

# San José State University

## Political Science 15B, Section 5: Essentials of US and California Government, Tu 6:00-8:45,

### HGH 116, Spring Semester 2018

Instructor: Ben Field  
Office Location: Clark Hall 406G  
Telephone: 408-606-2060  
Email: Benjamin.Field@sjsu.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

#### Canvas and mySJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, and study guides can be found on Canvas. Go to [www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/) to sign in. You will need your 9-digit SJSU id number. I will also communicate with you using the mySJSU messaging system. Please check your mySJSU email account frequently.

#### Course Description

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). GE Area: D3, and American Institution Requirement: US2 and US3

#### Required Texts/Readings

Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry, *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* (New York: Pearson Longman) with supplement Field, *California Government and Politics* (New York: Pearson Longman). Available in digital form through the Canvas webpage for this class.

## Expectations for the Class

Students should come to each class prepared by having done the assigned readings. You will be asked at the beginning of each class to summarize some or all of the readings. In class, each student should make regular and meaningful contributions to the discussion. If you have a question, raise your hand and the instructor will call on you. The in-class discussions and lectures will often not address the same information that is covered in the readings; nonetheless, students are responsible for knowing all materials covered in both the lectures and the readings. Questions about the readings and lectures are welcome at any time; there will always be time for questions, comments, and discussion at the end of class as well.

## Attendance

Every lecture covers material that will appear on exams. If you miss class, you are still responsible for any lecture material that you missed. It is every student's responsibility to maintain excellent class attendance and to keep up with each class lecture.

## Electronic Devices

Turn off your cell phone and put it away when you come to class. Do not answer phone calls in class. Do not send, receive, or read messages in class. Do not leave the room to use your cell phone. Do not record, transmit, or broadcast the lectures in any way.

## Examinations, Assignments, other Requirements, and Grading Policy

Quizzes: Students will take a section quiz on-line after each section of the readings for each class. The quizzes will be available two weeks before the readings are to be completed. The quizzes for each class will be due at 5:30 PM before each class. The final grade for the quizzes will be based on the percentage of correct answers on all of the quizzes for the semester.

Midterm: A one hour, multiple choice examination based on the lectures, discussions, and readings from the first half of the class. **Students must bring the correct green scantron sheet, Form 882-E, to the midterm.**

### Research Paper and Bibliography:

- 1) A bibliography in proper form listing all sources that inform your paper. Sources in your bibliography must be published books, peer reviewed articles or government studies in hard copy form. Websites (e.g. Wikipedia) cannot be cited. The bibliography, which is due several weeks before the paper and is worth up to 20 points, must identify your paper topic at the top of the page. It should cite no fewer than six substantial sources, not including the course readings. **Submit your bibliography through Canvas by 5:30 PM the day it is due.** Bibliographies submitted after that time will be marked late. You do not need to turn in a hard copy.

2) You will write a research paper on a public policy question list below. The paper is designed to teach you scholarly research methodology, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills. It should meet the following requirements:

- It should be five pages long, not including the bibliography, which should be resubmitted with the paper.
- All factual assertions must be properly footnoted.
- It must be written with correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- It should be carefully proofread.
- The structure of the paper should be as follows:
  - Introduction of the policy question you have chosen and brief description of its current public policy significance
  - Description of the arguments on either side of your public policy question
  - Conclusion stating which arguments prevail and why
- Do not write in the first person. The word “I” has no place in your essay.
- Avoid the phrase “many people believe.” Instead identify the supporters and opponents of the arguments you discuss.
- **Submit your paper through Canvas by 5:30 PM the day it is due.** Papers submitted after that time will be marked late. Check to make sure that none of your paper is copied without attribution. You do not need to turn in a hard copy.
- Topics for Papers:
  1. Should judges be judicial activists?
  2. To what extent does elite theory explain congressional actions?
  3. What are the most important factors in presidential elections?
  4. Does gerrymandering violate the Constitution?
  5. Does affirmative action violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution?
  6. Does the Constitution give Congress the power to oversee drone strikes?
  7. Does NSA surveillance of citizens' electronic communications violate the 4th Amendment of the Constitution?

The best papers will contain clear, logical writing, thorough research and probing analysis. Late papers will be accepted, but the score will be reduced 5 points for every school day they are late. All papers must be submitted to Professor Field through Canvas. Students need not turn in hard copies.

Final:

A one and a half hour, multiple choice examination based on the lectures, discussions, and readings for the entire semester, but weighted toward the lectures, discussions, and readings from later weeks. **Students must bring the correct green scantron sheet, Form 882-E, to the final.**

Student grades will be determined by the following:

Quizzes	100 points
Midterm	80 points
Term Paper and Bibliography	120 points
Final	<u>100 points</u>
Total	400 points

#### Grading of Political Science Writing

An “A” paper is clearly written and well-organized, but most important, it contains a perceptive, central argument supported by specific evidence. It demonstrates that the student has grappled with the issues raised in the reading and lecture, synthesized the material, and formulated a compelling, independent argument.

A typical “B” paper is solid work that demonstrates that the student has a good grasp of the material. It may provide a summary or reiteration of ideas and information already covered in the literature, with no evidence of independent thought or synthesis. Other “B” papers give evidence of independent thought, but do not present an argument clearly or convincingly.

A typical “C” paper provides a less thorough or accurate summary or a less thorough defense of an argument. A paper that receives a grade less than a “C” typically does not respond adequately to the assignment, and is marred by frequent errors, unclear writing, poor organization, or some combination of these problems.

Please note: NO STUDENT WILL PASS THIS CLASS WITHOUT TURNING IN THE PAPER.

Students should also note that plagiarism will be detected and will result in a failing grade for the assignment at the very least.

#### University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>.

## Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 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 internships, labs, clinical practical. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## Additional Class Notes

This is a course that covers a significant body of material in a short period of time. Every student is encouraged to participate by asking questions and actively participating in group and class discussions. Although attendance in the class is not mandatory, participation is a portion of the grading scale and it is obviously difficult to contribute if you do not attend class. Each student has intellect, experience and a personal point of view to bring into the class and the course becomes much more rewarding if you frequently participate.

Please avail yourself of the instructor to answer any questions you may have regarding the course and the context in which the subject matter is considered.

## POLS 15B, Essentials of US and California Government, Spring 2018 Course Schedule

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Jan. 30	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 1 Lecture: The Ideology of the American Revolution
Feb. 6	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 2 and 3 Lecture: Introduction to the U.S. Constitution and Federalism
Feb. 13	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 11 and 13; <i>California Government and Politics</i> , Chapter 8 Lecture: Congress
Feb. 20	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 12 and 14; <i>California Government and Politics</i> , Chapter 9 Lecture: The Presidency
Feb. 27	<b>Bibliography due 5:30 PM through Canvas</b> Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 15; <i>California Government and Politics</i> , Chapter 11 Lecture: The Courts
Mar. 6	<b>Midterm</b>
Mar. 13	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 4 Lecture: Civil Liberties and Public Policy
Mar. 20	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 5 Lecture: Civil Rights and Public Policy
Mar. 27	Spring Break
Apr. 3	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 8 and 9; Federalist 10 Lecture: Party Politics
Apr. 10	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 10 Lecture: Interest Group Politics
Apr. 17	<b>Paper due 5:30 PM through Canvas</b> Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 6 Lecture: Public Opinion and Political Action

Apr. 24	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 7; <i>California Government and Politics</i> , Chapter 7 Lecture: Mass Media and the Political Agenda
May 1	Reading: Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 18 Lecture: Foreign Policy
May 8	Reading: <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 16 and 17 Lecture: Domestic Policy
May 22, 17:15- 19:30	<b>Final Examination</b>