	<p>Separation of Powers and Federalism</p> <p>DUE by September 4th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board #1 (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 3; and full text of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Federalist Papers</i> No. 10 and No. 51 (both found in textbook, Appendix C)
<p>Week 4 September 12th and 14th</p>	<p>Legislative Branch: The US Congress</p> <p>DUE by September 11th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Reading Quiz #2 (on assigned readings this week)</p> <p>DUE by September 16th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-First Short Essay</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 9;</p>

	(submitted on Canvas course page)	
Week 5 September 19 th and 21 st	Executive Branch: The US President	Bardes, Ch. 10 and 11; and full text of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address <p>And watch this video. (5:21)</p>
Week 6 September 26 th and 28 th	US Domestic and Foreign Policy DUE by September 25th @11:59pm: -Discussion Board #2 (on topic from assigned readings this week)	Bardes, Ch. 13 & 14
Week 7 October 3 rd and 5 th	Judiciary Branch: The US Courts DUE by October 2nd @11:59pm: -Reading Quiz #3 (on assigned readings this week) -Discussion Board #3 (on assigned readings this week)	Bardes, Ch. 12; and familiarize yourself with these Supreme Court Cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marbury v. Madison (1803) • Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857) • Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) • Brown v. Board of Education (1954) <p>And watch this video. (4:25)</p>
Week 8 October 10 th and 12 th	Civil Liberties DUE by October 14th @11:59pm: -Second Short Essay (submitted via Canvas course page)	Bardes, Ch. 4; and full text of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick Henry – “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!” (1775) • Frederick Douglass – “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852)

<p>Week 9 October 17th and 19th</p>	<p>Civil Rights/Midterm Review</p> <p><u>MIDTERM in-person and in-class on Wednesday, October 19th during our regularly scheduled class time (3-4:15). Bring a Blue Book!</u></p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 5 and the full texts of the following speeches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan B. Anthony – “Woman’s Rights to the Suffrage” (1873) • Martin Luther King Jr. – “I have a Dream” (1963) • Barack Obama – Speech About Same-Sex Marriage Ruling (2015)
<p>Week 10 October 24th and 26th</p>	<p>Political Ideologies and Political Parties</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch.1 (from section entitled “Political Ideologies” to the end of the chapter) & Ch. 7 (full)</p>
<p>Week 11 October 31st and November 2nd</p>	<p>Public Opinion and the Media; Campaigns and Elections</p> <p>DUE by October 30th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board #4 (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 6 & 8</p>
<p>Week 12 November 7th and 9th</p>	<p>California Politics: Introduction and Direct Democracy</p> <p>DUE by November 6th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Reading Quiz #4 (on assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Van Vechten, Ch. 1, 2, & 3</p>
<p>Week 13 November 14th and 16th</p>	<p>California Politics: State Legislature, Executive Branch, and the Court System</p>	<p>Van Vechten Ch. 4, 5, & 6.</p>

	<p>DUE by November 13th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board #5 (on assigned readings this week)</p>	
<p>Week 14 November 21st and 23rd</p>	<p>California Politics: Local Governments and the Budget Process</p> <p>DUE by November 20th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board #6 (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Van Vechten Ch. 7 & 8</p>
<p>Week 15 November 28th and 30th</p>	<p>California Politics: Political Parties, Elections, Campaigns and Political Engagement</p>	<p>Van Vechten Ch. 9 & 10.</p>
<p>Week 16th December 5th only</p>	<p>Final Review</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Finals Week Thu-Fri, Dec. 8-9; Mon-Wed, Dec. 12-14</p>	<p>Final Exam: Thursday, December 8th from 12:15- 2:30 PM</p>	

***I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus throughout the quarter where necessary.**