Course Summary

In this class, we will examine the values, processes, and institutions of American and California government and politics to provide a framework within which we can understand how policies are made and why our political environment is the way it is.

I expect you to participate and be an active part of the class. I expect all of you to not only read the course material and participate in class but also pay attention to current events. The best way to do this is to look at a variety of news sources, not just talking heads on the left or right. Being politically astute means being able to gather information from multiple sources and draw your own conclusions, not regurgitating what a political pundit says. It is important to be open to the arguments of all sides.

In this course we are participating in a very exciting endeavor, the Town Hall Meeting, which provides an opportunity for you to interact with and provide insight on real policy issues. We will be engaging political leaders for involvement in the final presentations for this project. This is a tremendous opportunity presented to members of this class, I expect everyone to take it seriously.

The course material presented in class will be given in lecture format with media used as appropriate. I will not teach from a PowerPoint nor post the notes on titanium. It is important to come to class to absorb the material, ask questions and take notes. I frequently bring in guest speakers and the material they present on will be on the exams. Before each exam we will have a review period, where you can ask questions and brush up on any topics you may have missed.

Course Description

POSC 100 American Government (3): People, their politics, and power; contemporary issues, changing political styles and processes, institution and underlying values of the American political system. Satisfies State General Education requirements in U.S. Constitution and California State and local government.

Course Requirements

The components to your grade in this course are broken down as follows:

62% Exams:
There will be two exams, each worth 31% of your grade. Exams will be multiple-choice and will cover material in the text as well as lectures. The final is non-cumulative. **You will need a Scantron 882E to take each test – I am not a Scantron vending machine – buy one before class.**

**32% Town Hall Meeting Team Assignment:**
Each student will be assigned to a team of 8 students. Teams will work over the semester in preparation for an in class presentation on key issues facing all levels of governments. You are all adults, I expect you to divide your work evenly and function as a group. With a class of 200 I cannot manage every group individually. Please work together to produce the best possible work product.

A full description of this project and how you will participate will be provided during the first week of class in the supplemental Town Hall Meeting Handout. Each student will be responsible for their fair share of the project, and will be evaluated for this assignment based on my evaluation of your team’s process and your participation in that process, peer evaluation from team members and the quality of your reports as delivered in class. There will also be two non-graded “check-in” assignments due throughout the semester.

**6% Town Hall Meeting Attendance:**
Attendance will be taken at the Town Hall Meeting and also the in class presentations to incentivize attendance and support of your fellow classmates.

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- **A** 92% and Higher
- **A-** 90-91.99%
- **B+** 88—89.99%
- **B** 82-87.99%
- **B-** 80-81.99%
- **C+** 78-79.99%
- **C** 72-77.99%
- **C-** 70-71.99%
- **D+** 68-69.99%
- **D** 62-67.99%
- **D-** 60-61.99%
- **F** 59.99% and below

**Books**


**Course Calendar**

**Week 1: January 26 & 28**
Class intro, American Democracy Project (ADP) Intro
Reading: Patterson Chapter 1

**Week 2: February 2 & 4**
U.S. Constitution, California Constitution, Federalism and Civil Liberties
Reading: Patterson Chapter 2, 3 & 4 Ting Chapter 1
**Week 3: February 9 & 11**
Legislative Politics, ADP Group Assignments & ADP Work Period

**ADP Assignment 1 Due**
Reading: Patterson Chapter 11

**Week 4: February 16 & 18**
State Legislative Politics and Executive Politics
Reading: Patterson 12 & 13 and Ting Chapter 7, 8 & 10

**Week 5: February 23 & 25**
Judicial Politics and Civil Rights
Reading: Patterson Chapter 5 & 14 and Ting Chapter 9

**Week 6: March 1 & 3**
Exam Review and Exam 1

**Week 7: March 8 & 10**
ADP Work Period

**ADP Assignment 2 Due**

**Week 8: March 15 & 17**
Political Parties, Public Opinion and Elections
Reading: Patterson Chapter 6, 7 & 8 and Ting Chapter 3, 4 & 5

**Week 9: March 22 & 24**
Interest Groups, Media and Local Government
Reading: Patterson Chapter 9 & 10 and Ting Chapter 6 & 11

**Week 10: March 29 & 31**
Spring Recess

**Week 11: April 5 & 7**
Group Work, Guest Speakers and/or Make Up Lectures

**Week 12: April 12 &14**
Exam Review and Final Exam

**Week 13: April 19 & 21**
Town Hall Meeting Creative Work Product Presentations

**Week 14: April 26 & 28**
Town Hall Meeting Creative Work Product Presentations

**Week 15: May 3 & 5**
Town Hall Meeting Creative Work Product Presentations
Town Hall Meeting: **Friday**, May 6, 2016 1:00 – 3:00 (arrive at 12:45 for check in)
Week 15: May 10 & 12
Town Hall Meeting Creative Work Product Presentations

Since we are taking the final before the Town Hall Meeting presentations you do not need to show up at the designated final exam time for this class.

Course Objectives

This is an introductory course, intended primarily for students who have no prior background in political science. It is designed to serve both as a first political science course for prospective majors and as a survey and general education course for non-majors. Accordingly, the course has three principal objectives:

For all students, to provide you with a working knowledge of American government and politics and to, at the very least, help you be a politically astute member of society.
For all prospective majors, to introduce you to the discipline of political science and to prepare you for more advanced coursework.
For all beginning students, to help you develop reading, writing, and thinking skills necessary for success in more advanced course work in any area.

In this course we will Assess critically the Constitutions of the United States and of California, the operation of representative democratic government under those Constitutions and changes that have occurred over time.
Explain the processes and interaction between and among local, state, and national government, with particular reference to California.
Understand critically the structures, functions, and processes of the three branches of government and resulting public policies.
Assess critically behavior and institutional practices in United States and California politics.

Absence

Excused absences for exams or assignments will only be given for documented illness or university sports function, meaning you can only make up an exam or assignment if your absence falls into one of the above categories. Students should arrange any needed make-ups with the instructor as soon as possible. You are required to be present for your group presentation to get full credit on that assignment.

Resources

Assistants and Assistance
As a student in this class you have a variety of resources available to you. The Graduate Assistant for this class is here to assist in reviewing course material, grading and preparing for exams. The Politics Administration and Justice division also offers Poli Sci 100 tutoring at various hours throughout the week. Those resources will be posted to Titanium as available. Depending on the help you need, you have a wealth of options available to you so please contact the correct person.

For students’ rights to accommodations for documented special needs please visit:
http://www.fullerton.edu/disabledservices/

For policies on academic integrity please visit:
http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/PDF/300/UPS300-021.pdf

For information on actions students should take in an emergency please visit:
http://www.fullerton.edu/emergencypreparedness/ep_students.

Withdrawals
Here is the information on withdrawing from the course. Please pay close attention to the dates and authorization requirements.

Last day to register or add without an electronic permit: 1/31/16

Last day to drop without a “W”: 2/8/16
(To drop a course, complete a course request/change form, no signature required, and submit to CP-100 or call x2611).

Last day to drop with a “W”, for “serious and compelling reasons only”: 4/22/16
(Post census withdrawal petition required. Instructor’s signature, department signature or stamp, and in some cases the Dean’s signature are required.)

For more information on drop dates and policies, see:
http://www.fullerton.edu/admissions/currentstudent/calendars.asp

Please note: I will only authorize withdrawal from the for “serious and compelling reasons, e.g. a documented physical, medical, emotional or other condition which has the effect of limiting the student’s full participation in the class. Such reasons must be documented by the student. Poor academic performance is not evidence of a serious reason for withdrawal.” (California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) 2011-2013 Catalog, p. 67)

Withdrawal unauthorized (WU): “The symbol “WU” indicates that an enrolled student did not withdraw from the course but failed to complete course requirements.” “For purposes of grade point average computations, this symbol is equivalent to an F.” (CSUF 2011-2013 Catalog, p. 67)