

## **Political Science 100: Introduction to American Government**

Spring Semester 2008, Section 9397

Class Times: Mondays & Wednesdays 12:30-1:45 PM in SPA-211

California State University, Long Beach

### **Instructor: Som Chounlamountry**

Office Hours: Fri 11:00 to 2:00 PM (& by appointment) in SPA-335 Email: [schounla@csulb.edu](mailto:schounla@csulb.edu)

## **I. Course Description**

This course is an analytical study of politics and political institutions in the United States and the state of California. It investigates human behavior within the framework of those political institutions and further understanding of the roles of the mass media and of the economy in American politics. It deals with how the U.S. Constitution and the government meet democracy's challenge in a world of change. The latter part of the course will focus on California, paying particular attention to political, economic, cultural and demographic trends.

This course satisfies the general education requirement and the California teaching credential requirement. (CAN GOVT 2)

## **II. Course Objectives**

**Content Knowledge** — Upon completion of this course the student will have an understanding of, or be able to apply, the following principles and concepts:

1. The influence of representative government on our daily lives, and of the citizens with their respective values upon the policies and institutions of government.
2. The basic constitutional principles of separation of powers and check and balance between the three branches of government.
3. A respect for The Bill of Rights and the evolution of American Civil Rights.
4. An understanding of the interaction and relationships between federal, state, and local governments as they operate in different national and cultural contexts.
5. An understanding of basic political processes and instructions at all levels in a way that empowers them with a critical thinking ability to gain access in a democracy.

**Exit Skills** — Upon completion of this course the student have the following skills:

1. To be able to critically analyze state, local and national news.
2. To be able to explain and discuss how federal, state and local government interrelate and impact the lives of its citizens.
3. To critically analyze issues to be voted on in a ballot.
4. To be able to comfortably work in, or run, an election campaign.
5. To have the knowledge of how to influence legislation, and write legislators.
6. To know how your rights as a citizen, and the protections afforded by the Bill of Rights, along with the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts.

## **III. Required Texts**

1. **Required:** Patterson, T. E.; *We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition McGraw-Hill. (ISBN 0-07-3403865)
2. **Required:** Field, M.; *California Government and Politics Today*, 11<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> edition, AB Longman. (ISBN: 0-321-12962-8)

#### IV. Assessment

Assessment & Date Due	Points	%	Your Grade
Political Scrapbook Part I (Wed. Mar 26 <sup>th</sup> )	50 points	10%	
Midterm Exam (Wed. March 5 <sup>th</sup> in class)	100 points	20%	
Political Scrapbook Part II (Wed., May 7 <sup>th</sup> )	50 points	10%	
Research Paper (Wed., May 23 <sup>rd</sup> in class)	100 points	20%	
Final Exam (Wed., May 21 <sup>st</sup> from 12:30 am to 1:45 pm)	150 points	30%	
Attendance and Pop Quizzes	50 points	10%	

Grade	Point Totals	Assessment Criteria
A	450-500 points	Indicates mastery of the relevant course standards
B	400-449 points	Indicates above average proficiency of the relevant course standards
C	350-399 points	Indicates satisfactory proficiency of the relevant course standards
D	300-349 points	Indicates partial proficiency of the relevant course standards
F	0-299 points	Indicates little or no proficiency of the relevant course standards

**Political Scrapbook:** Each student will create a POLITICAL SCRAPBOOK (aka Political Journal) in which they will respond to statements and discussion questions and complete activities. The responses will be compiled to compose a political scrapbook which will be graded. Check under the Assignments area for details.

**Research Paper:** Each student will write a 7 to 10 page research paper based on scholarly sources on a current topic of international politics to be assigned by the instructor. All papers must be double-spaced, and paginated, 12 fonts (Times New Roman), have standard margin, and use APA citations.

**Exams:** The midterm and final examinations will consist of objective questions and short essays covering reading and lecture materials. The essay portions of the exams will be open book and notes, but will have strict time limits.

**Attendance and Class Participation:** Students are to attend each class having read the required selections, with questions and discussion points already in mind for each class session. The Pop Quizzes will cover materials and topics only discussed in class sessions and current news items.

**Late Assignments, Early Exams and Exam Make-ups:** Late assignments will result in a lower score, unless otherwise noted one grade level per school day for that assignment. Early exams are not allowed except under conditions of a make-up exam. Make-up assignments will be available only in cases of demonstrated medical emergencies, religious holidays, or university business. Typically a make-up exam will be taken at the end of the semester and may have a different format than the original.

**Plagiarism and Cheating Policy:** As university students, you are a member of an academic community that strives to maintain the highest standards of academic quality. Students engaging in cheating or plagiarizing, will receive zero (0) points for that assignment or exam. Further disciplinary action may be taken, including failing the class and/or reporting to the university.

**Policy on Withdrawals:** You are responsible for withdrawing from courses in which you enrolled. University policy on withdrawals applies. Please refer to current California State University, Long Beach Catalog of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies for more detailed guidelines.

**Policy on reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the course instructor. If a student with a disability feels that modifications, special assistance, or accommodations offered are inappropriate or insufficient, s/he should seek the assistance of the Director of Disabled Student Services on campus.

#### **IV. Beachboard and Email Etiquette**

**Beachboard:** Students are required to access the Beachboard site for this course and the e-mail account registered to it. Due to budget restrictions, we are compelled to distribute almost all course documents electronically.

**Email Etiquette:** Your real name will be identified as “Sender.”

**Use the Subject Line:** All email in this course must be addressed as if it were a business letter, including on the subject line the student’s Full Name, Class Number and Topic of the correspondence. The content must be formatted as a business letter, including a Real Name Signature and Phone Number. Emails not fulfilling these requirements will be considered spam or spyware and may not be opened by the instructor. Again, be sure that your real name appears as the sender, not the email address. Barring technical difficulties, I will usually respond within 24 hours, except for the weekends. Please follow up with another email if there is no response.

Week & Meetings	Reading & Deadline	Topics
Week 1 (1/28 & 1/30) Week 2 (2/4 & 2/6) Week 3 (2/11 & 2/13)	WTP Chapter 1: American Political Culture WTP Chapter 2: Constitutional Democracy; WTP: Read US Constitution & Declaration of Independence WTP Chapter 3: Federalism  <b>Email Som <a href="mailto:schounla@csulb.edu">schounla@csulb.edu</a></b> Full Name, Class & Section #, Brief Bio, Major, Phone & Joke	Welcome, Syllabus & Course Overview, Form Groups Types of Government Principles of US Govt Power and Authority The Political System Before the Constitution Negotiating Toward a Constitution Limited Government Self-Government National and State Sovereignty Supremacy Clause  <b>Genocide &amp; Forum 2/11-13</b>
Week 4 (2/18 & 2/20) Week 5 (2/25 & 2/27) Week 6 (3/3 & 3/5)	WTP Chapter 4: Civil Liberties WTP Chapter 5: Equal Rights WTP Chapter 6: Public Opinion and Political Socialization  <b>Midterm Exam on March 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Freedom of Expression Freedom of Religion The Right of Privacy Rights of the Accused Rights and War on Terrorism Struggle for Equality Civil Rights Movement Equality Under Law Equality of Results Public Opinion Political Socialization Political Ideology
Week 7 (3/10 & 3/12) Week 8 (3/17 & 3/19) Week 9 (3/24 & 3/26)	WTP: Chapter 11: Congress WTP: Chapter 12: The Presidency WTP: Chapter 14: The Federal Judicial System  <b>Political Scrapbook I due 3/26</b>	Congress as a Career Congressional Leadership How a Bill Becomes Law Choosing the President Presidential Leadership Predicting Performance Judicial Review Judicial Activism Judicial Constraint Court Cases
<b>Week 10: BREAK</b> March 31-April 4	<b>SPRING BREAK</b> <b>No Classes</b>	
Week 11: (4/7 & 4/9) Week 12: (4/14 & 4/16) Week 13: (4/21 & 4/23) Week 14: (4/28 & 4/30)	California Chapter 1-3 California Chapter 4-7 California Chapter 8-11 California Chapter 12-15  <b>*Group Prep Day on 4/16</b> <b>Research Paper due 4/23</b>	Freedom and Equality Media Influence and Interest Groups Political Parties Campaigns and Elections The California Legislature Plural Executive The Budget The Judiciary Justice and Civil Laws City Government Beyond Cities California's Future
Week 15: (5/5 & 5/7) Week 16: (5/12 & 5/14)	WTP: Chapter 17: Foreign and Defense Policy  <b>Political Scrapbook II due 5/7</b>	Foreign Policy Defense Policy Military Terrorism Genocide
<b>Final Exam: Wed., May 21<sup>st</sup> from 12:30 am to 1:45 pm</b>		