

San José State University
Department of Political Science

Pols 15B-03: Essentials of U.S. and California Government,
Spring 2018

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Sabrina Pinnell
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Office Hours:	M 9-10, 2-2:30; W 2-2:30, 4:30-5:30; additional hours by appointment
Class Days/Time:	M W 10:30-11:45
Classroom:	WSQ 207
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	AI (US2 & US3); D3

Course Format

This class is primarily lecture and in-class discussion, with occasional assignments that will be completed in class. This class also has a Supplemental Instructor who will be providing additional discussion/assistance sessions weekly for students to attend.¹ This course does use a Canvas webpage for announcements, uploading handouts and reserve readings. Students should have access to a computer capable of accessing this page.

Supplemental Instructor

Alizeh Raza (alizeh.raza@sjsu.edu) is our supplemental instructor for the class. She will be having weekly sessions (Tuesdays 1-2 p.m. in SSC 601; Thursdays 12-1 p.m. in SSC 602) for students to go into class material in more detail, as well as other activities to help you learn. Alizeh will also be attending class and is another resource for questions you may have about the class material and requirements.

1. As you will see under course requirements, students must attend one of these sessions over the course of the semester; others are optional.

Course Description

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 (D3).

From the SJSU GE Guidelines (S14-5): 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 principles, 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.

Department of Political Science Learning Outcomes

The Political Science Department has the following objectives for its students:

- 1) Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- 2) Application: Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
- 3) Disciplinary methods: Students 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.
- 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.
- 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.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

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

1. **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.

2. **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.
3. **GELO 3 (D3):** Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.
4. **GELO 4 (D3):** Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.
5. **GELO 5 (D3):** Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.
6. **GELO 6 (D3):** Apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national and international levels.

The US2 and US3 requirements will be fulfilled primarily through three two-part exams and a final exam; the D3 requirements will be fulfilled primarily through participation activities and sections of the three two-part exams.

Students are expected to complete the writing equivalent of ~1500 words or more in this class. This will be accomplished through three in-class essays attached to Exams 1-3.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

The major texts for this course are Neal Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi and Margaret Weir et al.'s We The People, 11th Core Edition (W.W. Norton, 2017; ISBN: 978-0-393-28363-1) ² and the League of Women Voters of California, Guide to California Government, 16th edition (Sacramento, CA: League of Women Voters Education Fund, 2016; ISBN: 978-0-9632465-2-3).³ Both of these texts are available through Spartan Bookstore.

Other Readings

Additional readings are also listed in the Schedule. There are some reserve readings on the Canvas webpage for the class under "Files." *All readings for this course are required readings, unless labeled "recommended" in the Schedule.*

Course Requirements and Assignments

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](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

2. We The People will be listed as WTP in the Schedule for readings.

3. Guide to California Government will be listed as LWV in the Schedule for readings.

This course includes the following methods to evaluate student performance:

Participation	7 x 10 points
Exams 1-3	3 x 100 points
Final Exam	<u>100 points</u>
	470 points

Participation: At various times over the semester, students will be doing work in class, such as viewing videos, taking notes on them and discussing them, group exercises and like activities. There will be six of these in class at various times (see Schedule for approximate dates), with assignments begun in one class session and completed in the next. A seventh assignment will be started out of class (the Voting Game) and then completed in class. Students should plan on regular attendance to get the material to complete the assignments. If you are not in class on a day an assignment is completed, you must check the Canvas page for the handout and material to complete it, and then plan on attending the next class to finish and hand it in. Each of these assignments is worth 10 points. While attendance cannot be used as a basis for grading in this class, please be aware that if you do not attend class, you may miss completing these specific assignments for your course grade.⁴

Exams: Exams for this section of Pols 15B will be in-class, and contain a combination of multiple-choice questions and an essay section, totaling 100 points each. See Schedule for dates. The exam will take up the entire class period for the scheduled day.

The first part of the test is a multiple-choice section worth 50 points, with 25 questions that you will answer on a Scantron 882-E form. You will have a choice of four options for each question. Please make sure to bring a pencil for this section of the test.

The second part is an essay question worth 50 points, which you will answer in 5-7 pages (estimate based on single-spaced, single-sided) in a small greenbook. Please see the handout appended to this syllabus for format. We will also go over requirements in class before Exam 1.

While you will receive a study guide of terms and concepts to help you study before the exam, the exams will be closed-book, closed-note. There will be no questions given out in advance. Due to the classroom setting, you are permitted to bring a simple clipboard (not a notebook) to serve as a writing surface for both sections of the test.

Students are expected to take exams as scheduled; they will not be given in advance of their scheduled dates and make-ups will only be permitted due to a verified emergency. Makeups must occur within a one-week time period from the scheduled date. Contact the instructor ASAP if you miss a test to schedule a makeup.

Final Exam: The final exam is on May 21, 2018 from 9:45-12:00. It is comprehensive for the course and will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions worth two points each for a total of 100. There will be questions from all previously tested sections of the class, as well as any material covered after Exam 3. You will need to bring a Scantron 882-E form to complete this exam. This exam is closed-book and closed-note. The exam will not be given in advance for any reason; please make travel arrangements accordingly. Make-ups are only permitted for emergencies and will be held after the scheduled exam time on the official makeup day.

4. If you miss class due to a verifiable emergency, the lack of the assignment may be excused from your course grade. Please note that travel or athletic activities may not excuse you from these; you should talk to the instructor.

Grading Policy

This course is based upon a point system, with percentage of points earned on assignments and exams corresponding to the following grades: 97-100% is an A+, 93-96% is an A, 90-92% is an A-, 87-89% is a B+, 83-86% is a B, 80-82% is a B-, etc. Keep track of your points over the course of the semester as noted above, and you should have an idea how you stand in the class.

Note that “All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades.” See [University Policy F13-1](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf> for more details.

Extra Credit Policy

An additional ten points of credit outside of the required points can be earned by attending two of the weekly SI sections with Alizeh Raza over the course of the semester, time and location TBA.

Note that per Academic Senate policy (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S09-7.pdf>), any extra credit opportunities must be extended to all students in the class; this means that individual appeals for extra credit may not be considered apart from the entire class.

Classroom Protocol

This is a course that will consider several controversial issues including diversity and minority rights in American politics, immigration and its effects on American politics and culture and the nature of citizenship. Students are expected to come prepared to class discussions and conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner, particularly to their fellow students. With that in mind, students should avoid any colloquial language, characterizations, remarks or outright slurs that pertain to groups in the abstract or to their fellow students in particular. Any remarks made in ways that attack a student's personality or physical characteristics that have nothing to do with his or her actual points in a discussion will not be tolerated. Students may be asked to leave if this occurs.

WSQ 207 is not a good classroom for laptops; my recommendation is to take written notes. If you use a laptops for the purpose of taking notes, you are expected to stop typing and participate in discussions when they occur. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off or at least silenced for the duration of class.

Recordings of lectures for personal use outside of class is permitted, provided the instructor is consulted and approves such recording. Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material. If you feel you may need to do this, please contact Dr. Pinnell and clear this with her at the start of the course.

Policy on Submitting Written Work in this Course

Students at the college level are expected to submit written work that fits the grammatical, stylistic and citation expectations for college-level work in English. All written assignments in this course are therefore graded in two ways: both in terms of content (information in terms of logic, quality of evidence, etc.) and in terms of writing. Given the in-class nature of class essays, writing rules such as citation and spelling may be relaxed, and the bulk of the grade will be for content. But organization of your points in the essay, use of introduction/conclusion and ability to make an argument may be factors in grading. If you are at all uncomfortable with writing at the college level, you need to take steps to rectify this. You may want to see the instructor after exams are handed back if comments indicate that there are specific errors in argument or writing.

Collaboration and Source Use Policy

The University has a clear policy on Academic Integrity, but I feel that some issues need to be made more explicit within the body of this syllabus.

Per the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy, you may not submit work done in another course, in whole or in part, for evaluation in this course without prior instructor approval. This includes your own writing for another course – that is actually a form of plagiarism as well as cheating.

Collaboration in preparing for exams such as sharing notes before exams and group study is encouraged, but keep in mind that there may be more than one answer to an exam question.

If there are issues with source use or possible cheating, it is the policy of SJSU for the instructor to have a face-to-face meeting with a student to clarify the issue and particulars before any decisions are made about possible sanctions. Serious infractions must be reported to the University per the Academic Integrity Policy for recording purposes, and possible administrative action.

To sum up – the University is serious about cheating and plagiarism, and so is your instructor. If you are concerned about how to use material for exams, come to office hours or consult with the SI.

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 Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>. Please peruse these policies at the link, which cover academic integrity, religious holidays and recording information in class.

Disclaimer

All information in this syllabus, including due dates for evaluation instruments such as exams or papers may be subject to change with fair notice by the instructor, the Department of Political Science or San Jose State University.

Pols 15B: Course Schedule

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/24	<u>Course Introduction</u>
2-4	1/29-2/5	<u>Constitution and Federalism</u> WTP, Chs. 2-3
4-5	2/5-2/12	<u>Civil Liberties and Rights</u> WTP, Chs. 4-5 Participation Activity 1: Government action and civil rights
6	2/19	Exam 1 in class
5-7	2/14-2/28	<u>Legislative and Judicial Branches</u> WTP, Chs. 12, 15 LWV, Chs. 4, 6 Participation Activity 2: <u>One Nation Under Law</u> (film), discussion
7-10	2/28-3/14	<u>Executive Branch, Bureaucracy, Budget Politics</u> WTP, Chs. 13-14 LWV, Chs. 5, 10 (pp. 143-158) Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Policy Basics: Introduction to the Federal Budget Process," 17 February 2016 (https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/3-7-03bud.pdf) (reserve reading on Canvas under "Files"). Participation Activity 3: Bureaucratic decision making
11	3/21	Exam 2 in class (please note the date!)
	3/26-3/30	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
10-12	4/2-4/9	<u>Public Opinion and Media</u> WTP, Chs. 1, 6, 7 Participation Activity 4: Media and framing comparison
12-14	4/11-4/23	<u>Elections and Political Parties</u> WTP, Chs. 8-10 LWV, Chs. 1-3

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Participation Activity 5: Voting game
	4/30	Exam 3 – In class
15-16	4/25-5/7	<u>Interest Groups, Mobilization and Campaign Finance</u> WTP, Ch. 11 Participation Activity 6: “The Cost of Campaigns” (film), discussion
16-17	5/9-5/14	<u>Local Government</u> LWV, Chs. 7-9 Participation Activity 7: “Proposition 13: Mad as Hell” (film), discussion
Final Exam	5/21	9:45-12:00 (Please note date and time!)

Exams 1-3: Information for Part II (Essay)

As part of Exams 1-3, you will need to draft an essay of 5-7 pages in a small greenbook to answer one of two question possibilities given to you on the exam. Question choices will not be given in advance; you will need to prepare for writing this essay by studying the terms and concepts provided on the study guides before the test, as with Part I. You will have the entire class period to take each exam, so this will give you time to take the various steps in creating your essay.

Essays during exams are not like essays written outside of class. You will need to set aside time during the exam period to think over and outline your answer before you write. You may want to use the exam form or the inside page of your greenbook to make notes and outline your answer before you begin; starting an essay without organizing your points may lead to a poor result. Each essay answer will have both informational components and an overall argument, so you need to know what your answers will be before you compose the essay.

A proper exam essay has much the same organizational format as an out-of-class essay:

- 1) An *introduction* paragraph with a thesis for your answer, and a brief roadmap of the points you are going to use to back up your thesis. In short, how you are planning to answer the essay question.
- 2) A *body* of points that provide support for your thesis, with information provided as needed. You will not need to cite for these facts in an exam essay, but you may want to note specific authors if they provided ideas or information (“As Jefferson noted in the Declaration of Independence...”). The body must cover all parts of the question in terms of required information or argument. But it is not an outline or set of bullet points; like a regular out-of-class essay, you should write these points as paragraphs.
- 3) A *conclusion* that briefly summarizes your argument and verifies you answered the question. You cannot leave the essay with the last body paragraph; you must finish it.

The 5-7 page requirement for the exam is based on the idea that you will need at least five pages (roughly one per paragraph, if single-sided pages and single-spaced) to compose your essay, if you have one introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs and a conclusion. Obviously, you might go over this; but try to keep your argument organized to seven pages.

Grading of this essay will be based on a combination of content and writing, as outlined below.

Content: (40 points)

The bulk of the essay grade is based on whether or not you answered the question as given in the exam, and made a sufficiently good argument. Take the following example:

“The Declaration of Independence asserts that a major purpose of government is to protect the individual rights of citizens; it is founded for this purpose. But if government impinges on the rights of citizens after its creation, what should citizens do, according to the Declaration? Is this position a reasonable one in today’s America? Give information from the document and the class material where necessary.”

This question gives you both a clue as to what information you need to give as well as the argument you’re going to make. You’ll need to know enough about the Declaration from the reading and lecture to give the foundations on individual rights and the relationship between government and the public. But you’ll also need to give some of your own opinion as to whether the Declaration’s argument on revolt is feasible in the current American era if you object to the

government's powers over your rights, and defend your position with information as well. (Keep in mind this document backed a revolution – do we have other options today?)

The forty points for content will therefore focus upon:

- Having a clear thesis, preferably at the start, for your argument;
- Answering all parts of the question – informational and argument;
- Developing all parts of the roadmap you made at the start, in terms of information and argument.

This should bring home the necessity of the introduction and conclusion; you're using these to verify that you have an answer, and that you are covering the answer. But please note that just providing correct information, without a clear argument that carries through the essay, will earn you a 33 at best, or a middle-range B. Leaving the thesis until the end could mean a higher B, but not an A. You need to organize your thoughts before you write.

Writing: (10 points)

Roughly 20% of your essay grade is based on writing, although the rules for in-class essays are clearly different than for out-of-class ones. You will not have an opportunity to do multiple drafts for this essay, and tools like spell check and grammar check are not available. Also, not everyone is a native English speaker. With that in mind, here are the concerns that could lower your grade in this part of the essay:

- Lack of introduction or conclusion. Just answering the points of the question, one at a time, is not an essay.
- Lack of organization. This is particularly evident when the essay is one large paragraph. Organize before you write, and split up your points into paragraphs.
- Answering the essay in bullet points or as an outline. That is not essay format.

Other writing issues such as spelling, verb tense/agreement, and punctuation will not be as important in grading, given that this an extemporaneous answer and you just received the question. Citations are not necessary. Clear, concise points with a few writing errors will still get you a high writing grade.

Final Points

As noted above, you are not getting these questions in advance. There will be no exceptions to this rule. If you feel that you will need extra time for this exam format due to disability, you need to set up accommodations with AEC as soon as possible. Sudden disability due to injury or illness may require accommodations in the testing room, but cannot be dealt with if you do not let the instructor know in advance; you cannot expect these on the test day with no notice.⁵ International students who feel less comfortable with English may want to meet with the instructor to discuss concerns, but should plan on composing the essays in English to the best of their ability. This is not a writing class, but you are expected to satisfy some parts of the class requirements in writing; use this class as a means to master a form of writing that you need to know for other courses, particularly in the humanities and social sciences.

5. Example: Showing up with a broken arm on test day does not mean you get to write the essay on your computer. The instructor can bring in a clean computer for you to write on, but only if you contact her in advance.