

Palomar College
Political Science 102/120
Intro. to U.S. & California Government

Spring 2018
Mr. Chadwick-Brown
(619) 232-5233 (h)

Required text: Bardes & Gerston American Government Today, with California Politics and Government

Also, access to daily newspaper or weekly newsmagazine

Learning Objectives:

Understand the forces shaping the origins of the United States

Study the political process as it transforms private opinion into public policy

Examine the compromises between what the voter 'demands' public policy accomplish and what the Constitution 'allows,' between what politicians promise and deliver, between what citizens vote for and what they are willing to be taxed for, between what is private responsibility and public power, between democratic political and capitalistic economic choices, and between what is efficient or necessary and what is just or right

Relate the course materials to current events

Impart a comprehension of citizenship as consensus and commitment

Serve as an intellectual basis for ensuing political and social science courses

Start the training of the next generation of political leaders

Course outline:

1. The origin and functions of government
 - What historical factors and persons shaped our governmental system?
 - How did the Founding Fathers balance such conflicting urges as 'freedom vs. control,' 'personal autonomy vs. collective security,' 'local vs. national,' 'power vs. rights,' 'privileges vs. equality,?'
 - Why was war necessary to create a government that would make war unnecessary?
2. The constituting of a government
 - Incorporation of a cultural heritage
 - Erecting a federal system
3. The process of government
 - Do the media report or shape public opinion?
 - Are lobbies and interest groups replacing political parties?
 - Nominations, campaigns, and elections: Are they participation, manipulation, or window-dressing?
4. The policies of government
 - Individual gain and personal rights, i.e., economic vs. constitutional rights
 - Collective good and public policy - what is the commonweal?
 - A specific focus on current domestic and foreign policy issues
5. California government
 - History of the state
 - Institutions and issues
 - Local government

Evaluation and grading:

Classes are evaluated on exams, participation, and an optional term paper. The course grade may be derived by either of two methods: First, three exams (25% each) and participation/attendance (25%), or second, three exams (20% each), participation (20%), and paper (20%). Exams cover the course in thirds, i.e., the 'final' is not comprehensive. Multiple choice questions, for which a Scantron slip and pencil are required, constitute half of each exam, and a choice from among several essay questions, for which a bluebook or greenbook and pen are required, conclude the exam. Essays must be in pen. Exams are closed book, but a single sheet of notes will be permitted. Grades are curved, and numeric grades are recorded, with an A-B-C-D-F distribution announced once the class average has been determined. Up to 10 points, as a bonus, can be earned for following instructions fully.

Participation assumes attendance, including on-time arrival and full engagement until the end of class. It also assumes completion of readings by the assigned dates, and discussion contributions.

The optional 102 term paper will be a typed, double-spaced discussion of any topic currently in the news which allows you the opportunity to draw upon Chapters 10-15 readings. Optional papers are due on the date prior to the final exam, and generally run 6 to 10 pages. Please consult if you have questions about the topic you select.

Procedures:

Classes are lectures and discussion. Lectures are not summations of the text, but build from it as a common point of reference and departure. The course uses the chapter headings as a study guide. Consult with the instructor if you need suggestions on how to take and use notes from lecture, since these and the text are the sources of exam questions. Since there are no make-up exams, the following grading policy will apply: (A) the term paper will be a mandatory component, and (B) an additional essay(s) will be answered at the time of completion of the third exam in finals week. Possible questions will be drawn from any of the course requirements for the semester. Thereby will be created a sufficient number of components to permit adequate assessment for course grading purposes.

Students with verified disabilities may be entitled to appropriate academic accommodations. Please confer with the instructor at the beginning of the term. All students are encouraged to meet, as I shall make as much additional time available for office hours as you may need.

Withdrawal from the course must be by the drop date, and is the sole responsibility of the student. It is the instructor's discretion to withdraw a student after the add/drop deadline, due to excessive absences. Students remaining enrolled beyond the published withdrawal deadline, as stated in the class schedule, will receive an evaluative letter grade in the class. Remember, the final grade will be affected by active participation, including attendance, as noted above.

A student found violating standards of honest academic conduct will fail the assignment(s) and may be referred for further disciplinary action.

1. Identify the origins of the bicameral Congress both in the traditions established by colonial legislatures and the debates occurring at the Constitutional Convention.
2. Describe the Constitutional powers granted to the Congress with emphasis on the enumerated powers listed in Art. I, Sec. 8 of the U.S. Constitution.
3. Compare and contrast the key differences between the House and the Senate as expressed in the U.S. Constitution
4. Describe the organization and functions of the Congress today with special emphasis on the committee structure and its influence on public policy-making.
5. Trace the evolution of the American presidency from a relatively weak constitutional office to one of global leadership.
6. Compare and contrast a president's formal constitutional powers to informal powers as identified by presidential scholar Neustadt.
7. Describe the legacy of great and/or memorable presidents.
8. Compare and contrast the impeachment trials of Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton with emphasis on constitutional requirements and key issues in the Clinton trial.
9. Describe the contemporary structure of the executive branch.
10. Explain the structure of the federal court system with emphasis on the scope and responsibilities of the U.S. Supreme Court with its power of judicial review.
11. Describe the origin of judicial review and the silence of the Constitution on this issue.
12. Compare and contrast judicial activism and judicial restraint throughout history.
13. Consider the issues of judicial nationalism and the current retreat to states' rights
14. Analyze the national budget preparation process with the concomitant responsibilities of the president and Congress.
15. Describe the primary tools used to manage fiscal and monetary policy.
16. Explore the history and tendencies of the U.S. Capitalistic system.
17. Compare the actions of the original robber barons of the 19th century to the 'new age' robber barons of the 21st century.
18. Identify the components of the public policy cycle and explain the impact of the 'iron triangles' on this process.
19. Link the rise of national social programs to the deprivations of the Great Depression.
20. Contrast U.S. social programs to those initiated by EU countries.
21. Develop an appreciation of the complexity of U.S. foreign policy.
22. Analyze the war powers granted to the President and the Congress by the Constitution.
23. Describe the California constitution and organization of state government.
24. Understand the contemporary relationships of state and local governments with the national government in terms of the concepts of states' rights and national supremacy as referenced in the U.S. Constitution and relevant Supreme Court cases.
25. Analyze the complexity of local government in California with emphasis on jurisdictional disputes, financing local government services, and attempts at regional solutions to common problems.

Reading assignments:

- Jan. 29 Overview Ch. 1 (Bardes)
Feb. 5 Constitutional foundations Ch. 2
12 Congress Ch. 10
26 Congress
Mar. 5 Presidency Ch. 11
12 Presidency EXAM #1 (Chs. 1, 2, 10, 11)
19 Bureaucracy Ch. 12
Apr. 2 Judiciary Ch. 13
9 Domestic & economic policy Ch. 14
16 Foreign & military policy Ch. 15 EXAM #2 (Chs. 12-15)
23 Calif. history Gerston Chs. 1-3
30 Calif. politics Chs. 4-6
May 7 Calif. institutions Chs. 7-8
14 Calif. policies Chs. 9-10 Optional 102 papers due in class
21 EXAM #3 (all of Gerston)

Dates: Last drop, 12 Feb.; last drop with 'W' 24 Mar.

Office hours: M and Th. 4:30-6 p.m. in MD 377

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