

San José State University
Political Science
POLS 15 Section 07 Fall 2019

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Kristina Mitchell
Office Location:	Clark Hall 404B
Telephone:	408-924-6424 (email is best!)
Email:	Kristina.mitchell@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 2:30-4:30 (please let me know you're coming, as I often work from other locations)
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays 4:30-7:15
Classroom:	Hugh Gillis Hall 116

Course Description (Required)

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

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) (Required)

Course and GE Learning Objectives (CLOs and GELOs):

Upon successful completion of this GE 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 government, the links between the people and government, and the operations of California government. (assessed by Exam 1)

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. (Assessed by service learning project)

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

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. (Assessed by Exam 2)

GELO 5 (D3): Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues. (Assessed by Exam 3)

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

Textbook

Gateways to Democracy 3rd Edition – ISBN 9781285858548

Renée B. van Vechten (vV), *California Politics: A Primer* 4th Edition, CQ Press (ISBN-13: 978- 1-4833-7559-5 for the newest version; ISBN-13: 978-1-4833-4013-5 for the previous)

Course Requirements and Assignments (Required)

Exams

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. All exams are open notes, but NOT open book or open internet/phone. Your two highest exam scores will be used to calculate your grade (one exam score is dropped), but you should include in your plans that you are taking all three exams. There are no makeup exams for any reason whatsoever. Even though you should plan to take all three exams, including the comprehensive final, the two highest exam scores will be used to calculate your grade even if you've earned a zero on an exam.

Service Learning Project

The week of November 5, you will present to the class on a service learning project you have undertaken over the course of the semester. You have from today until the presentations to engage in a local political activity. Ideas for local activities you can participate in for service learning:

- Attend a city council meeting
- Attend a school board meeting
- Go to a local Democrat or Republican party meeting or event
- Track a piece of legislation in the California state legislature (check their website for info. Note, you do not need to drive to Sacramento to track legislation!)
- Find a local nonprofit organization. Volunteer or attend a board meeting.
- Register to vote
- Visit the mayor's office
- Have a meeting with your local state representative or senator. Tell her or him your opinion on a political issue.
- Call your senators and congressperson to give your opinion on a political issue.
- Watch a court case

If you have an idea that is not listed above, please email me for approval. You will create a power point presentation and speak to the class for about 10 minutes (please note: we may adjust this time length based on the number of students in class. Be prepared for a class announcement to discuss mid-semester). In your presentation you will 1) describe your service learning project activity, 2) explain how it relates to the concepts we have learned in class so far, 3) offer your insight into how it made you a more engaged political citizen. You must ALSO submit a 400-500 word essay outlining those same three things, due at the end of class November 5th.

Final Paper

Your final paper must be at least 1200 words (about 5 pages double spaced). You will find a current event in the U.S. or California and write a paper that connects that event to the concepts you have learned in this course. There will be a MINIMAL amount of class time in the last week devoted to completing those papers, but you MUST work on your paper outside of class to complete it. It is due by the end of class on December 3rd. More information about the specifics of the paper will be provided in class.

Grade Distribution

The grading breakdown for the course assignments is as follows:

- Service Learning Project Essay – 15%
- Service Learning Project Presentation – 15%
- Final Paper – 30%
- Exams – 40% (20% each)

You can use this grade distribution to calculate what is possible for you based on your grades on assignments. Please note the weighting of each assignment and keep it in mind as you complete your work.

Final Grade Determination

97 & above: A plus

92-96: A

90-91: A minus

87-89: B plus

82-86: B

80-81: B minus

77-79: C plus

72-76: C

70-71: C minus

67-69: D plus

62-66: D

60-61: D minus

59.99 & below: F

I do not have a policy of rounding grades. Rounding and curving decisions are made by the professor after all final grades are calculated. Even an 89.999 can be considered a B plus. Grades are not assigned based on individual need.

- Do not contact me with a question or request for your final grade to be rounded, curved, or increased.
- Do not contact me asking for extra credit that has not been specifically offered to the whole class via email announcement.

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 three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Classroom Protocol

Course Rules

1. Always maintain professional and respectful language, in class, in emails and in your coursework.
2. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other forms of bigotry are not acceptable in this class.
3. You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Canvas every day to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily. Course rules, schedule, and day-to-day are subject to change, please pay close attention to course announcements.
4. Late work will not be accepted for any reason. To be clear, late work will not be accepted for any reason whatsoever.
5. Students may not print, save, photograph, or make any record of graded content in this course.

Professionalism

Here is a quick-start on professionalism in your communication with your professors:

- Don't ask a question that you could have answered yourself. Read all information and instructions in Canvas before you send an email.
 - Use an appropriate Subject Line that identifies yourself and your concern (don't just say, "HELP")
 - Address the recipient by his or her professional title, such as Professor, Dr., Mr., or Ms. (NOT Mrs. or Miss unless instructed otherwise)
 - Your first sentence should introduce yourself and include your course and section number. • Be specific about what your request is. Demonstrate that you have read and understood course information and instructions.
 - Use proper grammar and spelling. Punctuate and capitalize. Proofread.
 - Allow 24 hours for a response to your email during the week. Do not expect email responses on weekends. Do not send multiple emails on the same topic within a 24 hour period without waiting for a response.
- If you send an email that does not follow these guidelines, don't be surprised if you get a response that states, "Please revisit the Professionalism section of your course home page and email again."

University Policies (Required)

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> Please be sure to go over these policies..

Course Schedule

Remember: Late work will not be accepted for any reason.

Week 1 – August 27th

Introduction

Ch 1-2

Week 2 – September 3

Democracy
Ch 4-5

Week 3 – Sept 10
Legislative Branch
Ch 12

Week 4 – Sept 17
Judicial Branch
Ch 15

Week 5 – Sept 24
Executive Branch
Ch 13-14
Exam Review

Week 6 – Oct 1
Exam 1

Week 7 – Oct 8
Campaigns & Elections
Ch 10

Week 8 – Oct 15
Public Opinion
Ch 6

Week 9 – Oct 22
Political Parties
Ch 9
Exam Review

Week 10 – Oct 29
Exam 2

Week 11 – Nov 5
Class presentations on Service Learning
Service Learning Project due

Week 12 – Nov 12
Economic Policy
Ch 16

Week 13 – Nov 19
Social Policy
Ch 16

Week 14 – Nov 26
No class. Thanksgiving week.

Week 15 – Dec 3
Paper due December 3
Final Exam Review

Week 16 – Dec 10
Final Exam (date and time TBA)