

Political Science 001  
American Government  
Fall 2016, HGH116  
M, W 9:00-10:15

Professor Gerston  
Clark Hall 404M 924-5580  
Office Hours: M/W 8:00-8:45  
and by appointment  
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## ***SYLLABUS--revised***

### **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, concepts 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, race relations, gender relations, political campaigns, interest groups, political parties and the process of policy formation, implementation, and evaluation. Fundamentally, the course will encourage critical thinking about political issues and values and their implications for the American political system.

Fall 2016 is a particularly important time because of the national elections, which will entail the presidency, the House of Representatives, and one-third of the U.S. Senate, including the seat of retiring Senator Barbara Boxer of California. In addition, in California, elections will cover all of the state assembly and half of the state senate. We will focus on many of these contests throughout the semester.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

Barbour and Wright, *Keeping the Republic*, **Sixth** Brief Edition (Softback), 2015

Gerston and Christensen, *California Politics and Government: A Practical Approach*, **Thirteenth** Edition, 2015

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is not required, but **strongly encouraged** inasmuch as material on the quizzes and exams comes from the texts **and** lectures. Moreover, if a student is on the margin after the grade calculation, attendance and participation may help move the student's grade to the next level.

## **CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

***As a courtesy to other students and the professor, please make sure that cell phones, computers, and any other electronic devices 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.***
- ***If you leave during class, please take your materials with you and do not return for the rest of the lecture. (The only exception will be for those with medical conditions who must leave occasionally. Please provide notice to me in advance if this is the case.)***

***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.

Success in this class is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities, including but not limited to special lectures and the presidential debates. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

### **SPECIAL EVENING LECTURE**

There may 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. If the lecture is scheduled, it will take place at 7:00 p.m. at a location to be announced. **Attendance will be mandatory and the information from it will be considered as part of the class materials for examination.**

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

### **PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES**

You will be responsible for watching the three presidential debates and the one vice presidential debates that take place during the course of this semester. To the extent that time permits, we will discuss the debates in class. You may be asked questions about the debates in the class quizzes and exams. Their dates and times are included in the syllabus.

### **EVALUATION**

The course grade will have three parts:

- An essay midterm (100 points), comprising 1/3 of the course grade
- 10 of 11 quizzes (100 points), consisting of short answers, multiple choice, true/false and definitions questions, 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 for the midterm and final **MUST** be done in **INK** in **LARGE NEW** green books (or other colors) for the midterm and final exam supplied by students.

- Weekly quizzes which will be completed as handouts provided by the professor.
- The midterm and final will be primarily **essay** in nature; quizzes will be combinations of questions from materials presented in lecture, outside assignments, and the reading.
- **NO WORK SUBMITTED IN PENCIL WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- 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.**

## **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 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 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)**

<b><i>Week of:</i></b>	<b><i>Reading Assignment:</i></b>	<b><i>Exam/Quiz Date:</i></b>
August 24	Introduction	
August 29	B/W, Chapters 1, 2	August 31 <b>Q1</b>
<b>September 5</b>	<b>Labor Day—No Class</b>	
September 7	B/W, Chapter 3	
September 12	B/W, Chapter 3, cont.	September 14 <b>Q2</b>
<b>September 19-21</b>	<b>No Class</b>	

September 19	B/W, Chapters 4, 5	
<b>September 26</b>	<b>First Presidential Debate, 6:00-7:30 PM</b>	
September 26	B/W, Chapters 4, 5, cont.	September 28 <b>Q3</b>
October 3	B/W, Chapter 6	October 5 <b>Q4</b>
<b>October 4</b>	<b>Vice Presidential Debate, 6:00-7:30 PM</b>	
<b>October 9</b>	<b>Second Presidential Debate, 6:00-7:30 PM</b>	
October 10	B/W, Chapter 7	October 12 <b>Q5</b>
October 17	B/W, Chapter 9	October 19 <b>Q6</b>
<b>October 19</b>	<b>Midterm Review</b>	
<b>October 19</b>	<b>Third Presidential Debate, 6:00-7:30 PM</b>	
<b>October 24</b>	<b>No Class</b>	
<b>October 26</b>	<b>Midterm Examination</b>	
October 31	B/W, Chapters 11,12	November 2 <b>Q7</b>
November 7	B/W, Chapters 10, 13	
<b>November 9</b>	<b>No Class</b>	
November 14	B/W, Chapters 10, 13 , cont.	November 14 <b>Q8</b>
November 16	B/W, Chapter 14	
November 21	B/W Chapter 14, cont.	November 21 <b>Q9</b>
<b>November 23-25</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	

November 28	G/C Chapters 1-5	November 30 <b>Q10</b>
December 5	G/C, Chapters 6-10	December 7 <b>Q 11</b>
<b>December 7</b>	<b>Final Exam Review</b>	
<b>December 12</b>	<b>Final Exam in class at regular meeting time</b>	