

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

Robert Ovetz, Ph.D.

San Jose State University

Class number: 28625

Section: 12

Spring Semester 2018

Meeting Time: Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30—11:45 am, Boccardo Business Center 4

My office hours: Thursdays 1:20-2:20 by prior appointment, Clark Hall 406J

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### **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).

### **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.

### **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 as described in the syllabus.

### **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**

Thurs., 1/25—First day of class, post your photo to the Canvas page if you have not already done so

Tues., 2/20—**Reflection paper #1**

Tues., 2/27—**Midterm 1**

Tues 3/27 & Thurs., 3/29—Spring Break

Thurs., 4/12—**Midterm 2**

Thurs., 5/10—**Reflection paper #2**

Thurs., 5/10—**Self-evaluation due**

Thurs., 5/10—Last day of class

Tues., 5/22—**Final exam, 9:45 am—12 noon**

### **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, self-evaluation, and the self-reflection assignment. 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

### Assignment

Participation self-evaluation

### Percentage

10

Reflection paper #1	20
Reflection paper #2	20
Midterm exams (highest of the 2 grades)	25
Final exam	25
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<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### Grade Checks

Due to the large number of requests for grade checks and the large class size I require that all grade checks be submitted on paper **in advance**. Please plan ahead because I cannot complete a signed grade check the same day unless it is during office hours. They can be given to me at the beginning or end of class and during office hours. If you have a form for me to sign be sure to fill it out as **completely** as possible before giving it to me. I will not complete a blank form.

### Student Evaluation/Grading Policies

- **No withdrawals (W) will be granted** except for verifiable medical reasons.
- 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.
- The **lowest** of the two midterm grades will be **dropped**. There are no make up, early, or late midterm exams even if you have an excused absence. If you miss a midterm it will be a 0 and be your lowest dropped score if you took the other midterm.
- There are no make up, early, or late final exams even if you have an excused absence. If you are **later than 10 minutes** to the exam or **miss** an exam without a **demonstrable excuse** (medical or extracurricular only) you will receive a 0.
- **No late arrivals** for the exams are allowed. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late you will not be allowed to take the exam and will receive a zero.

### Attendance and Participation Policy

Because the class is large and there is a participation grade it is imperative that you have a photo uploaded to the class page where you are listed as enrolled in the course. This will allow me to keep track of who contributed to class and on-line.

To earn full participation points you need to make a least 4 substantial contributions to class discussions. I will keep track of your contributions so it is essential that you have a photo on the class Canvas page. You may also ask a question or participate in group meetings. A “substantial contribution” is defined as doing more than just asking me to repeat something, making a random guess, making a comment clearly unrelated to the immediate line of discussion, or otherwise just taking up airtime to get your points. For example, making a connection to something being discussed, offering another perspective, questioning an assumption, making a connection to something in the readings, referencing a related item in history or the news, etc. will be considered a “substantial contribution.” To be sure you receive credit be sure to say your name after I call on you.

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 our 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.

The university attendance policy can be found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf>.

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**. **Each time** you are asked to put away your phone you will automatically have **10 points deducted** from your final participation points. On the second request you may be asked to leave the class and report to the appropriate campus authority to discuss your disruptive behavior.

### **Self-Evaluation**

On the last class day please turn in a typed and stapled statement describing your participation in the class. Include a small photo of yourself on the same page. There are several important ways to participate in this class. One page maximum.

Among the forms of participation acceptable for the class are:

- in-class questions and contributions to the class discussions (be sure to note which topics discussed and the days)
- contributions to small group discussions (be sure to note which topic your small group was asked to discuss and the days)
- meeting me at office hours with topical class questions (be sure to note the date and time)
- going to the tutoring or writing center for this class (include name of tutor, date, time, and topics discussed)
- study groups (name the other students and the date, time, and topics studied)
- civic and political involvement other than required in this course for the Self-Reflection assignment (for example: participating student government, attending & participating in campus or community political groups, interning for local official, etc.)

Please note that asking for a quick grade check will not be counted.

Keep notes on what contributions you make in class and the dates when you visited me at office hours, and meet with other students in the class in study groups. You will need these for your self-evaluation.

Please note that trying to meet with me at the end of the semester to make up for a lack of participation during the entire semester will not be counted unless you have a substantive issue to discuss.

### **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 dispose of your trash and recycling in the available campus containers.

### **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.

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

Field, Mona (2012) *California Government and Politics Today*, Pearson, NY, 14th edition, 160 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0205251780. (order on-line)

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. There will be questions related to pressing current political events on the exams.

Other resource: The CQ Researcher and ABC-CLIO American Government databases available through the

SJSU library website are good reference resources for topics covered in this class.

### 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	Week	Dates	Katznelson Readings	Other Readings & Videos
<b>Democracy</b>	Week 1	1/25	ch. 1, 2, & 5	
	Week 2	1/30		
<b>Declaration of Independence &amp; the US Constitution</b>	Week 2	2/1		<b>Field</b> , ch. 1 & 2; <b>Parenti</b> , ch. 2; , <b>Madison</b> , “Federalist Paper #10”; Declaration of Independence; and US Constitution
	Week 3	2/6 & 2/8		<b>Note:</b> Print out & bring a copy of the entire Declaration of Independence & Constitution with you to class.
<b>Federalism</b>	Week 4	2/13 & 2/15	ch. 3	Go to <a href="https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/">https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/</a> 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
	Week 5	2/20 & 2/22		Watch <b>PBS Now</b> , “Emission impossible”: <a href="http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/328/">http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/328/</a>
<b>Midterm 1</b>	Week 6	2/27		
<b>Article I: Congress</b>	Week 6	3/1	ch. 7, 9, & 10	<b>Field</b> , ch. 8 & 13
	Week 7	3/6 & 3/8		
	Week 8	3/13 & 3/15		<b>60 Minutes</b> “Under the influence”: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUVoYMxlCJk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUVoYMxlCJk</a>
<b>Article II: The Executive Branch &amp; the President</b>	Week 9	3/20 & 3/22	ch. 6 & 11	<b>Field</b> , ch. 9

	Week 10	4/3 & 4/5		
	Week 11	4/10		
<b>Midterm 2</b>	Week 11	4/12		
<b>Article III: The Judiciary</b>	Week 12	4/17 & 4/19	ch. 8	<b>Field</b> , ch. 11; and <b>Brennan</b> , “Judicial Interpretation”
	Week 13	4/24 & 4/26		Watch “Soul of Justice: Thelton Henderson's American Journey” on library database Kanopy Streaming
<b>Corporations &amp; Money in Politics</b>	Week 15	5/1 & 5/3	ch. 4	<b>Field</b> , ch. 5
	Week 16	5/8 & 5/10		Watch <b>PBS Now</b> “Votes for Sale”: <a href="http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/242/">http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/242/</a>
<b>Final Exam</b>	Final exam, Tues., 5/22, 9:45—noon			

### Exams

There will be two mid-terms and a final exam. All 3 exams are multiple choice are based on the assigned readings and class lecture and discussion. You must bring your own T&E 200 scantron sheet (available in the bookstore), 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. The scantrons are not marked but we will review select questions after they are returned to you.

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.

Please note that I do not do in or out of class exam reviews. You should find fellow students or a tutor to do them with. I can help you find the answer to questions that you have tried to answer.

### Reflection Papers

There will be two reflection papers due. The assignments are described on the “Reflection Paper” assignment sheet found on the Canvas page.

### 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 research and writing 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/>

I do not proofread student papers before they are turned in. I can help you with limited specific selections of text. For help I encourage you to go to the campus writing center for help with your writing and the campus reference librarians for help with research and citations.



## 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 2nd 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