

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. COURSE ID: PLSC 210 **TITLE:** American Politics

Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; and 96.0-108.0 Homework hours

Method of Grading: Letter Grade Only

Recommended Preparation:

Completion of, or enrollment in ENGL 100, or ENGL 105

2. COURSE DESIGNATION:

Degree Credit

Transfer credit: CSU; UC

AA/AS Degree Requirements:

CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E1a. American History and Institutions

CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E5b. Social Science

CSU GE:

CSU GE Area D: SOCIAL SCIENCES: DSI - Social Institutions

CSU GE Area D: SOCIAL SCIENCES: US-1

CSU GE Area D: SOCIAL SCIENCES: US-2

IGETC:

IGETC Area 4: SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES: Social and Behavioral Sciences

3. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

Catalog Description:

The historical and constitutional development of the foundations of the United States political institutions and the dynamics of governmental decision-making processes from the colonial era to the present.

Examination of the various sources of political attitudes, roles, and behaviors of political participants and ways political decisions are made by the different units of government. This course is designed to satisfy the CSU requirements US 1 (US History and American Ideals) and US 2 (US Constitution). Note: Upon transfer to a U.C. campus, students who have completed both PLSC 200 and PLSC 210 will receive transfer credit for only one 3-unit course.

4. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical evolution of American political institutions.
2. Effectively communicate understanding of the roles played by state actors (such as the 3 branches of government) and non-state actors (such as interest groups, political parties and the news media) on the development and implementation of policy.
3. Critically analyze theories on the impact of federalism, the separation of powers and economic inequality on the development and implementation of policy.
4. Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy.
5. Evaluate the ethical issues and conflicts inherent to political issues.
6. Demonstrate understanding of the rights and duties of a citizen through participation in the political system.

5. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical evolution of American political institutions.
2. Effectively communicate understanding of the roles played by state actors (such as the 3 branches of government) and non-state actors (such as interest groups, political parties and the news media) on the development and implementation of policy.
3. Critically analyze theories on the impact of federalism, the separation of powers and economic inequality on the development and implementation of policy.
4. Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy.
5. Evaluate the ethical issues and conflicts inherent to political issues.
6. Demonstrate understanding of the rights and duties of a citizen through participation in the political system.

6. COURSE CONTENT:

Lecture Content:

1. Historical context of the American Revolution and the creation of the Constitution.

2. Democratic theory and the political philosophies of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists.
3. The Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation.
4. Federalism and the Constitution.
5. The structures of and relationships between the local, state and federal governments.
6. The development of the common law legal system, the structure of the federal court systems, civil litigation and criminal proceedings, the evolution of the rights of criminal defendants, the history of the Supreme Court and judicial review.
7. The Bill of Rights, the evolution of civil liberties, and the rights and obligations of citizens.
8. The history of religion and politics in the United States.
9. The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments and the history of civil rights and racial and gender relations.
10. The history of wealth, poverty, and economic inequality in the U.S., and its relationship to public policy.
11. The historical relationship between government and business, and the impact of the capitalist economic system on the workings of representative democracy.
12. The historical roles of the mass media, interest groups, and political parties.
13. The historical roles of primary elections, general elections and voting.
14. Campaign finance and the impact of money on politics and public policy in historical context.
15. The historical evolutions of the Legislative Branch of government: Congress and state legislatures.
16. The historical evolutions of the Executive Branch: presidents, governors and the bureaucracy.
17. The historical evolution of domestic policymaking: budgetary, economic, social welfare, health, environment, energy, etc.
18. The history of American foreign and defense policy and policymaking.

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Discussion
- C. Guest Speakers
- D. Other (Specify): Lecture, classroom discussions and debates, small group discussions, individual and group presentations, use of multimedia (including Power Point presentations and use of Internet sources to supplement the textbooks), and Civic Mirror American politics simulation. Student assignments include written work emphasizing critical thinking skills (analysis of the readings and/or research), as well as fieldwork like volunteering for a political campaign or a political organization or an elected official. Students will read 50 to 100 pages per week in the textbook and other sources.

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

Research papers, analytical essays, short-answer questions on assigned readings, letters to elected representatives, reports on political events attended, reports on participation in political activities, asynchronous online discussions, face-to-face discussions/debates, self-evaluation of progress in Civic Mirror American politics simulation.

Reading Assignments:

Textbooks, websites, reports, newspapers, newsmagazines.

Other Outside Assignments:

Oral presentations. Service learning with organizations whose activities are related to politics or government.

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Work
- C. Exams/Tests
- D. Field Trips
- E. Group Projects
- F. Homework
- G. Oral Presentation
- H. Papers
- I. Projects
- J. Quizzes
- K. Research Projects

- L. Simulation
- M. Written examination

10. **REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):**

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Edwards III, G. C., M. P. Wattenberg, R. L. Lineberry. *Government in America: People, Politics and Policy*, 18 ed. Pearson, 2022
- B. O'Connor, K. J., L. J. Sabato. *American Government: Roots and Reform*, 14 ed. Pearson, 2022
- C. McClain, P.D., S.C. Tauber. *American Government in Black and White*, 5 ed. Oxford University Press, 2021
- D. Greenberg, E. S., B. I. Page. *The Struggle for Democracy*, 13 ed. Pearson, 2022
- E. Patterson, T.. *We The People*, 14 ed. McGraw-Hill, 2022
- F. Magleby, D, P. Light, C.L. Nemacheck. *Government By The People*, 27 ed. Pearson, 2022
- G. Ford, L., S.W. Schmidt, B. A. Bardes, M. C. Shelley. *American Government and Politics Today*, 19 ed. Cengage Learning, 2022
- H. Hudson, W.. *American Democracy in Peril*, 9 ed. CQ Press, 2020

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Course Originator: Lee Miller