

Political Science 001
American Government
Fall 2011
M, W 7:30-8:45 DMH 149A
M, W 1:30-2:45 DMH 149A

Professor Gerston
Clark Hall 451 924-5580
Office Hours: M/W 6:45-
7:25; M/W 9:00-10:15
lgerston@sjsu.edu

SYLLABUS

SCOPE OF THE COURSE

What makes American government work? Are American politics unique? And why should anybody care? These are the central questions of Political Science 001.

This course will introduce you to American government through the study of values and political institutions in the United States and California. A central component will deal with the evolution of American society to its place as a "representative democracy." Accordingly, we will devote considerable attention to the political process as it has developed from important underlying political theories to evolving and increasingly democratic institutions.

We will investigate the impact of social and political participation in the United States and California from a multi-cultural perspective including the interaction between civil rights, civil liberties and linkage institutions. In doing so, we will cover the development of public opinion, gender relations, political campaigns, interest groups, political parties and the process of policy formation and implementation. Fundamentally, the course will encourage critical thinking about political issues and values and their implications for the American political system.

REQUIRED READINGS

Barbour and Wright, *Keeping the Republic*, Fourth Brief Edition (Softback), 2011

Gerston, *Confronting Reality: Ten Issues Threatening to Implode American Society (and How We Can Fix It)*, 2009

Gerston and Christensen, *California Politics and Government: A Practical Approach*, Eleventh Edition, 2011

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is not required, but strongly encouraged inasmuch as not all material on the quizzes and exams comes from the text only.

CELL PHONES

As a courtesy to other students and the professor, please make sure that cell phones are turned OFF. If your phone rings during class, you will be asked to leave. If you text during class, you will be asked to leave. I AM VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THIS ISSUE.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES, WRITING PROFICIENCY AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

In Political Science 001, you will learn to analyze political events, values and institutions in the context of the many elements that make up our diverse society. By the end of the semester, you will be able to identify the key events and issues that have framed our nation and be able to explain how they relate to current political, social and economic issues and institutions. You will complete writing assignments and examinations with a strong essay component. You must demonstrate university-level writing abilities and critical thinking skills, partly through at least 1500 words of original writing which will conform to the Political Science Department's requirements for style, language and format as described to you by your professor.

SPECIAL EVENING LECTURE

There will be a special lecture one evening during the semester as part of the Don Edwards Lecture Series. Edwards served in the U.S. Congress for more than 25 years as a representative from the San Jose area. The lecture will take place at 7:00 p.m. at a location to be announced.

Attendance will be mandatory; in exchange for attending this lecture, there will be no class on October 19.

Note: the lecture is videotaped for those with schedule conflicts.

EVALUATION

The course grade will have three parts:

An essay midterm (100 points), comprising 1/3 of the course grade

10 of 12 quizzes (100 points), comprising 1/3 of the course grade

An essay final examination (100 points), comprising 1/3 of the course grade.

Those receiving 90% or more of the total will earn an "A," 80-89% a "B," 70-79% a "C," 60-69% a "D." Averages of less than 60% will result in an "F."

All graded work **MUST** be done in **INK** in **LARGE NEW** bluebooks supplied by students, and on weekly quizzes which will be completed as handouts. **NO WORK SUBMITTED IN PENCIL WILL BE GRADED.** There will be **NO** make-ups for missed quizzes, midterms and final examinations. There **may** be medical exceptions if a student provides a compelling reason with appropriate written substantiation. The midterm and final will be primarily essay in nature; quizzes will be combinations of short answers, multiple choice, true/false and definitions.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you need particular accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 also requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability to use available services.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Note that faculty members are required to report **all infractions** to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The policy on academic integrity can be found at: <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>. In other words, plagiarism and cheating on exams, papers, or assignments are serious offenses that may result in grades of F or expulsion from the university. Don't do it!

LEARNING ASSISTANCE

The SJSU **Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC)** provides tutoring assistance on a weekly or drop-in basis. This is an excellent resource skills development. The LARC is located in the Student Services Center, Room 600 (between 9th and 10th Street on San Fernando). Hours: M-R 9-6, F 9-3. Phone: 408-924-2587. All services are offered to registered SJSU students free of charge.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMINATION SCHEDULE (tentative)

Week of:	Reading Assignment:	Exam/Quiz Date:
August 24	Introduction	

August 29	B/W, Chapters 1, 2 Gerston, Chapter 1	August 31 Q1
September 5	Labor Day—No Class	
September 6	B/W, Chapter 3 Gerston, Chapter 11	September 7 Q2
September 12	B/W, Chapters 4, 5	September 14 Q3
September 19	B/W, Chapter 6 Gerston, Chapter 6	September 21 Q4
September 26	B/W, Chapter 7	September 28 Q5
October 3	B/W, Chapter 9 Gerston, Chapter 2	October 5 Q6
October 10	Midterm Review	
October 12	Midterm Examination	
October 17	B/W, Chapter 11, 12 Gerston, Chapter 10	
October 19	No class (in exchange for attending Edwards lecture)	
October 24	No class	
October 26	B/W, Chapter 11, 12 Gerston, Chapter 10, cont.	October 26 Q7
October 31	B/W Chapters 10, 13 Gerston, Chapter 4	November 2 Q8
November 7	B/W Chapters, 14 Gerston, Chapters 7, 8	November 9 Q9
November 14	G/C, Chapters 1-2 Gerston, Chapter 3	November 16 Q10

November 21

G/C, Chapters 3-6
Gerston, Chapter 5

November 23
Q11

November 28

G/C, Chapters 7-10

November 30
Q12

December 5

Final Exam Review

December 7

Final Examination