

## **Pols 15b. Essentials of US and California Government**

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San Jose State University

Class numbers: 48416, 49417, 47328, 47330

Fall Semester 2016

Meeting Time: Mon and Wed, 1:30-2:45 pm in Washington Square Hall 207

Office Hours: Mon and Wed, 12:30-1:15 and 3-4:00 (starting Sept. 28), Clark Hall 406J

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### **From the SJSU Catalog**

Treatment of essentials of U.S. and California government. Satisfies the American institutions requirements in U.S. Constitution (US2) and California government (US3), and the Core GE requirement in Social Sciences: Social Issues (D3).

### **From the SJSU GE Guidelines**

In this course, you will be exposed to alternative interpretations of the historical events and political processes that have shaped the social, economic, and political system in which you live. This course will provide a multicultural framework, including both conflict and consensus perspectives, of the choices and options available to individuals and groups in their social, economic, and political relations. The focus of the course is the growth of a multicultural society and the interactions, including cooperation and conflict, as these many and varied peoples have dealt with social economic, and political issues.

### **Political Science Program Learning Outcomes (PSPLO)**

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

PSPLO 1 Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

PSPLO 2 Application: Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

PSPLO 3 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.

PSPLO 4 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.

PSPLO 5 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.

## General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO)

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

GELO 1 (US2): Explain how political decisions are made, their consequences for individuals and society, and how individuals and groups may affect the decision-making process. Analyze the meaning and content of the democratic process as it has evolved in the United States and California, and describe the foundations of the political system and the evolving institutions of government, the links between the people and government, and the operations of California government.

GELO 2 (US3): Identify the tools of political action and collective decision making at the local, state, national, and global level, and articulate the values and assumptions that inform their civic engagement.

GELO 3 (D3): Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.

GELO 4 (D3): Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.

GELO 5 (D3): Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

GELO 6 (D3): Apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

### Important Dates

Wed., August 24—First day of class

Mon., September 5—Labor Day, no class

Wed., September 14—3 citations due

Wed., October 5—**Midterm 1**

Wed., November 23—Thanksgiving holiday, no class

Wed., November 15—**Midterm 2**

Mon., November 21—**Paper thesis and outline due**

Mon., December 12—**Research paper due**

Mon., December 12—Last day of class

Thursday, December 15, 12:15-14:30—**Final exam**

### Grading

Grading will be based on a combination of preparation for class including doing the readings **before** they are scheduled to be discussed, participation in the discussions, mid-term and final exams, and the short papers. The grade for participation includes participation in class.

### Grading Scale

A+ 96-100

A 93-95

A- 90-92

B+	86-89
B	83-85
B-	80-82
C+	76-79
C	73-75
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Civic Engagement Project reports	30
Citations, outline & thesis	15
Research paper	25
Exams	30
<hr/> <b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### **How to Calculate Your Grades**

After the midterm I will provide you with your grade for the course at that point in time. To calculate your grade at any point after that add up all of your grades for each category above, divide by the number of assignments, multiply by the percentage (eg, 15% is .15), and then add each category together. Remember that you need to put in an estimated grade for any assignments not yet completed to figure out what your final grade might be. That will be your grade at that point in time.

I may not have my grade sheet with me on campus so please contact me in advance. If you need a grade sheet signed please calculate your grade before bringing me the form to sign.

If you have any questions about your grade after you have done this calculation feel free to come see me during office hours. I cannot do grade checks in class. Please fill in the following table as completely as possible before coming to check on your grade.

Assignment	Grade	Grade %	grade decimal	Points
Group Engagement Report				
Final Individual Engagement Report				
<b>TOTAL</b> Reports		30%	0.30	
Citations				
Outline				
Thesis				
<b>TOTAL</b> citations, outline & thesis		15%	0.15	
Research paper		25%	0.25	
Midterm 1				
Midterm 2				
Final exam				
<b>TOTAL</b> exams		30%		
<b>TOTAL GRADE</b>			0.30	

### Student Evaluation/Grading Policies

- **No withdrawals (W) will be granted** except for **verifiable** medical reasons.
- Students will receive their grades at mid-term when the graded mid-term exam is returned.
- 10 percent will be deducted for each **week** that an assignment is turned in late. A period of 7 days or less is consider 1 week.
- Please sign your **complete name** on the sign in sheet.
- If you miss more than 2 classes during the semester your final grade will be reduced by **1/2 a full letter grade** on your final grade for each additional absence. Excused absences according to campus policy are not counted. If you have not signed in by the end of class you will be counted as absent.
- If you are late more than 2 times during the semester your final grade will be reduced by **1/2 a full letter grade** on your final grade for each additional late arrival. If you arrive after the sign in sheet passed your seat or if you were skipped please sign in after class ends and write “late” if you were late.
- Students must take all 3 exams. The lowest of the 3 scores will be dropped. **There are no make up, early, or late exams.** If you miss an exam you will receive a 0 and your exam grade will be calculated based on **all 3** scores. If you have an excused absence according to campus policy please provide written documentation ASAP.

### Participation Policy

Attendance is not required but you are **strongly encouraged** to attend every class and to be on time and stay

the entire class. You do not need my permission to be absent from class, arrive late or leave early. However, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from your classmates either in class or by posting an email to the class list serve before you return to class.

You **need to be in class to participate** in the small group and class discussions, make contributions, and ask questions. You are expected to come to class prepared by having **completed all the readings and article or chapter worksheet prior to class**. If you have any questions about the readings it is preferable to ask them in class or during office hours. One of the best ways to participate in class—and learn—is to ask questions, and participate in the group and class discussions. Feel free to also use the class discussion list to ask questions.

During the course I will be requesting certain students to come meet with me during office hours. If you do not meet with me within two weeks of my request I will **deduct 10 points** from your participation grade.

If you disrupt class by allowing your cell phone to ring, send text messages and carry on conversations with classmates **you will be requested to stop**. If you are warned a second time you will automatically have **10 points deducted** from your final participation points and may be asked to leave the class and report to the appropriate campus authority to discuss your disruptive behavior.

### Classroom Policy

- **Please turn off and put away all electronic devices** (cell phones, laptops, audio recorders, headphones, etc). I will give only one warning and then **I will ask you to leave the class**. If you need to use your phone please leave the classroom and make your call in the hallway away from the door to the classroom. **After one warning** if you continue using your devices you will be asked to report to the appropriate campus authority and you will **lose 10 points**. University Policy S12-7, <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course.
- **No electronic recordings or photographs** of any kind of the class are allowed except as an accommodation with campus documentation.
- The posting of any electronic recordings, tapings or any other type of documentation of any aspect of this course on the internet is not allowed.
- Please keep your bag and purse **on the floor** not on your desk or lap.
- **Laptops are only allowed in class for note taking**. You must sit in the front two rows. Any use of your laptop for any other purpose than note taking will result in the discontinuation of its use and a **deduction of 10 participation points**.
- Please show respect for your classmates and instructor by refraining from interrupting someone who is speaking, engaging in side conversations in class and making disrespectful comments. You will receive only one warning.
- Please allow your classmates time to speak.
- **Any act of plagiarism will result in an automatic "F" for the assignment**.
- Please refrain from engaging in side conversations. If you have a question ask me in class or your neighbor before and after class.
- If you **take time** during class discussions, please **give time** in return to your classmates.
- Please raise your hand if you wish to speak.
- Please do not interrupt your classmates.
- Please speak respectfully about one another. It's ok to criticize ideas **but** not people.
- Any student who has special needs that may affect his or her performance in this class is asked to identify his or her needs to Dr. Ovetz in private by the end of the first day of class and provide

written proof as soon as possible. Any resulting class performance problems that may arise for those who do not identify their needs will not receive any special grading considerations.

- Please recycle your containers and paper rather than throwing them in the trash.

## **Required Readings**

Required course readings can be found in the following assigned books and readings. You are expected to complete the readings *before* they are scheduled to be discussed.

The following book is required reading. You may purchase your own copy. Any edition published in the past 10 years is acceptable.

- Ira Katznelson, Mark Kesselman, and Alan Draper, *The Politics of Power: A Critical Introduction to American Government*, W. W. Norton & Company: NY, 7th Edition, 2013, 403 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0393919448.

The chapters from the Field and Parenti books are available on the class Canvas webpage.

Note: Print and bring a copy of both the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution to class. The links to both are below.

You are expected to read the news at least 1-2 times per week as we will be discussing current news events.

## **University Policies**

Per University Policy s16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information Page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

## **Course Outline**

### **Topic 1. Democracy**

#### **Weeks 1-2**

Read in book:

**Katznelson**, ch. 1. Democracy's Challenge; ch. 2 Capitalism and Democracy; and ch. 5. Interest Groups and Social Movements

### **Topic 2. The Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution**

#### **Weeks 3-4**

Read on-line:

**Field**, ch. 1. California Politics in Perspective; and 2. The Californians

**Parenti**, ch. 2. A Constitution for the Few

**Declaration of Independence**

**Constitution** and the **amendments**

**Madison**, "Federalist Paper #10"

\*Print out and bring a copy of the entire Declaration of Independence and Constitution with you to class.

### **Topic 3. Federalism**

#### **Weeks 5-6**

Read in book:

**Katznelson**, ch. 3. The History of American Political Economy

Read on-line:

Go to <https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/> and read the annotations for the 10th Amendment: Reserve Clause; Article I, Section 8. Necessary and Proper Clause, Art VI, Section 2: Supremacy Clause; Article IV, Section 1. Full Faith and Credit; and Article IV, Section 2. Privileges and Immunities

Watch on-line:

PBS Now, "Emission impossible": <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/328/>

### **Topic 4. Article I: Congress**

#### **Weeks 7-9**

Read in book:

**Katznelson**, ch. 7. Congress; ch. 9. Economic Policy; and ch. 10. Social Policy

Read on-line:

**Field**, ch. 8. The California Legislature; 13. City Governments

Watch on-line:

Reich, "Corporate Welfare in California," <http://robertreich.org/post/127112501510>  
60 Minutes "Under the influence": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUVoYMxICJk>

### **Topic 5. Article II: The Executive Branch and the President**

#### **Weeks 10-12**

Read in book:

**Katznelson**, ch. 6. The Presidency; and ch. 11. Foreign Policy

Read on-line:

**Field**, ch. 9. California's Plural Executive

### **Topic 6. Article III: The Judiciary**

#### **Weeks 13-14**

Read in book:

**Katznelson**, ch. 8. The Courts

Read on-line:

**Field**, ch. 11. California Courts and Judges  
**Brennan**, "Judicial Interpretation"

### **Topic 7. Corporations and Money in Politics**

#### **Weeks 15-16**

Read in book:

**Katznelson**, ch. 4. Political Parties and Elections

Read on-line:

**Field**, ch. 5. Media Influences and Interest Groups

Watch on-line:

PBS Now “Votes for Sale”: <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/242/>

### **Exams**

There will be two mid-terms and a final exam. The exams are multiple choice. You must bring your own 882e scantron sheet, eraser and pencil. The questions will address concepts, terminology, and important events in political history covered in class and the readings. In order to prepare for the exams I strongly encourage you to form study groups, visit me during office hours, and use campus tutoring resources.

There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course.

### **Civic Engagement Reports**

Students will be engaged in a civic engagement project that will be explained in detail in class and on the assignment sheet available on the class page.

### **Research Paper**

You must write a 4-6 page research paper (approximately 1500 words not including citations) during the course. In preparation to write the paper you will also be required to write a draft thesis and outline. The paper assignment, thesis worksheet, and writing guides will be available on the class CANVAS page.

The paper must have an introductory paragraph, clear thesis statement, and either footnotes (use auto insert function) or in text citations and a bibliography. Please do not write in outline. Any single academic citation style is acceptable. Your paper should:

- Be turned in on paper on the due date
- Be written in a formal research paper style
- Be written with an introductory paragraph with a clear thesis and preview
- Be stapled including copies of any group work
- Not include a cover sheet
- Be typed in no smaller than 11 pt font, and use 1.5 or 2 line spacing with at least .8 margins all around
- Use either in text citations with a bibliography or footnotes without a bibliography. Use APA style only. You must have at least 8 sources from a variety of academic, popular, trade, and government sources. No more than 3 may be from the research groups’ reports. For more about references see “About References” below.
- Include your name, the course and assignment information, a title, and page numbers

The paper will cover the following:

- Provide research into the main problem on campus, locally, and in California

- Discuss your experience participating in the civic engagement project to change local policies to address this problem.
  - Be **specific** about what you and your group and the class did, it's effect, effectiveness, and what else you think needs to be done
  - Discuss the role of activism in making change. Why is it needed or not?

I strongly encourage you to use the campus writing center at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

The SJSU library also has a central page for resources on writing research papers and citing sources: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/writeandcite> and <http://library.sjsu.edu/tutorials/alphabetical-list-tutorials>

### Writing Grading Scale

Does not meet the basic requirements of the assignment	0-60%
Incompletely fulfills part of the basic requirements of the assignment	70-74%
Fulfills the basic requirements of the assignment	75-79%
Completed the assignment with more than the basic requirement	80-89%
Completed the assignment with critical insights	90-100%

\*Note: In addition to late penalties described below reductions of 5-10% will also be made for incomplete assignments including unstapled work, missing worksheet pages, excessive misspellings, and unreadable text.

### **About Sources and References**

Sources used for your paper should include credible and reliable academic, popular, trade, and government sources. Do not cite wikis, personal web pages, commercial non-news sources, student papers, and blogs. The textbooks may be cited in your paper but do not count towards your required number of citations. Do not use Wikipedia as a source. Please use the free library databases that you will learn about in our visit to the library. Any one of the primary styles for citing works used is acceptable.

For help writing your citations go to SJSU library webpage and databases for political science, <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/az.php?s=47559>

The staff librarian for political science also has additional resources on his webpage: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/politicalscience>

### **About References**

Use either in text citations and a list of references **or** footnotes.

If a list of references is used at the end of the paper be sure to provide clear indications as to where each reference appears in the body of the text by including an in text citation: (last name, year).

If footnotes are used use the “insert footnote” function in your word processing program. Please **do not** insert them manually. Be sure to provide the complete reference the first time each reference appears in the footnotes. If you use a bibliography put your full citations in alphabetical order—**do not** number your sources.

Use the APA citation style only.

### **Grammar and Proofreading**

You will be graded for grammar, punctuation and style to the extent that it reduces your ability to express your research and analysis clearly. While grammar, punctuation and style are not the most significant part of the grade you will receive, it does affect your ability to communicate your ideas and analysis clearly and effectively. If you have any issues concerning your language skills you wish to discuss with me please visit me during office hours.

I strongly encourage you to use the Lib Guide cited above and the short guides to writing research papers at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/sitemap/>

### **Extra Credit**

You may attend the November 9 Shaping SF panel on the SF housing crisis between 7:30-9:30 at 518 Valencia. If you attend and write a typed one page essay on what you learned at the panel discussion and how it will help you with your Civic Engagement Project I will offer up to 10 extra credit points. <http://www.shapingsf.org/public-talks/index.html>

## Student Pledge

\*Please read, print your name on the blank line, sign and date it at the bottom, and turn in the following pledge sheet by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of class.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read this entire syllabus outside of class, understand what is expected of me this semester in this class, and will abide by the classroom policies. If I have any questions about what is contained in this syllabus I promise that I will first refer to this syllabus to find the answer, and if I am unable to find it, will either ask a question at the beginning of class, post my questions to the class discussion list, or visit Dr. Ovetz during office hours to discuss it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date