



San José State University
Department of Political Science
POLS 15 Sec. 09: *Essentials of U.S. and California Government*
Spring 2022

Instructor: Joseph Bergee
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Class days/time: Monday 6pm-8:45pm
Class Zoom Link (1/31-2/7): <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/83237161307?pwd=WEJNbEMzdIFvMDFqTG85aUhhZEJ6QT09#success>
Password: 264364

Classroom location: DMH 150
GE/SJSU Studies Category: US2, US3, D3
Office Hours: Mondays 4:30pm-5:30pm (on Zoom until February 14th).
Zoom Office Hours Link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/8428586814>

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.

In this course we will learn about structures and systems of the U.S. and California governments, their historical development and context in which they were formed, discuss the key components of American politics and how they influence policy issues, and debate the current state of our nation's politics.

Throughout this course, we will be discussing many topics and current events concerning American politics, so it is important that you stay up-to-date with state, national and international events.

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements:

In accordance with SJSU policy, “[s]uccess 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, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Course Format:

Per the University announcement that the first three weeks of this semester will be online, our first two class meetings (January 31st and February 7th) will be held online via the above Zoom link for the class. This course will be with **in-person instruction starting February 14th**.* We will meet in-person once a week at the designated class time. Readings and assignments will be posted on the course [Canvas page](#) unless directed. All assignments, including quizzes, discussion boards, the midterm, short essays, and final essay will be submitted for grading through our course Canvas page. Office hours will be held in person, but can be scheduled online if needed.

Attendance: While attendance in-class itself is not graded or monitored, there is going to be material in lecture, not presented in the assigned texts, that will be covered on assignments. Further, our in-class meetings are meant to facilitate lively-discussion and provide an opportunity to ask questions about the material, raise topics for discussion, and engage in review for assignments.

Technology in the classroom:

Online: When in class via Zoom, please have your cameras on throughout. Please have your microphone on mute unless you wish to speak. You may use the chat function if you have background noise that would make hearing you difficult, but I highly encourage the use of audible discussion via the microphone function as if we were in person. If you would like to make a comment, ask a question, or respond to anything being said, you may simply do so freely, unless doing so would interrupt another speaker; if someone else is speaking, use the “raise hand” button to indicate you wish to speak next.

In-Person: You may use your laptop/tablet/phone to take notes, look at text-book, or look up information for discussion, however, this should be the extent to your activity on your device. Activity beyond the purpose of the class will not only prove distracting to yourself but to your fellow classmates as well. During small-group assignments that may be assigned in class, you may use your technology to access reading assignments, look up relevant information online, etc.

Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material: Consistent with SJSU policy, because course material is my intellectual property, recording in this class is allowed only with my written permission, and will be granted only on a class-by-class basis if the student justifies

the need to record the lectures. Similarly, students must obtain written permission from any guest speaker and every class member in order to record presentations or class discussions.

*We will transition to in-person on this date unless University extends online deadline.

Contacting Me:

I will be available through a number of different channels. The best method will be through Canvas Inbox or via email at joseph.bergee@sjsu.edu. I will always do my best to respond promptly. During the week I will usually respond within 24 hours, though often much quicker than that. When you send me an email, please put your class section information (eg. 'POLS15 Sec. #09 @ 6:00pm') in the Subject line. You may also leave me a voice mail at the number listed above, though I may be slower in responding via phone.

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 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.

Students' achievement of these learning outcomes will be assessed as follows:

GE Student Learning Outcome	Assessment
GELO 1	Quizzes, Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Essay, Discussion Boards, and Two Short Essays
GELO 2	Quizzes, Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Essay, and Two Short Essays
GELO 3	Reading Quizzes, Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Essay, and Two Short Essays
GELO 4	Quizzes, Final Essay and Two Short Essays
GELO 5	Discussion Boards, Final Essay and Two Short Essays
GELO 6	Final Essay
GE Writing Requirement (1,500 words)	Discussion Boards, Midterm, Final Essay, and Two Short Essays

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes (PSPLOs):

Successful completion of this course satisfies the following Political Science Program Learning Outcomes:

- Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- Application and Disciplinary Methods: Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
- 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.
- 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.

Required Textbooks:*

Please obtain the following, both of which should be available from the SJSU bookstore and/or available for purchase online:

- *American Government and Politics Today* by Barbara Bardes, Mack Shelley II, and Steffen Schmidt (Brief). Either the 10th or 11th edition is fine. (10th edition: ISBN-13: 9781337559706; 11th edition looseleaf: ISBN-13: 9780357459133; 11th edition paperback: ISBN-13: 9780357459065.)
- *California Politics: A Primer*, 6th edition, by Renee B. Van Vechten: CQ Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-1544388670

Other brief readings and videos may be assigned throughout the course; links will be provided.

*As shown in Course Schedule, you will need at least the first text for our Week 2 readings.

Library Liaison:

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help learning using the library’s online resources for research:

Paul Kauppila
 University Librarian (Political Science Liaison)
 408.808.2042
Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu

Grading Breakdown:

Assignment	Point Value
Reading Quizzes	20
Discussion Boards	30
Short Essays (2)	40 (20 each)
Midterm	50
Final Essay	60
Total Points Possible:	200

Grading Scale:

A plus	97 to 100 percent	193 to 200 points
A	92 to 96 percent	183 to 192 points
A minus	90 to 91 percent	179 to 182 points
B plus	87 to 90 percent	173 to 179 points
B	82 to 86 percent	163 to 172 points
B minus	80 to 81 percent	160 to 162 points
C plus	77 to 80 percent	153 to 160 points
C	72 to 76 percent	143 to 152 points
C minus	70 to 71 percent	140 to 142 points
D plus	67 to 70 percent	133 to 140 points
D	62 to 66 percent	123 to 132 points
D minus	60 to 61 percent	120 to 124 points

Assignments:*

Reading Quizzes: There is a total of 4 (four) reading quizzes (each worth 5 points) to complete, each one will be given in 4 designated weeks throughout the quarter (as shown in “Course Schedule” below). You will submit them via our Canvas course page under “Quizzes.” The quizzes will be due by Thursday night at 11:59pm on the designated weeks.

Discussion Boards: There is a total of 6 (six) discussion boards to participate in throughout the course. They will be posted on alternating weeks with the reading quizzes, i.e. you will not have to complete a reading quiz AND a discussion board in the same week. A topic of discussion will be posted on Canvas, and you will each post a comment, question, argument, etc. under that post. You may create your own thread of response or respond directly to your fellow classmates. You may also post more than once per discussion board. The discussion boards will be available for posting no later than Tuesday morning at 10:00am on designated weeks; the discussion boards will be due by Sunday night at 11:59pm on the designated weeks. (Thus, you will have from 10am on Tuesday to 11:59pm on Sunday to post on the discussion board).

Midterm: The midterm will cover the material covered in the first half of the class (Week 1 – Week 9). This is a “take-home” exam that you will complete on Canvas on our course page. You will have from 9:00:am on Tuesday, March 29th to 9:00am on Thursday March 31st, to take the exam. We will spend time during our previous class session to do midterm review (Monday March 28th). The midterm will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank,

and one essay question. Possible prompts for the essay question will be provided before the exam.

Two Short Essays: There are two short (1-2 pages) essays to complete. They will be on topics related to current events, historical events/developments, and/or material covered in class. The prompts will be posted on our Canvas course page and will be submitted via our course page as well. (Schedule for these essays are found in “Course Schedule” below).

Final Essay: This will be a 1,000-word term paper due finals week (in lieu of taking a final exam) in which you will decide between 3-4 essay questions that will be posted to our Canvas page. When prompts are posted, before Week 10, I recommend reading through each carefully and selecting the one you find the most interesting and worth exploring. The prompts will range from questions/arguments about current and historical policy issues, social issues and their relations to American politics, executive/legislative/judicial structures and functions. All prompts will allow you flexibility on focusing on either local, state, or national level, or all three. The paper will be argumentative in nature, i.e. you will take a clear position and defend it with data, facts, and arguments. If you have questions about the prompts or have smaller questions regarding your writing or argument, please feel free to contact me via email, phone, or drop by during office hours. **I am happy to review drafts or outlines of your paper, but only during office hours. Do not email me your drafts, unless we agreed prior to an office-hours meeting in-person or via Zoom.** If you cannot attend regularly scheduled office hours, email me and we can see about scheduling a time that works for both of us in-person or via Zoom.

*All assignments are going to be turned in via Canvas, do not email me any assignments as attachments.

Late Policy:

All assignments are expected to be completed and submitted by their respective due dates in order to pass the class. It is understood that life has its complications and the ability to complete assignments can be inhibited, and certain exceptions to due dates may be granted, if warranted, because of a serious illness, religious holiday, pre-approved university-sanctioned event or activity, military orders, or family emergencies. All of these can be accommodated, but **you must notify me in writing (email) before the assignment is due.** Only medical emergencies will excuse a missing assignment without pre-approval, if it is a documented. Please take care to plan ahead to ensure you are managing your time to complete this course’s assignments and readings, as well as those for your other classes. Exceptions will not be granted if you “forgot” or “ran out of time.” That being said, you are permitted to turn in late assignments, excluding Reading Quizzes and Discussion Boards, up to a certain time, but will incur a 5% decrease for an assignment grade for each day it is late.

On Writing:

Students should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count. The ability to form a coherent and concise argument is a skill worth developing for this class and beyond. Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct, which carries serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website [here](#). For assistance with writing, please see me or contact the [Writing Center](#).

All work should be original to this course and not “borrowed” from previous assignments from other classes. If you wish to build on previous work, you need to discuss this with me first during office hours.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), 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](#). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule:*

Dates	Discussion Topics/Assignment Due dates	Reading/Watching Assignments (Complete these before the scheduled class)
Week 1 January 31 st	Course Introduction; Syllabus Review Introduction to Government and Politics.	Syllabus; and full text of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Declaration of Independence; (also in textbook Appendix A) • Jefferson’s “original Rough draft” of the Declaration of Independence. And watch this video . (3:49)
Week 2 February 7 th	The American Founding; The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.	Bardes, Ch 1 (until the section entitled “Political Ideologies”(pg. 13 in 10 th ed.; pg. 14 in 11 th ed.) & 2 (all), and the full texts of:

	<p>DUE by February 6th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Reading Quiz (on assigned readings for this week)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Articles of Confederation. (text starts under “Transcript”) • The U.S. Constitution; (also in textbook Appendix B) • the Bill of Rights. (text toward bottom of page)
<p>Week 3 February 14th</p>	<p>Separation of Powers and Federalism</p> <p>DUE by February 13th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board post (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 3; and full text of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Federalist Papers</i> No. 10 and No. 51 (both found in textbook, Appendix C)
<p>Week 4 February 21st</p>	<p>Legislative Branch: The US Congress</p> <p>DUE by February 20th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Reading Quiz (on assigned readings this week)</p> <p>DUE by February 25th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-First Short Essay (submitted on Canvas course page)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 9;</p>
<p>Week 5 February 28th</p>	<p>Executive Branch: The US President</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 10; and full text of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address • Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address <p>And watch this video. (5:21)</p>

<p>Week 6 March 7th</p>	<p>Judiciary Branch: The US Courts</p> <p>DUE by March 6th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 12; and familiarize yourself with these Supreme Court Cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marbury v. Madison (1803) • Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857) • Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) • Brown v. Board of Education (1954) <p>And watch this video. (4:25)</p>
<p>Week 7 March 14th</p>	<p>Civil Liberties</p> <p>DUE by March 13th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Reading Quiz (on assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 4; and full text of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick Henry – “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!” (1775) • Frederick Douglass – “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852)
<p>Week 8 March 21st</p>	<p>Civil Rights</p> <p>DUE by March 20th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Bardes, Ch. 5</p>
<p>Week 9 March 28th</p>	<p>Civil Rights (cont.); Midterm Review</p> <p><u>MIDTERM available to take on Canvas course page from 9:00am, Tuesday, March 29th to 9:00am, Thursday 9:00am, March 31st.</u></p>	<p>The full texts of the following speeches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan B. Anthony – “Woman’s Rights to the Suffrage” (1873) • Martin Luther King Jr. – “I have a Dream” (1963) • Barack Obama – Speech About Same-

		Sex Marriage Ruling (2015)
Week 10 April 4 th	Political Ideologies and Political Parties Final Essay Prompts will be posted by April 3rd and discussed in class April 4th	Bardes, Ch.1 (from section entitled “Political Ideologies” to the end of the chapter) & Ch. 7 (full)
Week 11 April 11 th	Public Opinion and the Media; Campaigns and Elections DUE by April 10th @11:59pm: -Discussion Board (on topic from assigned readings this week)	Bardes, Ch. 6 & 8
Week 12 April 18 th	Domestic Policy and Foreign Policy DUE by April 22nd @11:59pm: -Second Short Essay (submitted via Canvas course page)	Bardes, Ch. 13 & 14
Week 13 April 25 th	California Politics: Introduction and Direct Democracy	Van Vechten, Ch. 1, 2, & 3
Week 14 May 2 nd	California Politics: State Legislature, Executive Branch, and the Court System DUE by May 1st @11:59pm: -Reading Quiz (on assigned readings this week)	Van Vechten Ch. 4, 5, & 6.

<p>Week 15 May 9th</p>	<p>California Politics: Local Governments and the Budget Process</p> <p>DUE by May 8th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Van Vechten Ch. 7 & 8</p>
<p>Week 16 May 16th</p>	<p>California Politics: Political Parties, Elections, Campaigns and Political Engagement</p> <p>DUE by May 15th @11:59pm:</p> <p>-Discussion Board (on topic from assigned readings this week)</p>	<p>Van Vechten Ch. 9 & 10.</p>
<p>Finals Week May 18th – May 25th</p>	<p>DUE by May 23rd @7:30pm:</p> <p>-Final Essay (submitted via Canvas course page)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

***I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus throughout the quarter where necessary.**