

**Solano College**  
**Introduction to American Government & Politics**  
**Political Science 1**  
**Summer 2016, 3 Units,**  
**8 Weeks Online**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is a survey of the American political framework and processes. The course covers the Constitutional structure and functions of the legislative, executive and judicial branches at national, state and local levels. Using a Madisonian framework, this course will examine the challenges of democratic theory in practice. With an emphasis on pluralism, students will place themselves within current political debates. Viewed in the context of political parties, interest groups, and citizenship, students will engage with questions about power and justice. Emphasis will be placed on protests movements, such as the civil rights and women's rights movements.

Partially satisfies: (Refer to current transfer guide.)

IGTEC Area D: Social Sciences requirement.

CSU Graduation Requirement: US History, Constitution & American Ideals

See [www.Assist.org](http://www.Assist.org) for the most accurate and up-to-date transfer information

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Compare the operation of the legislative, executive, judicial branches and the bureaucracy of the national and state governments and local governments.
2. Critically evaluate the theory and performance of American political institutions.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with fundamental and contemporary political problems and issues, verbally and in writing.
4. Demonstrate developed critical, analytical and evaluative skills and their disposition in identifying central issues in the American political system.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship*, 7<sup>th</sup> essentials edition. By: Barbour & Wright. ISBN: 978-1483352749
2. The instructor will also provide other assigned readings and media online.

### REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY & SKILL:

This course will be delivered full online using Canvas. Students taking this course must have basic computer skills for operating Microsoft Word and email, including sending attachments and files. Students also need access to the Internet and must have adequate hardware and software capabilities. You must use [Chrome](#) to complete the Midterm and Final Exams. Computers are available for student use in the Foothill College Library. To login go here:

<https://solano.instructure.com/login/canvas> for Canvas help go here:

<http://www.solano.edu/technology/helpdesk.html>

### TEACHING & LEARNING COMMUNITY:

This course will incorporate a variety of learning activities and engagement opportunities. Participants will interact with lectures, read the text and additional materials, record academic notes, and participate in a series of discussions on hot button issues. Students are required to keep up with the course schedule and complete all assignments by their assigned due dates. Students will be required to actively engage in the teaching and learning process through group and peer teaching exercises. In our learning community, everyone's contributions are valued and respected. We are all in this together and I look forward to learning with you throughout the semester. The members of a course represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspective. I am committed to working with you to provide an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. We will work together to build this learning community by asking all class members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- Keep confidential discussions that occur within class that are of a personal nature.
- Consider other ways that we may create an inclusive learning environment within this course and the Foothill College community.

### NETIQUETTE:

"Netiquette" refers to online communication etiquette. Our online classroom is an academic environment where we can safely share our points of view, expressed with respect for others. Here are some basic guidelines that all participants should follow:

- Express your opinions politely, even if you disagree with someone. Be open and willing to accept other points of view.
- Course discussions and other shared content is private and copyright protected. Do not disseminate this content outside of the online classroom unless granted permission by the author(s).
- Do not use "texting" abbreviations when communicating in the online classroom. Be professional. Use concise, well-constructed language. Follow the rules of spelling and grammar.
- Avoid sarcasm and humor, as these can be easily misinterpreted,

- especially by individuals of different cultures than your own.
- Do not send messages that you write when you are angry or upset. Reread every post before you send it.
  - Do not use all capital letters, as it is considered SHOUTING.
  - Construct your messages in a text editor and transfer them to the LMS after proofing them for Netiquette.

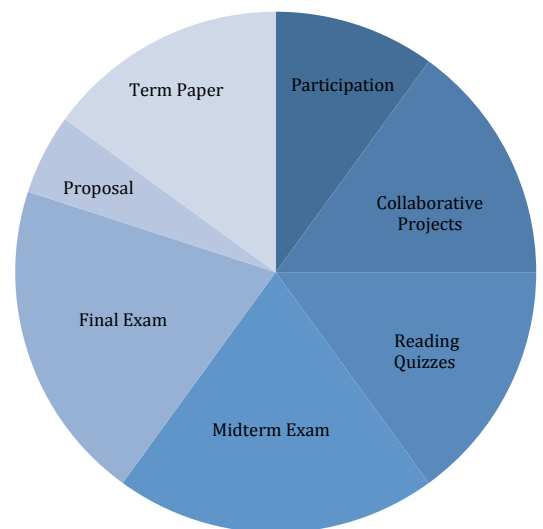
EVALUATION:

Your performance will be evaluated by your participation in class discussion and collaborative projects, a midterm exam, reading quizzes, a term paper proposal and term paper, and a final exam. Students are required to complete all assignments as outlined in the weekly schedule, no late work will be accepted. Only documented medical exceptions will be excused, though reasonable accommodations will be made in extenuating circumstances. Instructor reserves the right to drop anyone who fails to fulfill the weekly requirements for one or more weeks, but is not responsible for dropping disengaged students. If I see that you have not logged in to the course for 5 days in a row, you will receive an email from me to discuss a plan for success. You are required to submit written works in intent box submissions or .doc format only. NO email submissions will be accepted. Please identify a back up plan in case you may have technical issues submitting your work on time properly.

Your final grade will be based upon the following rubric:

Class Participation	10%
Collaborative Projects	15%
Reading Quizzes	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Term Paper Proposal	5%
Term Paper	15%
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Total	100%

Final grades will be assigned using the following evaluative grades and symbols:



A	Excellent	90%+
B	Good	80%+
C	Adequate	70%+
D	Less than adequate	60%+
F	Requirements have not been met	59%-

#### CODE OF CONDUCT:

All students are required to adhere to the college code of conduct at all times.

They can be found here:

[http://www.solano.edu/student\\_service/conduct.php](http://www.solano.edu/student_service/conduct.php)

All written work will be received through turnitin.com anti-plagiarism technology. Please avoid plagiarism at all costs, it will not be accepted. If you need help identifying what is and is not plagiarism come to office hours or email me or refer to this handout:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

#### DISABILITY:

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately, as soon as possible, to discuss your specific needs so that we can work collaboratively to insure reasonable accommodation. Students who require alternative formats for course materials or adaptive equipment because of a disability can request them through the Disability Services Program (DSP) <http://www.solano.edu/dsp/> Located in the building 400 room 407 M-Th 8:30am-6pm, F 8:30am-3pm. Please email me right away if you have a DSP need.

#### COMMUNICATION POLICY:

I will always be available during office hours. I am also available for communication by phone, skype, and ichtat by appointment. I prefer email communication, and will respond within 24 hours **M-F**. If I do not respond within 24 hours expect that I did not receive your message and send the email again. No assignments will be accepted through email. All assignments must be submitted in the proper format in the proper place in Canvas to receive a grade.

#### WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

I will drop anyone who does not participate in the first week of classes. After that, it is the student's responsibility to drop the course if they wish to withdraw. Do not expect that I will initiate the withdrawal procedures for you after the first week of classes, I will not. At the end of the quarter, students who stopped attending class without withdrawing will receive an "F" grade. Please see the important dates below. **LATE DROP:** After the deadline to drop with a "W," a student can only request a late drop if they have stopped attending class prior to the deadline to drop with a "W", and they have a documented medical issue (being a caretaker for another person with a medical issue qualifies), and/or they have been incarcerated. Students cannot receive a late drop past the deadline to drop with a "W" for any other reason - and must receive a grade or an Incomplete after that date.

## IMPORTANT DATES:

June 12	First day of instruction
June 15	Last day to drop with a refund
June 20	Last day to add
June 21	Last day to drop without a "W"
July 14	Last day to drop with a "w"
August 7	Final Exam

## SCHEDULE:

\*Schedule is tentative and subject to change.

### **Week 1: June 13-19**

#### **Unit 1: Politics**

In this unit you will engage in discussion with fellow classmates on the question: *What is politics?* Your engagement in this activity will facilitate your ability to think critically about the conflictual nature of politics. Students will discuss several paradigms in the social sciences and acquire numerous lenses to utilize when examining politics throughout the semester.

What is Politics?

-Paradigms in the Social Sciences

-Models of Social Justice

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Construct a working definition of the concept of the political.
2. Critically analyze the nature of conflict and compromise in recent policy decisions.
3. Recognize the presence of politics in your everyday lives and the origin of political conflict in your own values and expectations.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 1

Reading Quiz Chapter 1 due

Discussion Forum Politics due

#### **Unit 2: Political Culture**

In this unit you will acquire fundamental skills for navigating and understanding the political world in your every day life. We will identify the six key American political values and assess how they impact policy.

American Citizens & Political Culture

-Models of Democracy

-Evolution of American Elites & American Democracy

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Identify the main characteristics of American political culture.
2. Identify the American citizen and evaluate the relationship between the individual and the state.
3. Describe the gap between the American democratic ideal and practice.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 2

Reading Quiz Chapter 2 due

Discussion forum Political Culture due

### **Week 2: June 20-26**

#### **Unit 3: American Founding**

In this unit you will acquire fundamental skills for understanding the foundation of the American political system and the debates that have remained fluid throughout our history. We will discuss in depth models of democracy and the foundation of the American political system.

-Constitutional Convention

### -Ratification Debate

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Compare the founding fathers with modern radicals.
2. Identify the structural differences between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution.
3. Explain the founding and development of the U.S. Constitution.
4. Write a critical essay in which you analyze Madison's system of check and balances and separation of powers.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 3  
Reading Quiz Chapter 3 due  
Discussion Forum American Founding due  
Collaborative Project #1 Due

### **Unit 4: Federalism**

In this unit you will play an active role in an historical narrative construction of the founding of American democracy and constitutionalism. With a focus on the Federalist papers, students will form a critical understanding of the U.S. Constitution, its Amendments, the system of checks and balances, and its limitations.

Federalism & the U.S. Constitution

-American Constitutionalism and the birth of American Democracy

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Create a dialogue between the federalists and antifederalists in which you compare and assess the importance of different political structures on future public policy from each theoretical viewpoint.
2. Compare four theories of federalism, and explain the current U.S. federal system.
3. Discuss whether the Constitution fosters or limits citizen's participation in government.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 4  
Reading Quiz Chapter 4 due  
Discussion Forum Federalism due

### **Week 3: June 27-July3**

#### **Unit 5: Public Opinion & Political Socialization**

With a focus on the political socialization process, students will acquire skills for conducting public opinion research. This will assist you in critically analyzing public opinion research and the role it plays in policy formation.

Political Socialization Process

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Critically analyze the role of public opinion in public policy formation.
2. Evaluate the political socialization process.
3. Create a public opinion poll in which you research feelings on a current political debate, while recognizing the limitations of public opinion polling.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapters 11  
Reading Quiz Chapter 11 Due  
Discussion forum public opinion due

#### **Unit 6: The Media**

In this unit you will acquire necessary skills to evaluate the political implications of the mass media and its influence upon public opinion and political culture in the U.S.

The Media

-Role of Media in American Political Culture

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Critically analyze the role mass media plays in shaping public opinion.
2. Evaluate the media affects of recent news articles for filtering, framing, slant, and

priming.

3. Discuss the creation of safe/open spaces in media production and the shortening of the media cycle.

4. Describe the link between media and politics

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapters 15

Reading Quiz Chapter 15 due

Discussion forum the Media due

Collaborative Project #2 Due

Term paper topic discussion forum

#### **Week 4: July 4-10**

##### **Unit 7: Legislative Branch**

In this unit students will develop skills necessary to analyze the various theories of representation. Students will engage in the legislative process and develop an understanding of the difficulty in passing legislation. We will discuss the powers, duties and organization of Congress.

Development of Congress

-Congressional structure

-Legislative process

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Explain the system of checks and balances.

2. Evaluate the legislative process and current policy debates.

3. Discuss the structure and role of political parties in Congress.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 7

Reading Quiz Chapter 7 due

Discussion forum Congress due

***Term paper Proposal DUE by 11:55pm on the 9<sup>th</sup>***

***ONLINE MIDTERM due by 11:55pm on the 10<sup>th</sup>***

#### **Week 5: July 11-17**

##### **Unit 8: Executive Branch**

In this unit students will explore the executive branch and construct an outlook on formal and informal presidential powers. With a focus on leadership styles, students will evaluate several presidents.

Development of the Presidency

-Leadership styles

-Executive branch

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Compare the president's roles as head of state and head of government.

2. Explain the origin of executive powers and what role the founders had imagined.

3. Evaluate five recent presidents' leadership styles and the implications for policy and public approval.

*To do:*

Readings: Chapter 8

Reading Quiz Chapter 8 due

Discussion forum Presidency due

Collaborative Project #3 Due

##### **Unit 9: Judicial Branch**

In this unit students will acquire skills to evaluate the power of the judicial branch and analyze recent Supreme Court decisions. We will discuss judicial philosophies and the role of politics in the theoretically apolitical branch.

Development of the Judiciary

-The American Legal System and the Courts

### -Judicial philosophy

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Explain the rule of law and the role the legal system plays in democratic society.
2. Evaluate Hamilton's claim that the judiciary was the "least dangerous branch of government" in light of the power it wields.
3. Discuss the role politics and ideology play in judicial appointments and decisions.
4. Evaluate the application of judicial review to recent Supreme Court decisions.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 10  
Reading Quiz Chapter 10 due  
Discussion forum Judiciary due

### **Week 6: July 18-24**

#### **Unit 10: Political Parties**

In this unit you will chart the history of political parties in the United States. Different party systems and the impact of party polarization upon public policy will be analyzed.

##### Political Parties

- Political institutions at the state and federal level
- Party systems

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Explain the role parties play in policy creation.
2. Describe the structure and function of the American party system.
3. Compare and analyze the American two party system with alternative party systems.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 12  
Reading Quiz Chapter 12 due  
Discussion forum Political Parties due

#### **Unit 11: Interest Groups**

In this unit we will discuss interest groups and campaign finance. We will distinguish the role of interest groups to that of political parties. Students will acquire analytic tools to evaluate the power of interest groups and individuals.

##### Interest Groups

- Interest group tactics
- types of interest groups

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Differentiate interest groups from political parties.
2. Describe interest group tactics to utilized influence public policy.
3. Identify four types of interest groups and analyze one that you have a personal interest in.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 13  
Reading Quiz Chapter 13 due  
Discussion forum Interest Groups due  
Collaborative Project #4 Due  
Term paper rough draft peer review workshop

### **Week 7: July 25-31**

#### **Unit 12: Campaigns & Elections**

In this unit you will acquire analytic tools necessary to analyze the U.S. election system. Who votes? Why / why not? We will discuss the theoretical foundation of the U.S. election system and analyze elections in practice at the federal, state and local levels.

##### Campaigns & Elections

- Political institutions at the state and federal level
- Electoral college reform plans

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**



1. Analyze the reasons why American's vote – or do not vote.
2. Identify demographics based upon voter turn out, and four factors that influence vote choice.
3. Construct a process by which to become an informed voter and make tough political decisions.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 14  
Reading Quiz Chapter 14 due  
Discussion forum Campaigns and Elections due

### **Unit 13: Civil Liberties**

In this unit you will acquire skills to critically analyze your civil liberties as outlined in the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Civil Liberties

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Critically analyze the Bill of Rights, as applied to your everyday life.
2. Evaluate the positive and negative rights doctrines.
3. Create a draft Constitutional Amendment in which you make the argument for or against the expansion of a civil liberty.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 5  
Reading Quiz Chapter 5 due  
Discussion forum Civil Liberties due

### **Week 8: August 1-7**

#### **Unit 14: Civil Rights**

In this unit you will acquire skills to critically analyze the U.S. Supreme Courts' civil rights doctrines. We will discuss in depth protests and protest movements in American history with a focus on the civil rights and women's rights movements.

Civil Rights

- Protest & Protest Movements in American Society
- Outcomes of Protest Movements
- Impact of Civil Rights Act 1964 & 1991

**By the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

1. Identify current civil rights groups in the U.S. and critically analyze the application of the 14th Amendment's due process clause to their cause.
2. Critically evaluate recent Supreme Court decisions that expand or restrict civil rights.
3. Construct a political outlook on equal rights that recognizes the value of diversity and historical struggles of minority groups.

*To do:*

Readings: Barbour Chapter 6  
Reading Quiz Chapter 6 due  
Discussion forum Civil Rights due

***Term Paper due August 6th 11:55pm.***

**FINAL Exam August 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Please don't forget to complete the end of course survey**