

**POLI 102:  
The American Political System  
Spring 2016**

**CRN:** 60264  
Monday & Wednesday 12:45pm – 2:10pm

**Rooms:** MS 421

**Instructor:** Nicholas Boushee, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Department of History and Political Science

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**Office:** Math & Social Science Building, Room MS 438

**Office Hours:** Monday & Wednesday      9:30am – 11:00am  
Tuesday & Thursday      11:00am – 12:00pm

**Advisory:** ENGL 101 with a grade of "C" or better, or equivalent, or Assessment Skill Levels R6/W6.

**Units**      3 units      **Grading:** Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass Option

**Textbooks & Supplies:**

“LGSA” [on schedule] - Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere. 2014. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Core 13th Ed. New York: Norton. ISBN: 978-0-393-92245-5

“Kollman Reader” – Kollman, Ken. 2014. *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.

“GOV CA” – Anagnoson, et al. 2015. *Governing California in the Twenty-First Century: The Political Dynamics of the Golden State*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Norton. ISBN: 978-0-393-93839-5

882E Scantrons, one small Blue Book, & a #2 pencil, found at the bookstore.

Supplemental reading materials may be provided by the instructor.

**Course Description:**

This comprehensive survey course provides an in-depth study of the American political system. National and California systems of government are studied from the perspective of constitutional frameworks and political institutions, processes, issues, and policies. Other topics include political participation; political parties and interest groups; social movements and minorities; civil liberties; and the role of political ideology, culture, and the mass media

in shaping public opinion and policymaking. This course is intended for transfer students, political science majors, or students interested in the American political system.

### **Student Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Apply the basic concepts, principles, and terms common to meaningful political inquiry to the study of American government.
2. Describe the political philosophies of the framers of the Constitution and the nature and the operation of United States political institutions (national, state, local) and processes under that Constitution as amended and interpreted.
3. Explain the basis for American federalism.
4. Locate the Constitution of the State of California within the framework of evolution of Federal-State relations and appraise the nature and processes of State and local government under the Constitution.
5. Weigh the obligations and responsibilities of American citizenship, including the duty of participating at the national, State, and local levels.
6. Describe the role of major ethnic and social groups in significant events in the history of the United States including the nature of and efforts to achieve civil rights.
7. Apply different analytical models to describe the various structures, functions, and policymaking activities of the American political system at the federal, state, and local levels.
8. Compare and contrast American political ideals and constitutional principles, both stated and actual.
9. Identify and analyze major issues faced by the American political system at all levels, including contemporary relationships of State and local government with the federal government; the resolution of conflicts and the establishment of cooperative processes under the constitutions of both the State and the nation; and the political processes involved.

### **Student Learning Outcome:**

After successful completion of the course with the grade of C or higher, a Student should be able to:

- Produce a well-structured critical analysis essay that addresses an important current American political issue.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

Please refer to the “Student Rights and Responsibilities” section of the Student Handbook or College Catalog (see Policy 3100 and Procedure 3100.2).

### **Accommodation of Disability:**

Students with disabilities who may need academic accommodations should notify the instructor immediately. Contact DSPPS (Disability Support Programs and Services) in Room A-115, 619-388-3513. The class will view audiovisual materials (videos/dvds) and if a student needs closed-captioned accommodations, please notify the instructor immediately.

## Blackboard:

I use both Blackboard and the campus email to communicate so you **MUST** frequent both to stay up to date. Failing to do either of these is ***not*** an acceptable excuse.

**Access the Blackboard Login page:** <https://sdccd.blackboard.com>

**Type your Username :** 7-digit College Student ID (CSID) number

**Type your Password:** mmddyyyy (birthdate with no hyphens, slashes, or spaces) or use your current password if you are a returning Blackboard user at the SDCCD.

After logging in, you will see your My SDCCD portal page.

## Attendance Policy & Requirements:

- It is the student's responsibility to drop all classes in which he/she is no longer attending.
- It is the instructor's discretion to withdraw a student after the add/drop deadline due to excessive absences. ***Withdrawal deadline: 4/8/2016***

### **Important Dates**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Last day to receive, and process and pay for an add code: | 2/5/2016  |
| Deadline to drop and be eligible for refund:              | 2/5/2016  |
| Deadline to drop classes with no "W" recorded:            | 2/5/2016  |
| Last day to file a petition for Pass/No Pass option:      | 2/29/2016 |
| Withdrawal deadline:                                      | 4/08/2016 |

- Students who remain enrolled in a class beyond the published withdrawal deadline, will receive an evaluative letter grade in this class.
- The final grade in this class will be affected by active participation, including attendance, as follows:

Attending lectures is mandatory. The instructor will excuse an absence if a student is seriously ill (requires a note from a medical professional), has verifiable judicial and/or military obligations, and/or a verifiable unforeseen emergency.

Students who do not attend the first class will be dropped from the course. Students with more than 5 unexcused absences will be dropped from the class. If the 6th unexcused absence takes place after the final withdrawal date, you will lose a letter grade from your course grade for each absence after the third one. Vacations are not an excuse for an absence so plan to be in class.

If you arrive more than 10 minutes late to class (without prior approval from the instructor), you will be considered absent. Also, early departure from class without prior approval will be considered an absence. The approval of a late appearance and an early departure will be based on the same standard as an excused absence.

## Evaluation & Grading:

Student participation in the form of attendance and class discussions is expected. Assignments and exams will include in-class writing (impromptu short response, and analysis of a political documentary – bring a Blue Book), formal writing assignments of various lengths, genre, and scope (e.g. campaign strategy memo, and analysis of the five principles of politics to a current CA issue), a library research session, short assignments which have you finding real-world examples related to the reading for us to discuss in-class, a mixed-media (visual &/or audio) presentation, and multiple choice quizzes and exam. Details of these assignments will be discussed and explained further during lecture, on Blackboard, and with handouts. The scores for your assignments and exams will be recorded on Blackboard for your convenience.

| <b>Assignments</b>   | <b>Points</b> | <b>Final Grade</b>   |
|--|---------------|--|
| Quizzes [in place of midterm]                                      | 80            | 90% and above: A = Excellent   |
| Participation: discussion, jeopardy,<br>short assignments, library | ~80           | 80-89: B = Good - above average<br>70-79: C = Satisfactory – average |
| Doc. Film Analysis & Response                                      | 60            | 50-69: D = Passing - less than<br>satisfactory                       |
| Strategy Memo w/ Visual Presentation                               | 80            |  |
| Paper  | 100           | 49 and below: F = Unacceptable                                       |
| Final Exam [scantron]  | 100           |  |
| Approximate Total Points:  | 500           |  |

## Assignment Submission:

Students are required to utilize SafeAssign found in Blackboard for all out-of-class written assignments. All class assignments will be submitted in Blackboard, unless announced in class. This class will attempt to decrease hard copies and paper by utilizing Blackboard to submit most assignments.

**I do not accept assignments by e-mail.** It is the student's responsibility to schedule and complete make-up exams and turn-in class assignments on time. Make-up exams will be given for documented medical reasons or extreme hardship cases only. Repeated tardiness, unacceptable classroom behavior, excessive absences, or leaving class early will result in a lower final class grade. Total number of participation/discussion points may change and will be announced in class. Assignments are due before class start on the day they are listed. Late assignments will be marked down 10% for every day it is late. Once I return assignments or grade exams/quizzes/essays, late assignments will not be accepted. If you know you will not be able to turn in an assignment on the specified day, turn it in **early**.

## Participation:

Student participation in the form of attendance and class discussions is expected. I expect you to participate by attending lecture, completing small assignments beyond the major tasks described below, and being active in group and class activities. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the course material, and having done the reading. We will aim to

integrate discussion into each class meeting, as there is no separate section. This will require active participation of all students for its success. Much of our learning will take place in these discussions, as students share insights and ideas with each other.

### **Ideological Diversity:**

You will not be graded according to whether you share the political opinions or ideologies of the instructor or authors of the assigned texts. I do ask that you be open-minded and respectful, both of your fellow students and instructor and of diversity of opinion. I hope that you will view this diversity as valuable for your learning. As Stuart Mill once wrote: “All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility.” In this course, no one is infallible.

### **Class Decorum:**

I begin with the premise that each student enrolled in this course is highly intelligent and capable and I have high expectations for both your academic commitment and personal behavior. You are responsible for your success in this course and the course is designed such that if you work hard you will do quite well. The course has all the ingredients necessary to engage and challenge you. I expect students to refrain from engaging in any distracting or disruptive behavior such as—but not limited to—showing up late, using cell phones, texting, surfing the web, taking pictures, talking to classmates outside of our discussions. This sort of behavior is disrespectful not only because it makes it difficult for other students to concentrate in class, but it also makes it difficult for me to do my job. I will not tolerate any disruptive behavior and will refer egregious cases to Student Affairs.

### **Academic Integrity:**

I expect students to refrain from cheating, plagiarizing, or engaging in any other type of academic misconduct. Students who are found in violation of district Procedure 3100.3, Honest Academic Conduct, will receive a zero grade on the assignment, quiz, or exam in question and may be referred for disciplinary action in accordance with Procedure 3100.2, Student Disciplinary Procedures:

[http://www.sdccd.edu/docs/procedures/Student%20Services/AP%203100\\_03.pdf](http://www.sdccd.edu/docs/procedures/Student%20Services/AP%203100_03.pdf)

### **Class Schedule & Reading:**

The below class schedule outline is **tentative** and subject to change as necessary. You are responsible for keeping up with any changes made to the schedule. Schedule changes will be announced in class. Students should complete the assigned class reading prior to the class lecture. I recommend you bring the textbooks and your notes to every class. Lectures will build on and move beyond the ideas you have read about for that week.

| Wk         | Dates (M-W)        | Topics & Assignments  | Readings  |
|------------|--------------------|---|---|
| 1          | 1/25–<br>1/27/2016 | Introductions<br>5 Principles of Politics   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 1</li> <li>• Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons”</li> </ul>  |
| 2          | 2/1 – 2/3          | Constitution & Federalist Papers<br><b>Quiz 1</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 2</li> <li>• <i>The U.S. Constitution</i> (LGSA appendix)</li> <li>• <i>Federalist no. 10 &amp; no. 51</i></li> </ul>   |
| 3          | 2/8 - 2/10         | Public Opinion <b>Quiz 2</b><br><b>SA#1 – Issue Hunt</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 10</li> <li>• Lupia &amp; McCubbins “Dem. Dilemma”<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>   |
| 4          | 2/15 - 2/17        | Political Parties & The Electorate<br><b>Quiz 3</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 12</li> <li>• Aldrich, “<i>Why Parties?</i>”</li> <li>• Campbell et al., “<i>The American Voter</i>”</li> </ul>   |
| 5          | 2/22 – 2/24        | Elections & Mobilization<br><b>Quiz 4</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 11</li> <li>• Rosenstone &amp; Hansen, “<i>Mobilization, Participation, &amp; American Democracy.</i>”</li> </ul>   |
| 6          | 2/29 – 3/2         | Media & Campaign Ads<br><b>SA#2 Attack Ad Hunt</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 14</li> <li>• Baum, “Soft News Goes to War”</li> </ul>  |
| 7          | 3/7 – 3/9          | Interest Groups<br><b>Quiz 5</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 13</li> <li>• Kollman, “Outside Lobbying.”</li> </ul>   |
| 8          | 3/14 – 3/16        | Federalism & Separation of Powers<br><b>Library Research Visit 3/14</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 3</li> </ul>  |
| 9          | 3/21 – 3/23        | Congress + Paper Writing Tips<br><b>Quiz 6</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 6</li> <li>• Mayhew, “<i>The Electoral Connection.</i>”</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Off</b> | 3/28 - 3/30        | <i>SPRING BREAK</i>   |   |
| 10         | 4/4 – 4/6          | The Presidency<br><b>Paper Due 4/6 &amp; Quiz 7</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 7</li> <li>• Howell, “Power without Persuasion.”</li> </ul>   |
| 11         | 4/11 – 4/13        | The Bureaucracy<br><b>Quiz 8</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 8</li> <li>• McCubbins &amp; Schwartz, “Oversight”</li> </ul>   |
| 12         | 4/18 – 4/20        | Federal Courts & CA Courts<br><b>Strategy Memo Due 4/18</b><br><b>&amp; Presentations</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGSA Ch. 9</li> <li>• GOV CA Ch. 7</li> </ul>  |
| 13         | 4/25 – 4/27        | California Issues & Institutions<br><b>Presentations Cont’d.</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GOV CA Ch. 1 &amp; Ch. 2 pgs. 27-36</li> </ul>   |
| 14         | 5/2 – 5/4          | CA Parties, Media, & Elections<br><b>Pol. Doc [Street Fight] Response 5/4</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GOV CA Ch. 3 &amp; Ch. 4</li> <li>• <a href="http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/09/local/la-me-munger-20120610">http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/09/local/la-me-munger-20120610</a></li> </ul> |
| 15         | 5/9 – 5/11         | The CA Legislature & Executive Branch   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GOV CA Ch. 5 &amp; Ch. 6</li> <li>• Bowler et al., “Earthquakes ” Blackboard</li> </ul>  |
| 16         | 5/16 – 5/18        | Review Jeopardy<br><b>In-Class Final Exam 5/18</b>  |   |

<sup>1</sup> All non-LGSA or GOV. CA readings are in the Kollman Reader, unless otherwise noted.