

San José State University
Department of Political Science
Pols 15. Essentials of US and California Government
Class number: Pols 15-12
Section: 49666
Fall 2022

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Robert Ovetz, Ph.D.

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Office hours: Tuesdays noon to 1 by Zoom and Thursdays, noon to 1 in person. Other times Mon to Fri 9 am to 6 pm by prior appointment by phone or Zoom. Please email other suggested days and specific times.

Office location: Clark Hall 402D

Class days and time: every Tuesday-Thursday 1:30-2:45 pm in person on campus

Classroom: Sweeney Hall 346

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, GE Area D2, and the Core GE requirement in Social Sciences: Social Issues D3.

SJSU GE Guidelines

In this course, you will be exposed to alternative interpretations of the historical events and political processes that have shaped the social, economic, and political system in which you live. This course will provide a multicultural framework, including both conflict and consensus perspectives, of the choices and options available to individuals and groups in their social, economic, and political relations. The focus of the course is the growth of a multicultural society and the interactions, including cooperation and conflict, as these many and varied peoples have dealt with social economic, and political issues.

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

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 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities as described in the syllabus.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes (PSPLO)

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

PSPLO 1 Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

PSPLO 2 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.

PSPLO 3 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.

PSPLO 4 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.

General Education 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.

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.

Learning Outcomes	How the LOs Will be Assessed			
	Quizzes	Local Government Observation Paper Assignment.	Final Exam	Student Learning Activities
PSPLO 1	√	√	√	
PSPLO 2	√	√	√	√
PSPLO 3		√		√
PSPLO 4		√		
GELO 1	√	√	√	√
GELO 2	√	√	√	√
GELO 3	√		√	
GELO 4	√		√	
GELO 5		√		√
GELO 6	√	√	√	√

Important Dates

Tues 8/23—First day of class, complete the optional **Syllabus Extra Credit** by Thurs 9/1 at 11:59 pm
 Tues 9/6—**Democracy & Declaration of Independence Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm
 Thurs 9/22—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 1** due in class
 Tues 9/27—**US & CA Constitution & Federalism Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm
 Tues 10/18—**Congress & CA Legislative Branch Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm
 Thurs 10/20—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 2** due in class
 Tues 11/8—**US & CA Executive Branch Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm
 Thurs 11/10—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 3** due in class
 Tues 11/22—**US & CA Judicial Branch Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm
 Thurs 11/24—No class, Thanksgiving holiday
 Tues 12/6—Last day of class; **Elections & Money in Politics Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm
 Wed 12/7—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 4** due on Canvas
 Wed 12/14—**Final exam** (complete by 11:59 pm); the last day that late **Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4** may be turned in late by 11:59 pm

Grading Scale

A plus	96-100
A	93-95
A minus	90-92
B plus	86-89
B	83-85
B minus	80-82
C plus	76-79
C	73-75
C minus	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

Assignments	Percentage (100 total points each)
Student Learning Activities (10)	20
Quizzes (highest 4 of 6)	20
Final Exam	20
Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4	40
Total	100

Student Evaluation/Grading Policies

- **No withdrawals (W) will be granted** except for verifiable medical reasons.
- 10 percent will be deducted for each week that the Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4 are turned in late. A period of seven days or less is consider one week. No Short Essays or paper will be accepted after the day of the final exam at 11:59 pm.
- The **lowest two** quiz grades will be dropped.
- There are **no make up, early, or late quizzes or exam**. If you **miss** without a **demonstrable excuse** you will receive a 0. Missed quizzes or exam due to demonstrable medical, religious, or university related activities may be made up. A demonstrable excuse should be related to a medical, religious, or university related events only. Please contact me in advance or as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation.
- The quizzes or exam must be taken and completed by 11:59 pm of the last day of the week they are due.

- All Student Learning Activity assignments will be given and **completed in class** and **cannot be made up**. Each assignment counts as 10 points for a total of 100. There will be more than 10 Student Learning Activity assignments given in class. Students who arrive after the activity is nearly complete will not be able to complete it.
- All late writing assignments may be turned in no later than the day of the Final Exam by 11:59 pm. No late assignments will be taken after that time.
- Be sure to check your grades on Canvas closely. If there are any questions about specific assignments other than the final exam they must be made to me **no later than** the end of the last day of the course.
- Note that your grade in Canvas is only for the graded assignments at that point in time and are subject to change with each new graded assignment. To estimate your grade at any point during the semester use the Canvas grade sheet tool to estimate their grade by filling in future ungraded assignments.
- All writing assignments must be cut and pasted into the assignment text box to be graded. Do not post a link. No assignments will be accepted by email.
- Grades will be rounded up to the next letter only when the difference is .49 or less.

Classroom Policy

- No copies of the class video lectures are allowed except as an accommodation with campus documentation. University Policy S12-7, <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course.
- Surgical or N95 mask asks must be worn at **all times** covering the mouth and nose with protective fabric.
- Any act of plagiarism will result in an **automatic "F"** for the assignment.
- Any student who has special needs that may affect his or her performance in this class is asked to identify his or her needs to Dr. Ovetz in private by the end of the first day of class and provide documentation as soon as possible. Any resulting class performance problems that may arise for those who do not identify their needs will not receive any special grading considerations.
- If you expect to miss class for an extended period of time due to COVID please contact me ASAP and review the university policy to take extended leave.

Mask Policy

This class will follow the current SJSU campus requirement that a surgical or N95 or surgical mask be worn at all times. Masks must remain on at all times in class and cover the mouth and nose with protective fabric. For all of our mutual safety and well-being please adhere to this SJSU policy.

Canvas

For help with using Canvas please see the Canvas Student Resources page at: https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources/. If you need immediate help please contact the Canvas Help at the tab on the left side of the Canvas page.

On-Line Power and Connection Interruptions

Due to internet service, weather, high risk fire power shutoffs and other causes, internet service may be interrupted either preventing me from launching the class Zoom office hour or completing the grading in a reasonable amount of time (usually 1 week). Because I live in a high risk fire area which may experience intentional PG&E power shut offs and I do not have a landline, I may not be able to communicate with the class sufficiently to let you know that class was cancelled for these reasons. I will do my best to inform you about possible cancellations. Please check your SJSU email in these circumstances. It may be necessary to reschedule class meetings in the event of cancellations.

Required Readings

Required course readings can be found in the following assigned books and readings. You are expected to complete the readings *before* they are scheduled to be discussed.

The following books are required reading. You may purchase your own print or e-reader (if available) copies at the campus bookstore or on-line.

US Government Book

Katznelson, Ira, Mark Kesselman, and Alan Draper (2013) *The Politics of Power: A Critical Introduction to American Government*, W. W. Norton & Company: NY, 7th edition, 403 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0393919448.

You may not use older editions of the book.

California Government Book

Field, Mona (2012) *California Government and Politics Today*, Pearson: NY, 14th edition, 160 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0205251780. You may use newer editions but not older editions of the book. If you use a newer edition be sure to match up the chapters with this edition to be sure you read the right chapters.

Additional Required Readings and Historical Documents

The additional required short readings and videos listed below in the Course Outline are also linked in the Canvas modules.

Other Resources

The CQ Researcher and ABC-CLIO American Government databases available through the SJSU library website are good reference resources for topics covered in this class.

For more detailed background explanation of each part of the US Constitution go to <https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/>, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution> or any other reputable annotated constitution.

Library Liaison

Please contact the Political Science librarian Nyle Monday to answer questions and provide help with research, citations, and other library needs. He can be reached by email at Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu or <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/politicalscience>

University Policies

Per University Policy s16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page \(https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Office Hours

I am available during in person office hours to talk about the readings, quizzes or a current event you plan to write about for your Local Government Observation Paper.

Course Requirements

The required assignments will test your knowledge and ability to apply and assess principles and concepts of US and California government as models of representative democracy.

Student Learning Activities

This assignment assesses for PSPLO 2 and 3; GELO 1, 2, 5 and 6

During some of the classes we will have a guided discussion of a current class concept or topic. Students will be given an in class discussion or activity assignment to complete, discuss in groups, report back, and turn in. The assignment sheets are turned in when the class finishes. Student Learning Activities can only be completed during the class they are given and cannot be made up because the discussion and activity will be missed. However, there will be more than 10 Student Learning Activities given so it is necessary to only complete 10 to receive full credit for this portion of the total class grade.

Quizzes and Final Exam

This assignment assesses for PSPLO 1 and 2; GELO 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6

There will be six quizzes and one final exam taken on Canvas. The quizzes and exam are all multiple choice and based on the assigned readings and class lecture. The final exam is comprehensive, incorporating all previous course content. No proctoring is required.

The quizzes and final exam must be **taken and completed** by 11:59 pm of the assigned day. No quizzes or exam may be taken early or late. Once you start taking the quizzes or exam it cannot be paused. Be sure not to miss the quizzes and exam as **there are no make-ups** without a **demonstrable excuse**. A demonstrable excuse should be related to a medical, religious, or university related events only. Please contact me in advance or as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation.

Be sure to take the quizzes and exam on a computer with a stable internet connection and leave yourself sufficient time to **complete** the quizzes or exam by 11:59 pm. You do not need to use any proctoring service. **No additional time will be given** except for previously arranged university accommodations.

Beginning the next day at 12 am you may print out the quizzes or exam or save it as a pdf so you can have the questions to review later. Corrected quizzes or exam will be available for only one week after the quizzes or exam closes.

The questions will address concepts, terminology, and important events covered in class and the readings. In order to prepare for the quizzes or exam I strongly encourage you to form study groups, visit me during office hours, and use campus tutoring resources. Contact Peer Connections: https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/resources/academic_resources/index.html

What Each Quiz and the Final Exam Cover

Quiz 1 covers Democracy & the Declaration of Independence

Quiz 2 covers US & CA Constitution & Federalism

Quiz 3 covers US & CA Legislative Branch

Quiz 4 covers US & CA Executive Branch

Quiz 5 covers US & CA Judicial Branch

Quiz 6 covers Elections & Money in Politics

Final Exam is comprehensive

Local Government Observation Paper

This assignment assesses for PSPLO 1 - 4 and GELO 1, 2, 5 and 6.

There will be a four part observation paper project. The paper addresses GELO 2 (US3) by teaching how to apply political action and collective decision making in the form of civic engagement.

The assignment is described on the “Local Government Observation Paper Assignment” assignment sheet found on the Canvas page.

Please attach a copy of the **Grade Sheet** found on the Canvas page to the end of each part of the paper. The Grade Sheet indicates the point values for each part of the paper.

Grammar and Proofreading

You will be graded for grammar, punctuation and style to the extent that it reduces your ability to express your research and analysis clearly. While grammar, punctuation, and style are not the most significant part of the grade you will receive, it does affect your ability to communicate your ideas and analysis clearly and effectively. If you have any issues concerning your language skills you wish to discuss with me please visit me during office hours.

Where to Get Help with Your Writing

Although I do not proofread student papers before they are turned in I am happy to help you with specific selections of text. For help I encourage you to **first** go to the campus writing center for help with your writing and the campus reference librarians for help with research and citations.

I strongly encourage you to use the SJSU Writing Center’s Homegrown Handouts on many aspects of the writing process here: <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/handouts/>

The Writing Center, <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>, also offers up to two 45 minutes sessions per week by emailing them a request at writingcenter@sjsu.edu. It is also partnered with MLK Library to offer live chat services for students who have quick writing-related questions that can be addressed in 10-15 minutes. Live chat is available during select hours and no appointment is necessary.

The reference librarians can also help with using the library databases to find your outside sources and do the APA references (remember to use the Lunsford Guide). You can email or chat live with a librarian on the website here: <https://library.sjsu.edu/ask-librarian/ask-librarian>

You may also use the Lib Guide cited above and the short guides to writing research papers at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/sitemap/>

Course Outline

Notes:

- The schedule is subject to change with fair notice by email or on Canvas.
- Complete the readings before the assigned class meetings.

Week	Dates	Topic	Katznelson Book	Field Book	Other Required Readings & Videos (in Canvas Modules)
Week 1	Tues 8/23	• Review syllabus • Democracy	ch. 1	None	None
Week 1	Thurs 8/25	Democracy	ch. 2	None	None

Week 2	Tues 8/30	Democracy	ch. 5	None	None
Week 2	Thurs 9/1	Declaration of Independence	None	None	Declaration of Independence
Week 3	Tues 9/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Constitution • Democracy & Declaration of Independence Quiz due on-line by 11:59 pm 	None	ch. 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Madison, “Federalist Paper #10” 2. Boat, <i>Washington Post</i> 3. US Constitution
Week 3	Thurs 9/8	US Constitution	None	ch. 2	None
Week 4	Tues 9/13	US & CA Constitutions	None	None	None
Week 4	Thurs 9/15	Federalism	ch. 3	None	None
Week 5	Tues 9/20	Federalism	None	None	Federal-State Relations , 4/27/2018: Is partisanship putting governance at risk? by Alan Greenblatt in the CQ Researcher library database
Week 5	Thurs 9/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalism • Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 1 due in class 	None	None	None
Week 6	Tues 9/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress • US & CA Constitution & Federalism Quiz due on-line by 11:59 pm 	ch. 7	None	ProPublica/Washington Post , “How Congress Stopped Working”: https://www.propublica.org/article/how-congress-stopped-working?utm_source=pardot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter
Week 6	Thurs 9/29	Congress	ch. 9	None	None
Week 7	Tues 10/4	Congress	ch. 10	None	None
Week 7	Thurs 10/6	Congress	None	None	None
Week 8	Tues 10/11	CA Legislative Branch	None	ch. 8 & 13	Watch “ The First Angry Man ” in the library Kanopy database: https://sjsu.kanopy.com/ (access through the library webpage)
Week 8	Thurs 10/13	US Executive Branch	ch. 6	None	None
Week 9	Tues 10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Executive Branch • Congress & CA Legislative Branch Quiz due on-line by 11:59 pm 	ch. 11	None	None

Week 9	Thurs 10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Executive Branch • Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 2 due in class 	None	None	None
Week 10	Tues 10/25	US Executive Branch	None	None	None
Week 10	Thurs 10/27	US Executive Branch	None	None	None
Week 11	Tues 11/1	CA Executive Branch	None	ch. 9	None
Week 11	Thurs 11/3	US Judicial Branch	ch. 8	None	None
Week 12	Tues 11/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Judicial Branch • US & CA Executive Branch Quiz due on-line by 11:59 pm 	None	None	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brennan, “Judicial Interpretation” 2. Ovetz, <i>Marin IJ</i> Watch “ Soul of Justice ” in the library Kanopy database: https://sjsu.kanopy.com/ (access through the library webpage)
Week 12	Thurs 11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Judicial Branch • Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 3 due in class 	None	None	None
Week 13	Tues 11/15	US Judicial Branch	None	None	None
Week 13	Thurs 11/17	CA Judicial Branch	None	ch. 11	None
Week 14	Tues 11/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections & Money in Politics • US & CA Judicial Branch Quiz due on-line by 11:59 pm 	ch. 4	None	None
Week 14	Thurs 11/24	<u>No class</u> —Thanksgiving Day	N/A	N/A	N/A
Week 15	Tues 11/29	Elections & Money in Politics	None	ch. 5	Read opensecrets.org links to 2022 campaign spending tables under the column “ Elections Overview ”: https://www.opensecrets.org/elections-overview
Week 15	Thurs 12/1	Elections & Money in Politics	None	None	Watch “ Money is Speech: A Musical History of Campaign Finance ”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3d-bYU2cZ48
Week 16	Tues 12/6	Last day of class; Elections & Money in Politics Quiz due on-line by 11:59 pm	None	None	None

Finals Week	Wed 12/7	Local Government Observation Paper Part 4 (and Extra Credit) due on Canvas by 11:59 pm	N/A	N/A	N/A
Finals Week	Wed 12/14	Final exam (comprehensive, complete by 11:59 pm); the <u>last day</u> that late Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4 may be turned in late by 11:59 pm	N/A	N/A	N/A