

**STATE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS**  
**SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Fall 2016**

**Dominic J. Caserta, M.A.**

**Political Science (POLS) 102 – Fall Semester 2016 - 4 Units, Classroom**  
**Boccardo Business Center 022, Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:00-4:15 PM**

**Office Hours: By appointment on Mondays and Wednesdays in CLARK**  
**HALL 406 J.**

**Course Description:**

States are the forgotten components of American politics and government. Removed from the national limelight yet more distant than local power sources, states often are lost in the policy making shuffle. Yet they are critical to the understanding and operation of the American political process and key players in the current movement to decentralize government power.

California is known as the Golden State, a land of freedom and opportunity where one can live out their dreams. However, it is also a state traditionally besieged by massive budget deficits, a floundering education system, conflicts over civil rights and liberties, a polarized legislature, and a governmental system that seems unable to respond to the state's daunting and pressing public policy challenges.

This course will examine both the promise and limits of the California dream as well as how its unique political institutions are responding to the economic and demographic changes that are transforming the state before our eyes.

**Course Learning Objectives (CLOs):**

1. *Students will understand how California has responded to various immigrant groups who have journeyed to California seeking a better life.*
2. *Students will understand how demographic changes are affecting California's political institutions.*
3. *Students will be able to assess the promise and performance of California's initiative system of direct democracy.*

4. *Students will be able to explain the roots of California's budget problems as well as the structural barriers to addressing it.*
5. *Students will understand the factors that have led to a polarization of California's government and explore possible solutions in making it serve more responsive, and, thus, democratic ends.*

## **Course Materials:**

**Required Text:** DeBow (2009). DeBow, Ken, and Syer, John. *Power and Politics in California 9<sup>th</sup> edition*. Pearson Longman (ISBN # 0205622194).

## **Grades:**

Your grade is a reflection of the **CHOICES** you make and the **CHALLENGES** you accept.

Remember the 5 P'S: **PROPER PREPARATION PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE.**

Below are the elements on how you will be graded in the course:

1. Complete 4 Reflection Papers on the readings. The first Reflection Paper will cover the Section 1 Readings, the second Reflection Paper will cover the Section 2 Readings, the third Reflection Paper will cover the Section 3 Readings, and the fourth Reflection Paper will cover the Section 4 Readings. (**100** points each).

These four Reflection Papers must summarize the key points and issues raised by the Section Readings as well as provide your reaction and assessment to what the authors have written. Each of your pieces should be approximately **1,500** words long. The pieces will be typed, spell checked, double spaced, and regular 12-size font. The Reflection Paper Due Dates are listed on the Course Syllabus Calendar. No late reflections will be accepted. For highest credit, be sure to capture the major theme of the reading. Make sure to answer the following question: **What is the BIG picture in these section readings?** Do not simply focus on one week's reading.

2. Final Exam: My California Dream Essay Question: **100 points**  
In Class Exam: **200 points**

**NOTE:** If you have the ability to listen, speak, read, and write carefully and objectively, you will then be empowered civically, and you will also know how to distinguish between the authentic and the fraudulent in human discourse. Hence, the goals of the semester are to involve you in your own learning process; to expose you to issues, processes, institutions, politics and the economy, ultimately with the design of making each one of you responsible citizens and, hopefully, involved in the political process.

**NOTE: There will be periodic assessments (i.e. quizzes, free response tests) through the semester.**

### **Grading Breakdown:**

The basis of your grade will reflect the **CHOICES** you have made and the **CHALLENGES** you have accepted. The following represents how you will be graded. Each assignment will have a point value to them.

- **Quizzes and Tests** **10%**
- **Participation (Class Discussions) & Attendance** **10%**
- **Final (My California Dream Essay and In Class Exam)** **30%**
- **4 Reflection Papers** **50%**

### **Make-up Work:**

No make-up work will be permitted except in the case of a documented emergency. Late assignments will **NOT** be accepted. Furthermore, incompletes will only be assigned for compelling reasons to those students who have completed at least two-thirds of the required course work at a passing level. Requests must be made in writing on the official request forms.

### **Course Requirements**

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each

unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>."

Because this is a 3-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of nine hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments.

Careful time management will be required to keep up with readings and assignments in an intensive course such as this one.

## **Political Science Program Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

### **PSPLO1: Breadth**

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

### **PSPLO2: Application**

Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

### **PSPLO3: Disciplinary methods**

Student should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have

competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.

#### **PSPLO4: Communication Skills**

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

#### **PSPLO5: Citizenship**

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

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. 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 with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development at [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct) CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours.

Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

See <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/s90-5.htm> about Academic Senate Policy S90-5.

## **PLAGIARISM**

See [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct) (Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Dev).

## **DEPARTMENTAL WRITING POLICY**

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count! Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct which carries with it serious sanctions.

A tutorial on citations is available at the library website at [http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info\\_comp/citing.htm](http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm).

For assistance, please visit the SJSU Writing Center staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists. Writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. It is your responsibility to arrange a time to meet with the instructors. Consult with your professor in advance to determine whether you need assistance with your writing.

Arguably, the best way to improve your own writing is to read quality material on a regular basis. To that end, students are encouraged to read articles from scholarly sources but also newspapers such as The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, The New York Times, and The Economist. These publications also contain articles of direct relevance to their political science classes.

## **QUESTIONS?**

Finally, if you get stuck, feel overwhelmed, or just want to clarify something from the reading or lectures, ask me. I am here to help.

## **Changes to the Syllabus:**

The schedule and procedures for this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Any changes will be announced in class.

## **Course Calendar – Topics and Assigned Readings:**

### **SECTION 1 READINGS**

#### **Week of 08/22: California's Dream and Crises.**

*DeBow Chpt. 1 and 11*

*Article: California Government Has Failed Us*

**Week of 09/05: Federalism: The Legalization of Marijuana & the Same Sex Debate**

*Article: Greenberg and Page: Federalism*

*Article: Rourke: Federal Regulation of Marijuana*

**REFLECTION PAPER #1 IS DUE ON WEDNESDAY 09/14**

**SECTION 2 READINGS**

**Week of 09/19: Red state / Blue state: What is California?**

*DeBow Chpt. 8 and 9*

**Week of 09/26: Proposition 13 and the Initiative Industry.**

*DeBow Chpt. 6 and 7*

*Read Mercury news article at*

*[http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci\\_29663257/california-ballot-measures-why-your-signature-is-worth](http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci_29663257/california-ballot-measures-why-your-signature-is-worth)*

**REFLECTION PAPER #2 IS DUE ON WEDNESDAY 10/05**

**SECTION 3 READINGS**

**Week of 10/10: The Progressives and California's Constitution**

*DeBow Chpt. 2 and 5*

*Read Mercury news article at [http://www.mercurynews.com/politics-government/ci\\_29660061/sanders-and-trump-following-california-populists-footsteps](http://www.mercurynews.com/politics-government/ci_29660061/sanders-and-trump-following-california-populists-footsteps)*

**Week of 10/17: Changing California's Constitution**

*Article: Grodin: On Amending and Revising the Constitution*

**REFLECTION PAPER #3 IS DUE ON WEDNESDAY 10/26**

**SECTION 4 READINGS**

**Week of 10/31: California Elections & the Legislature, and the Governor.**

*DeBow Chpt.3 and 4*

*The Jungle Primary Article and Questions by Time Magazine at  
<http://time.com/100556/the-jungle-primary/>*

**Week of 11/07: Big State, Big Challenges, and the Budget**

*DeBow Chpt. 10*

**REFLECTION PAPER #4 IS DUE ON WEDNESDAY 11/16**

**MY CALIFORNIA DREAM ESSAY QUESTION IS DUE ON  
WEDNESDAY 12/07**

**IN CLASS FINAL EXAM ON MONDAY 12/12**