

**San José State University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**Pols 15. Essentials of US and California Government**  
**Class number: Pols 15-11**  
**Section: 29235**  
**Spring 2022**

Instructor: Robert Ovetz, Ph.D.

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Office hours: Thursdays, noon to 1 in person. No appointment necessary. Other times by phone by prior appointment. Please email other suggested days and specific times Mon to Fri from 9 am to 6 pm.

Office location: Clark Hall 402D

Class days and time: every Tuesday-Thursday 10:30-11:45 am in person on campus.

Classroom: Clark Building 238

### **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, GE Area D2, 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 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.

PSPLO 3 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 4 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.

| Learning Outcomes | How the LOs Will be Assessed |  |            |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--|------------|
|                   | Quizzes                      | Local Government Observation Paper Assignment. | Final Exam |
| PSPLO 1           | √                            | √  | √          |
| PSPLO 2           | √                            | √  | √          |
| PSPLO 3           |                              | √  |            |
| PSPLO 4           |                              | √  |            |
| GELO 1            | √                            | √  | √          |
| GELO 2            | √                            | √  | √          |
| GELO 3            | √                            |  | √          |
| GELO 4            | √                            |  | √          |
| GELO 5            |                              | √  |            |
| GELO 6            | √                            | √  | √          |

**Important Dates**

Notes:

- Class meets every Tuesday
- All Short Essay in class presentations occur only during our Tuesday in class meetings

- The topic of the ‘short Essays should correspond to the topic of the presentations listed for each Tuesday below
- All Quizzes occur on Thursdays except the US & CA Judicial Branch Quiz which is on a Tuesday due to the holiday

Thursday 1/27—First day of course, complete the Syllabus Quiz, and post your photo to the Canvas page  
 Tuesday 2/15—**Democracy & Declaration of Independence Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm  
 Thursday 2/24—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 1** due in class  
 Tuesday 3/1—**US & CA Constitution & Federalism Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm  
 Tuesday 3/22—**Congress & CA Legislative Branch Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm  
 Thursday 3/24—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 2** due in class  
 Tuesday 3/29—No class, Spring break  
 Thursday 3/31—No class, Cesar Chavez Day  
 Tuesday 4/19—**US & CA Executive Branch Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm  
 Thursday 4/21—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 3** due in class  
 Tuesday 5/3—**US & CA Judicial Branch Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm  
 Thursday 5/12—Last day of the semester; **Elections & Money in Politics Quiz** due on-line by 11:59 pm  
 Tuesday 5/17—**Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 4**  
 Friday 5/20—**Final exam** (complete by 11:59 pm); the last day that late **Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4** may be turned in late by 11:59 pm

## Grading

### Grading Scale

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| A plus  | 96-100 |
| A       | 93-95  |
| A minus | 90-92  |
| B plus  | 86-89  |
| B       | 83-85  |
| B minus | 80-82  |
| C plus  | 76-79  |
| C       | 73-75  |
| C minus | 70-72  |
| D       | 60-69  |
| F       | 0-59   |

| <u>Assignment</u>                            | <u>Percentage (100 total points each)</u> |
|--|---|
| Student Learning Notes (10)                  | 20  |
| Quizzes (highest 4 of 6)                     | 20  |
| Final Exam                                   | 20  |
| Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4 | 40  |
| <hr/> <b>Total</b>                           | <b>100</b>                                |

## Student Evaluation/Grading Policies

- **No withdrawals (W) will be granted** except for verifiable medical reasons.

- 10 percent will be deducted for each **week** that the Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4 are turned in late. A period of seven days or less is considered one week. No Short Essays or paper will be accepted after the day of the final exam at 11:59 pm.
- The **lowest** quiz grade will be **dropped**.
- There are **no make up, early, or late quizzes or exam**. If you **miss** without a **demonstrable excuse** you will receive a 0. Missed quizzes or exam due to demonstrable medical, religious, or university related activities may be made up by prior arrangement only.
- The quizzes or exam must be **taken and completed** by 11:59 pm of the last day of the week they are due.
- All Student Learning Notes assignments will be given and completed in class and cannot be made up.
- Be sure to check your grades on Canvas closely. If there are any questions about specific assignments other than the final exam they must be made to me **no later than** the end of the last day of the course.
- Note that your grade in Canvas is only for the graded assignments at that point in time and are subject to change with each new graded assignment. To estimate your grade at any point during the semester use the Canvas tool to fill in grades for future assignments.
- All writing assignments must be cut and pasted into the assignment text box to be graded. Do not post a link. No assignments will be accepted by email.
- All late writing assignments may be turned in no later than the day of the Final Exam by 11:59 pm. No late assignments will be taken after that time.
- Grades will be rounded up to the next letter only when the difference is .49 or less.

### **Classroom Policy**

- No copies of the class video lectures are allowed except as an accommodation with campus documentation. University Policy S12-7, <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course.
- Surgical or N95 mask asks must be worn at **all times** covering the mouth and nose with protective fabric.
- Any act of plagiarism will result in an **automatic "F"** for the assignment.
- 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 documentation 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.
- If you expect to miss class for an extended period of time due to COVID please contact me ASAP and review the university policy to take extended leave.

### **Mask Policy**

While SJSU mask policy has been changing during the summer this class will follow the current campus requirement that a surgical or N95 mask be worn at all times. Masks must remain on at all times in class and cover the mouth and nose with protective fabric. For all of our mutual safety and well-being please adhere to this SJSU policy so we can continue to meet in person.

### **Canvas**

For help with using Canvas please see the Canvas Student Resources page at: [https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student\\_resources/](https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources/). If you need immediate help please contact the Canvas Help at the tab on the left side of the Canvas page.

## **On-Line Power and Connection Interruptions**

Due to internet service, weather, high risk fire power shutoffs and other causes, internet service may be interrupted either preventing me from launching the class Zoom office hour or completing the grading in a reasonable amount of time (usually 1 week). Because I live in a high risk fire area which may experience intentional PG&E power shut offs and I do not have a landline, I may not be able to communicate with the class sufficiently to let you know that class was cancelled for these reasons. I will do my best to inform you about possible cancellations. Please check your SJSU email in these circumstances. It may be necessary to reschedule class meetings in the event of cancellations.

## **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 books are required reading. You may purchase your own print or e-reader (if available) copies at the campus bookstore or on-line.

### US Government Book

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. You may not use older editions of the book.

### California Government Book

Field, Mona (2012) *California Government and Politics Today*, Pearson: NY, 14th edition, 160 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0205251780. You may use newer editions but not older editions of the book. If you use a newer edition be sure to match up the chapters with this edition to be sure you read the right chapters.

### Historical Documents and the Reading Packet

There is also a “Reading Packet” folder with assigned readings under Files in Canvas.

### Other Resources

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.

For more detailed background explanation of each part of the US Constitution go to <https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/>, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution> or any other reputable annotated constitution.

## **Library Liaison**

Please contact the Political Science librarian Nyle Monday to answer questions and provide help with research, citations, and other library needs. He can be reached by email at [Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu](mailto:Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu) or <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/politicalscience>

## **University Policies**

Per University Policy s16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page \(https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Office Hours

I will be available by Zoom during office hours to talk about the readings, video lectures, and the writing assignments. Office hours are also an opportunity to discuss a current event you plan to write about for your Local Government Observation Paper.

Office hours will be conducted by Zoom without reservations. I will send the invite at least an hour in advance. Click on the Zoom link to enter. If there is another student already speaking with me you will be put into the waiting room until that student is finished. Please turn on your video and mic when you enter.

If you have a scheduling conflict with my designated office hour please send me a day and time from Mon to Fri before 6 pm in which you will call me. Your request should be sent at least 24 hours in advance.

## Course Requirements

The required assignments will test your knowledge and ability to apply and assess principles and concepts of US and California government as models of representative democracy.

## Required Video Lectures

The video lectures for each of the topics of the course listed below in the Course Outline are found in the modules on the Canvas home page.

## Quizzes and Final Exam

This assignment assesses for PSPLO 1 and 2; GELO 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6

There will be six quizzes and one final exam taken on Canvas. The quizzes and exam are all multiple choice and based on the assigned readings and class lecture. The final exam is comprehensive, incorporating all previous course content. No proctoring is required.

The quizzes and final exam must be **taken and completed** by 11:59 pm of the assigned day. Be sure not to miss the quizzes and exam as **there are no make-ups** without a **demonstrable excuse** (medical, religious, or university related activities only). No quizzes or exam may be taken early. Once you start taking the quizzes or exam it cannot be paused.

Be sure to take the quizzes and exam on a computer with a stable internet connection and leave yourself sufficient time to **complete** the quizzes or exam by 11:59 pm. You do not need to use any proctoring service. **No additional time will be given** except for previously arranged university accommodations.

Beginning the next day at 12 am you may print out the quizzes or exam or save it as a pdf so you can have the questions to review later. Corrected quizzes or exam will be available for only one week after the quizzes or exam closes.

The questions will address concepts, terminology, and important events covered in class and the readings. In order to prepare for the quizzes or exam I strongly encourage you to form study groups, visit me during office hours, and use campus tutoring resources. Contact Peer Connections: [https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/resources/academic\\_resources/index.html](https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/resources/academic_resources/index.html)

## What Each Quiz and the Final Exam Cover

Quiz 1 covers Democracy & the Declaration of Independence

Quiz 2 covers US & CA Constitution & Federalism  
Quiz 3 covers US & CA Legislative Branch  
Quiz 4 covers US & CA Executive Branch  
Quiz 5 covers US & CA Judicial Branch  
Quiz 6 covers Elections & Money in Politics  
Final Exam is comprehensive

### **Local Government Observation Paper**

This assignment assesses for PSPLO 1 - 4 and GELO 1, 2, 5 and 6.

There will be a four part observation paper project. The paper addresses GELO 2 (US3) by teaching how to apply political action and collective decision making in the form of civic engagement.

The assignment is described on the “Local Government Observation Paper Assignment” assignment sheet found on the Canvas page.

Please attach a copy of the **Grade Sheet** found on the Canvas page to the end of each part of the paper. The Grade Sheet indicates the point values for each part of the paper.

### **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.

### Where to Get Help with Your Writing

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

I strongly encourage you to use the SJSU Writing Center’s Homegrown Handouts on many aspects of the writing process here: <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/handouts/>

The Writing Center, <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>, also offers up to two 45 minutes sessions per week by emailing them a request at [writingcenter@sjsu.edu](mailto:writingcenter@sjsu.edu). It is also partnered with MLK Library to offer live chat services for students who have quick writing-related questions that can be addressed in 10-15 minutes. Live chat is available during select hours and no appointment is necessary.

The reference librarians can also help with using the library databases to find your outside sources and do the APA references (remember to use the Lunsford Guide). You can email or chat live with a librarian on the website here: <https://library.sjsu.edu/ask-librarian/ask-librarian>

You may also use the Lib Guide cited above and the short guides to writing research papers at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/sitemap/>

## Course Outline

### Notes:

- The schedule is subject to change with fair notice by email or on Canvas.
- Complete the readings before the assigned class meetings.
- A blank box means that there is no assigned reading for that class.

| Week   | Dates      | Topic   | Katznelson Book | Field Book | Other Readings & Videos in Canvas Modules   |
|--------|------------|---|-----------------|------------|---|
| Week 1 | Thurs 1/27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review syllabus</li> <li>• Democracy</li> </ul>  | ch. 1           |            |   |
| Week 2 | Tues 2/1   | Democracy   | ch. 2           |            |   |
| Week 2 | Thurs 2/3  | Democracy   | ch. 5           |            |   |
| Week 3 | Tues 2/8   | Declaration of Independence   |                 |            | <b>Declaration of Independence</b>  |
| Week 3 | Thurs 2/10 | US & CA Constitution  |                 | ch. 1      | 1. <b>Madison</b> , “Federalist Paper #10”<br>2. <b>US Constitution</b>   |
| Week 4 | Tues 2/15  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US &amp; CA Constitution</li> <li>• <b>Democracy &amp; Declaration of Independence Quiz</b> due on-line by 11:59 pm</li> </ul> |                 | ch. 2      |   |
| Week 4 | Thurs 2/17 | Federalism  | ch. 3           |            |   |
| Week 5 | Tues 2/22  | Federalism  |                 |            | <b>Federal-State Relations</b> , 4/27/2018: Is partisanship putting governance at risk? by Alan Greenblatt in the CQ Researcher library database  |
| Week 5 | Thurs 2/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federalism</li> <li>• <b>Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 1</b> due in class</li> </ul>                     |                 |            |   |
| Week 6 | Tues 3/1   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congress</li> <li>• <b>US &amp; CA Constitution &amp; Federalism Quiz</b> due on-line by 11:59 pm</li> </ul>                   | ch. 7           |            | <b>ProPublica/Washington Post</b> , “How Congress Stopped Working,” <a href="https://www.propublica.org/article/how-congress-stopped-working?utm_source=pardot&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=dailynewsletter">https://www.propublica.org/article/how-congress-stopped-working?utm_source=pardot&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=dailynewsletter</a> |
| Week 6 | Thurs 3/3  | Congress  | ch. 9           |            |   |
| Week 7 | Tues 3/8   | Congress  | ch. 10          |            |   |
| Week 7 | Thurs 3/10 | Congress  |                 |            |   |



|         |                        |  |        |            |  |
|---------|------------------------|--|--------|------------|--|
| Week 8  | Tues 3/15              | CA Legislative Branch  |        | ch. 8 & 13 | Watch “ <b>The First Angry Man</b> ” in the library Kanopy database at <a href="https://sjsu.kanopy.com/">https://sjsu.kanopy.com/</a> (access through the library webpage)  |
| Week 8  | Thurs 3/17             | US Executive Branch  | ch. 6  |            |  |
| Week 9  | Tues 3/22              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Executive Branch</li> <li>• <b>Congress &amp; CA Legislative Branch Quiz</b> due on-line by 11:59 pm</li> </ul>      | ch. 11 |            |  |
| Week 9  | Thurs 3/24             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Executive Branch</li> <li>• <b>Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 2</b> due in class</li> </ul>     |        |            |  |
| Week 10 | Tues 3/29 & Thurs 3/31 | No class—Spring Break and Cesar Chavez Day   |        |            |  |
| Week 11 | Tues 4/5               | US Executive Branch  |        |            |  |
| Week 11 | Thurs 4/7              | US Executive Branch  |        |            |  |
| Week 12 | Tues 4/12              | CA Executive Branch  |        | ch. 9      |  |
| Week 12 | Thurs 4/14             | US Judicial Branch   | ch. 8  |            |  |
| Week 13 | Tues 4/19              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Judicial Branch</li> <li>• <b>US &amp; CA Executive Branch Quiz</b> due on-line by 11:59 pm</li> </ul>               |        |            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Brennan</b>, “Judicial Interpretation”</li> <li>2. Watch “<b>Soul of Justice</b>” in the library Kanopy database at <a href="https://sjsu.kanopy.com/">https://sjsu.kanopy.com/</a> (access through the library webpage)</li> </ol> |
| Week 13 | Thurs 4/21             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Judicial Branch</li> <li>• <b>Local Government Observation Paper Assignment, Part 3</b> due in class</li> </ul>      |        |            |  |
| Week 14 | Tues 4/26              | US Judicial Branch   |        |            |  |
| Week 14 | Thurs 4/28             | CA Judicial Branch   |        | ch. 11     |  |
| Week 15 | Tues 5/3               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elections &amp; Money in Politics</li> <li>• <b>US &amp; CA Judicial Branch Quiz</b> due on-line by 11:59 pm</li> </ul> | ch. 4  |            |  |
| Week 15 | Thurs 5/5              | Elections & Money in Politics  |        | ch. 5      |  |

|             |            |  |  |  |   |
|-------------|------------|--|--|--|---|
| Week 16     | Tues 5/10  | Elections & Money in Politics  |  |  | Watch “ <b>Money is Speech: A Musical History of Campaign Finance</b> ,” at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3d-bYU2cZ48">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3d-bYU2cZ48</a> |
| Week 16     | Thurs 5/12 | Last day of the semester;<br><b>Elections &amp; Money in Politics Quiz</b> due on-line by 11:59 pm   |  |  |   |
| Finals Week | Tues 5/17  | <b>Local Government Observation Paper Part 4</b> due on Canvas by 11:59 pm   |  |  |   |
| Finals Week | Fri 5/20   | <b>Final exam</b> , (comprehensive, complete by 11:59 pm); the <u>last day</u> that late <b>Local Government Observation Paper Parts 1-4</b> may be turned in late by 11:59 pm |  |  |   |