

**WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE
POLITICAL SCIENCE 1 : AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**



Fall Semester 2015 (8/31 to 12/20)

Section 1733 Room: GC 420

T-Th. 8 a.m.-9:25 a.m.

Instructor: Olga Shewfelt

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Office Hours: Tuesdays: 11:40 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. at my office. If this time is not convenient for you, please talk to me after class, or email me in advance to see when we may schedule another time.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

- 1. Bardes, Barbara A.; Shelly II, Mack C.; & Schmidt, Steffen W. (refer to as Bardes or “B” in the weekly assignments) *American Government & Politics Today, The Essentials 2014-2015* edition. Wadsworth. ISBN- 13 :978-1-133-60437-2**
- 2. Lawrence, David G. & Cummings, Jeffrey, California, *The Politics of Diversity*, Eight edition. (refer as “L” in weekly assignments)**

Other materials & Resources:

Provided in class and/ or available in the internet on selected course topics:

- U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Bill of Rights. <http://www.archives.gov/national>
- Federalist Papers. <http://www.thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers>
- Library of Congress : <http://www.loc.gov>
- U.S. Budget : <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/overview>
- California Budget: <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/2015-16/pdf/Enacted/BudgetSummary/SummaryCharts.pdf>
- Newspapers & Magazines: Los Angeles Times & New York Times, Washington Post, and selected magazines.
- Selected Videos/DVD's/ web links
- Handouts (study questions & articles)

POLITICAL CONCEPTS AND FEDERALISM

Week of

9/1	Political Concepts/ Government & American society. Political Ideologies & Political Parties, Bardes, chapter 1
9/8	The Constitution. "B" Chapter 2 California History & Constitution, "L" chapters 1&2
9/11	<i>Last Day to drop classes with a refund/no fee owed and without a "W".</i>
9/15	Federalism "B" chapter 3 CA Budget "L" chapter 3
9/22	Federalism continues.
9/29	EXAM I

THE CONSTITUTIONAL CENTERS OF POWER

The Legislative Branch

10/1	Congress: The People's Branch. "B" chapter 9 The California Legislature, "L" chapter 7
10/6	Campaigns and Elections. "B" chapter 8. California Elections "L" chapter

The Executive Branch

10/13 The Presidency. “B” chapter 10
The Plural California Executive. “L” chapter 8

10/20 *EXAM II*

The Judicial Branch

10/27 The U.S. Judiciary. The Rule of Law/ U.S. Supreme Court
“B” chapter. 12. California Judiciary. “L” chapter 9

11/3 Civil Liberties: Rights of the Accused in the War on Terror. “B”
chapter 4

11/10 Civil Liberties. Racial Profiling. Handouts.

11/17 Civil Liberties continues.

11/20 *Last Day to drop classes with a “W”*

11/24 **EXAM III**

11/26 **THANKSGIVING.**

The Politics of Participation

12/1 Civil Rights in America: Chapter 5

12/8 Interests Groups & Political Parties, B. Chapter 7

12/15 *Final Paper & Presentation: 8am-10 am. GC 420*

Course Student Learning Objectives:

1. Critical Thinking Skills

The student will be able to know, demonstrate and asses the principles of federalism and representation; two of the five major components of

American Constitutional Government. This American Government course is designed to provide the student with critical thinking skills through the examination of first and secondary historical sources regarding the establishment of the U.S. government and the analysis of the most important issues that affect our government today. At the end of this course, the student would be able to describe, and analyze what are the elements of the U.S. representative democratic government, what are its main differences with other forms of government, why, when and how was the U.S. Constitution adopted and what is the structure of the three branches of the U.S. Government and its constitutional relation with the states, particularly with the state of California.

2. Communication Skills

This course improves the students' written and verbal communication skills by enhancing the student's analytical framework to understand U.S. politics and economics through the study of U.S. history, the adoption of the U.S. Constitution and the development of US Federal and state governments. These studies, as well as the written essay in each of the three course examinations, short written homework assignments, class discussions, term paper and oral presentations in class, enhances the student's lexicon and his/her abilities to communicate verbally and in writing about matters concerning U.S. government and politics.

3. Civic participation

This course provides the student with a practical opportunity to participate in issues of his/her concern/interest through the research and presentation of a 10-12 -page position paper on a topic of his/her choice at the local, state and/or national level. The successful completion of this paper gives the student the opportunity to take a position in a topic and become aware of his/her level of political participation This student outcome is evaluated in the final course paper which is worth 25% of the course grade.

Grade System:

3 exams: Total of 65% of the course grade.

Final Paper: 25% .of the course grade.

Class Participation 10% of the course grade

3 Exams: 65% of your total course grade.

Each exam has 3 sections: Multiple Choice (25 questions(2pts each=50 points). Fill-in-section, 5 questions=(2 pts each=10 points) and an Essay Section (2 essays -each worth 20 pts= 40 pts). The three sections add to a total of 100 points, or an "A" letter grade for each exam. Be sure to bring a scantron form 882E(100 questions) and a "blue book" for your essays.

Final Paper: 25% of your grade.

This is a very important part of your learning experience and performance in this course. Your topic choice, would give you an opportunity to take a position on a topic at the local, state and/or national levels of government as well as to evaluate and apply many of the concepts and facts learned in this course. Your final position paper is 10-12 pages long and is worth 25% of your final course grade. I will provide you with written detailed instructions about this paper. The Final Paper is due in class on Tuesday, 12/15/15. **NO EXTENSIONS!**

Class participation: 10% of your total course grade.

It is strongly recommended and encouraged! It is 10% of your total course grade! It includes your class preparation and participation in class discussions (questions, & comments) and up to 3 short (2-3 pages) homework assignments submitted on due dates during the semester. You must be participating in the class in the manner described above in order to obtain the maximum percentage of this grade. There is **NO** make up work for this part of your grade.

Grade Breakdown:

100%	A+	88-89%	B+
94-99%.....	A	84-87%.....	B
90-93%.....	A-	80-83%.....	B-
78-79%.....	C+	68-69%.....	D+
74-77%.....	C	64-67%.....	D
70-73%.....	C-	60-63%.....	D-
		59% and below	F

Note: Final course grades will be solid letter grades. No minus or pluses are accepted at the office of admissions and records. Therefore, your final course grade will be the result of computing the percentage value of each one of the 3 exams and the Final Paper. These four grades will make 90% of your final course grade. The remaining 10% of your grade will be determined by the level of your class participation. See the definition of this portion of your grade in the paragraph above the grade breakdown.

Make Up Exam

*Due to the benefits for your course learning and our compressed semester schedule, it is critical that you take your exams at the schedule dates. In the rare event that you don't take an exam on the scheduled date, you may take a make-up exam provided that you present a valid excuse before or immediately after the scheduled exam. **YOU MUST** schedule a new exam immediately after the missed*

exam, to be taken no later than one week from the date of the regular exam. If you do not take the make up exam in this timeframe, your missed exam will be graded with a letter “F”. With the exception of a certified medical emergency for which you provide written evidence, you can only schedule ONE make up exam in this course.

Class Attendance: Good attendance is an essential part of your learning. Students who attend class regularly throughout the semester are more likely to succeed in the course. I expect you to arrive punctually or a few minutes before 8 a.m. so I can start the class right at 8 a.m. I keep strict records of attendance. **If you fail to attend 3 classes, you will be dropped from this class. Three (3) late arrivals or early departures will be considered as one absence.** However, for all academic purposes, it is ultimately your obligation to drop officially from the class. You may do so by 9/11/15 without a “W” and by 11/20/15 with a “W”. Failure to drop officially from the course may result in you being listed as active in the class at the end of the course and for this reason having an “F” as a final course letter grade.

Course Materials

It consists of the assigned chapters, plus study questions, handouts, videos and lectures. The student is responsible for keeping track of all course materials and studying them for every exam.

Student Conduct

You are expected to abide by the norms of the Board of Trustees and the California Education Code. (See West Catalog and Schedule of Classes.) Student use of electronic devices during class, or voice taping and/or video taping of my lectures are not permitted unless there is a written request for accommodation of DSP students, or the use of these devices is directed by the instructor as part of a learning exercise.

Academic Honor Code

Each student understands and honors the value of academic integrity in all his/her academic endeavors including tests, quizzes, written assignments and term papers. Cheating and plagiarism in a test or written assignment will result in an “F” grade for that particular test or assignment and any other appropriate disciplinary actions related to student conduct.

Communication with Instructor: Feel free to contact me after class, or during my office hours. You may also leave a phone message at my office, or send me an e-mail. If the assigned office hours are not convenient for you please contact me via email or in person to set a different meeting time.

In case of an emergency (ONLY) contact me at my cell phone at (213) 392-0489.

