

DE ANZA COLLEGE
Spring Quarter 2024
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Office Hours: tbd

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American Government and Politics

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course. As such, we will cover a great deal of material, but will not go into the depths that are available to you through more advanced Political Science course offerings. We will lay the basic foundation for understanding the creation, development, and perpetuation of our fundamental political institutions. This will be done with an initial focus on our national government, and a subsequent focus on our state government.

At the outset we will review the historical record of the founding of the American body politic, and will quickly move to a structural (what is the government made of), functional (how does its many parts interact), and practical (what is my role as an individual citizen) analysis. This course will expose enrolled students to the text of the United States and California State Constitutions; the evolution and interpretations of their texts; constitutional principles; key and current events; and finally, to the prospects and possibilities for a more inclusive and democratic society within the set framework.

Political Science 1 fulfills the General Education A.A. degree requirement (Segment IV: Social and Behavioral Sciences) for Foothill College; the General Education Breadth requirement for all California State Universities (CSUs); and the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) for all CSUs and UCs.

This syllabus is subject to change with fair notice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed for any student who wishes to make a serious study of these issues, and is prepared to do the extensive reading, writing, and research that are course requirements. However, the most important objective will always be the encouragement and development of critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.

This course is for five units of academic credit in an asynchronous (online-distance) learning format. It adheres to all of the dictates of the promulgated De Anza College policies outlined in the Schedule of Classes, and found in the current college catalog. Of immense importance and emphasis are the policies attendant to Academic Integrity and Academic Freedom. Strict adherence will be followed. Please read these passages in the most sober and careful manner. Unlike much of our contemporaneous society, in this course we will agree, disagree, and agree to disagree while maintaining the decorum befitting a fine institution of higher learning.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

SLO 1: Students will evaluate how political decisions are shaped by institutions and processes.

SLO 2: Students will assess the impact of political decisions on individuals and groups.

SLO 3: Students will demonstrate the capacity to effectively participate in the political process.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

In most cases, the instructor will develop the subjects of the sessions and place them in proper perspective so that a meaningful understanding can be shared among the reader (students), and the instructor. Using the required readings, students are encouraged to take a view from various sides, and a comparison will be made between all our viewpoints, and what was written in the required and general references relating to the subject or event.

As a point of great importance, make sure that your responses to our writing assignments have a strong foundation that is based on fact driven, reliable sources. The “safest ground” to rely on here are academic sources. The final grade students receive will result from a combination of your Office Hours participation, scores on Quizzes, a Research Paper, and your score on the Final Examination.

It is absolutely imperative that students respect the deadlines in this course. I can be amazingly flexible when there is a legitimate basis for an extension, but I can also be amazingly rigid when there is no basis. Some examples of legitimate basis include personal illness (that is verified through medical documentation), personal matters like military or court ordered obligations (with documentary verification), personal matters like a death in the family (but be prepared to submit an obituary), and other compelling reasons.

Due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), I am open to an increased amount of flexibility. However, verification of Coronavirus negative impacts on your academic performance must be submitted. Generally, be mindful of the negative impacts of unsuitable environments, distractions, etc. If you experience a technical problem, and could not submit your work, let me know immediately. Be sure to use reliable networks and equipment to get the job done.

If you have a request that is based on any number of personal challenges that beset us all, be prepared to provide a compelling, verifiable basis. It is not a compelling basis if you waited until a few minutes before the deadline, and could not submit your work. It is advisable for students to avoid the negative impact of technical problems by leaving a cushion of time to troubleshoot the technical problems that can arise. Again, be sure to use reliable networks and equipment to get the job done.

I will be available through Office Hours, Canvas, email, or through the possibility of individual Zoom meetings. In fact, I would love for all enrolled students to join the dialogue around the “seismic shifts” in our current political landscape.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Student Success Center offers individual and group tutoring, as well as several types of workshops. Students who use our services succeed at much higher rates than those who do

not. As you may know, De Anza now also offers free online tutoring with Smarthinking.

Need help with this course? Student Success Center peer tutors are ready for you!

- **SSC tutoring links and schedules:** go to the [SSC homepage](#) and click on the yellow link to add yourself to [SSC Resources Canvas](#). Once there, click on Modules then the SSC area for your course.
- **Support for online learning:** If you'd like to speak with someone about motivation and organization strategies for online classes, we encourage you to talk with a peer tutor or SSC staff member. We get it and are going through the same things, so let's support each other!
- **Need after-hours or weekend tutoring?** See the [Online Tutoring](#) page for information about NetTutor (via Canvas) or Smarthinking (via MyPortal).

There is also a great deal of assistance available for Students with Disabilities. De Anza has a very useful and effective Disability Support Programs and Services Division (DSPS), which I encourage you to explore through the following url/document:

- <https://deanza.edu/dsps/dss/dish.html>

TEXT:

There is one required text, and it has zero cost to students.

American Government– this online free text is provided by Openstax. It can be downloaded as a pdf (highly recommended).

Instructions:

- 1) go to <https://openstax.org>
- 2) click on “Subjects”
- 3) click on “Social Sciences”
- 4) click on “American Government 3e”
- 5) click on “Download a PDF”

SOME ESSENTIAL INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES:

californiachoices.org
govtrack.us
pewresearch.org
politifact.com
ppic.org
usdebtclock.org



In order to receive full G.E. credit (attaining at least a “C” as a final course grade) each student must score over 50% of possible points in every Performance Evaluation/Assessment area.

PROPER PREPARATION PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

1) Participation (Office Hours): 13% = 100 potential points [worth 20 points each time] – Vocal (must show face while speaking) contribution to the discourse of Office Hours – times will vary according to announced weekly scheduling.

2) Quizzes (5): 33% = 250 potential points [20 minutes timed, worth 50 points each]. They will be comprised of 25 fill-in-the-blank items that are largely (though not exclusively) taken from our required readings.

3) Research Paper: 20% = 150 potential points [see "Research Paper Specifications" in our "Files" Module].

4) Final Examination: 33% = 250 potential points. The Final Examination (100 minutes timed) will be comprised of 125 multiple choice items (it is cumulative). It will be administered and proctored via Zoom on Wednesday, 26 June 2024 from 7-9pm. Any student who does not join the Zoom by 7:15pm will not be allowed to sit for the Final Examination.

Grading Scale: is an approximation of final grading outcomes. Frequently the final grade is higher than the scaling below, but it is never lower.

**A+ = 713-750 pts A = 675-712 A- = 656-674 B+ = 626-655 B = 600-625
B- = 574-599 C+ = 552-574 C = 504-551 D+ = 486-503
D = 468-485 D- = 450-467 F = below 450 pts**

TOPICS/SUBTOPICS

Power, Authority, Legitimacy/Federalism

Madisonian model, separation of powers, checks and balances, republicanism, federalism, limited government. Any contradictions? The effect of authority on conflict resolution (techniques: force, negotiation, compromise, adjudication, rational analysis), Red State, Blue State (Regional Differences), Manifest Destiny, Territorial Acquisition through war, conquest, fraud, diplomacy, and purchase, No Child Left Behind Act (Unfunded Mandates), Immigration Reform, 10th Amendment (McCulloch v. Maryland)

Public Opinion/Media/Interest Groups/ Political Parties/Campaigns/Elections

Pervasive Ignorance, Culture Wars, 4 media sources, 1996 Telecommunications Act, TalkRadio and Spin Doctors, Polling, 1st Amendment, DoubleSpeak, statistics, representative and random samples, margin of error, propaganda (e.g. “war on terror”, quotas, patriotism, political correctness, etc.) Images, symbols, and myths and their role in formulating nationalistic feelings, Proposition 13’s impact on CA governance, the electoral process, participatory enough? The Electoral College, A Nation Divided, “winner takes all”, campaign finance reform,

referenda/initiatives, recalls, term limits, the elections of 1824, 1876, 2000, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2020, the Tea Party “Movement”, the “Alt-Right”

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

The Bill of Rights, 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 23rd, 24th, and 26th Amendments, Individual influence, *Korematsu v. U.S.*, Govt. response to political movements: Shay’s Rebellion, Alien and Sedition Acts, Social Movements: Abolitionism, Suffragism, Labor, Civil Rights, Anti War, Black Power, Women’s, Gay/Lesbian, Disability, Environmental (Earth Day, 1972), Equal Protection Analysis, Black Lives Matter, Me Too Movement

Congress/The Presidency

Comparison with parliamentary system, two parties, or one hegemony?, re-apportionment, redistricting, filibuster, cloture, supermajorities, types of committees, how a bill becomes a law, porkbarreling, role of oversight, the nuclear option, taxing and spending, deficits, The scope of presidential power, re-visiting authority and its sources, the Monroe Doctrine, Roosevelt Corollary, Executive Order 9066, FDR court packing, the Imperial Presidency, Watergate, *U.S. v. Nixon*, Carter Administration, the Reagan “Revolution”, military build-ups and deficit spending, Iran-Contra Gate, line item veto, the Clinton impeachment, unitary executive theory, executive privilege, Guantanamo Bay Detainees, rendition, Blackwater (Xe), signing statements, Trump (and his impeachments/indictments), the attack on the US Capitol, Biden

The Judiciary

The 13 Circuits, the federal bench, judicial appointments (Bork and Thomas), the Supreme Court, the establishment of judicial review (cf. *Marbury v. Madison*, the Pentagon Papers, the impending Nixon impeachment), infamous cases: *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Korematsu v. U.S.*, *Brown v. Bd. of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Roe v. Wade*, *Bakke v. UC Regents*, *Jones v. Clinton*, *Bush v. Gore*, the current make-up of the Supreme Court, rule of 4, types of opinions, state system structure, the 6-3 majority, recent decisions

Domestic/Economic Policy

The new federalism (unfunded mandates), one nation?, housing policy, health policy, education policy, tax policy, fiscal policy, immigration policy

Foreign/Defense Policy

Marshall Plan, MAD, Iron Curtain, Cold War, Domino theory, containment, military/industrial complex, War Powers Act, capitalism and globalism’s impact, AUMF, the war on terror’s impact, the global police mentality, the only superpower, picking our patsies/using our proxies, India/Pakistan, China/Taiwan/North Korea, Israel, Russia, the European Union, NATO, Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran, the black budget, the United Nations and the arrogance of unilateral, preemptive actions, the human bomb, Powell Doctrine, ISIS/ISIL, Ukraine

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Please see Canvas for greater detail of assignments required during this course.