

AMERICAN NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Contact Information

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Course Information

Political Science 355

Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30PM-1:45PM at Jerome Richfield 315

Moodle will also be used as the course learning management system (<http://moodle.csun.edu>)

Course Description

The University Catalog describes this course as "a detailed study of the structures and functions of the national government and California state and local governments. Special attention is given to the legislative and executive branches in the policy-making and administrative processes as well as the constitutional bases for these processes". This course also satisfies your Title 5 requirement for American history and government.

According to the University catalog, "Courses in the US History and Local Government (Title V) section must meet the Title V requirements as prescribed by California law.

Goal: Students will understand and reflect upon United States history, institutions, and ideals; the Constitution of the United States; and the principles of state and local government as established in California.”

GE and Title V Student Learning Outcomes

1. Describe and analyze the histories of the United States and California over significant time periods
2. Explain the principles and major provisions of the Constitutions of the United States and California
3. Compare United States and California political institutions and practices
4. Describe and examine the histories and development of political institutions as related to diverse peoples in the United States and California.

Departmental Student Learning Objectives

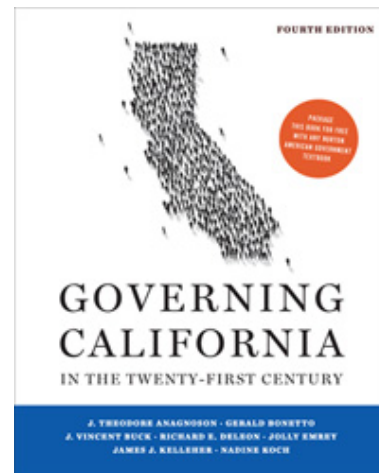
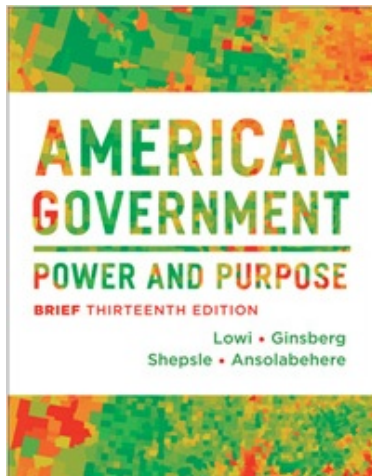
1. Active Citizenship and Civic Engagement – Students should demonstrate a knowledge and awareness of contemporary issues, political institutions, and problems in the community and their historical contexts. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of community involvement and leadership.

Assessment criteria for graded assignments – Evidence suggests that student is able to identify a major political and/or policy problem and is able to conceptualize and analyze the causes of the policy issues

2. Political Decision Making – Students should demonstrate an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the political institutions through which public policies are formulated, modified, and implemented.

Assessment criteria for graded assignments – Evidence suggests student is able to identify political issues and link them to the institutions involved in solving these issues

Instructional Material:



American Government: Power and Purpose, Brief 13th Edition - Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, et al.

Governing California in the Twenty-First Century, 4th Edition - J. Theodore Anagnoson, Gerald Bonetto, J. Vincent Buck, et al.

Course Requirements & Grading

Please see the Course Schedule below for the specific dates and mark your personal calendars in advance since make-up exams will **not** be permitted. There will be five exams in the course, two short papers and a final paper.

Paper Assignments

Students will be expected to submit two short papers as well as a final paper. Each paper is expected to be a well thought-out and researched response to the question posed (*See topics below*). The short papers should be between 3-4 pages long and the final paper being 6-7 pages long. Make sure to include academic references as well as utilize proper APA format. You will have the option of rewriting one of your short papers for a higher grade after initial comments and grading.

We will discuss the papers in class during the semester including the grading rubrics. The rubrics will also be posted in the course Moodle site.

Paper 1 Topic: Americans share the basic beliefs that comprise American political culture yet disagree on many issues along the lines of class, race, gender, and religion. Take two basic American beliefs (e.g. democracy, individualism, equality, community, etc.) and show how each can be interpreted differently depending on one's distinctive identity.

Paper 2 Topic: Although legal obstacles to voting have been dismantled, fewer people vote today than thirty, forty or even fifty years ago. Why is this the case?

Final Paper Topic: An interesting aspect of American politics concerns the ways in which political conflicts have been transformed into constitutional struggles over federalism. Analyze

the debate over states' rights versus national supremacy from the founding of our nation up until today. How has this debate changed over time?

Exams

You will have five exams in the class. Your lowest score will be dropped with only four of the exams counting towards your final grade. The exams will be based on the reading and class lectures. Each exam will be a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and fill-in the blank questions.

Attendance

I will randomly take roll and call out a few student names. If you are not present when your name is called, then you will lose attendance points.

The grading will be broken down as follows:

Exam 1	12
Exam 2	12
Exam 3	12
Exam 4	12
Paper 1	12
Paper 2	12
Final Paper	20
Attendance	8

****There will be no extra credit or make-up work available in the course. Make sure to mark your personal calendars in advance since the due dates are not negotiable.***

Percentage	Grade
95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	F

Reading Schedule:

Dates	Reading/Exams
M-8/25	<i>Syllabus & Introductions</i>
W-8/27	Lowi et al.
W-9/3	Ch. 1. "Introduction: Making Sense of Government & Politics"
M-9/8	Ch. 2. "The Founding and the Constitution"
W-9/10	Ch. 3. "Federalism and the Separation of Powers"

	<i>*Campus closed for Labor Day on 9/1</i>
M-9/15	Exam 1
W-9/17 M-9/22 W-9/24 M-9/29	Lowi et al. Ch 4. "Civil Liberties and Civil Rights" <i>Additional reading will be available on Moodle on same-sex marriage, torture, and the death penalty</i>
W-10/1	Exam 2
M-10/6 W-10/8 M-10/13 W-10/15	Lowi et al. Ch. 5. "Congress: The First Branch" Ch. 6. "The Presidency" Ch. 7. "The Executive Branch" Ch. 8. "The Federal Courts"
M-10/20	Exam 3
W-10/22 M-10/27 W-10/29	Lowi et al. Ch. 9. "Public Opinion and the Media" Ch. 12. "Groups and Interests" Anagnoson et al. Ch. 3. "Interest Groups and the Media in California"
W-10/29	Paper 1

M-11/3 W-11/5 M-11/10 W-11/12 M-11/17	Lowi et al. Ch. 10. "Elections" Ch. 11. "Political Parties" Ch. 13. "Introduction to Public Policy" Ch. 14. "Foreign Policy and Democracy" Anagnoson et al. Ch. 4. "Parties and Elections in California" Ch. 10. "Public Policy in California"
W-11/12	Paper 2
W-11/19	Exam 4
M-11/24 W- 11/26 M-12/1 W-12/3	Anagnoson et al. Ch. 1. "California Government in Crisis" Ch. 2. "The Constitution and Progressive Legacy" Ch. 5. "The California Legislature" Ch. 6. "The Governor and the Executive Branch" Ch. 7. "The California Judiciary" Ch. 8. "The State Budget and Budgetary Limitations" Ch. 9. "Local Government"
M-12/8	Exam 5
M-12/15	Final Paper

Policies

Student Conduct Code: <http://www.csun.edu/a&r/soc/studentconduct.html>

Academic Policy: <http://www.csun.edu/anr/soc/legalnotices.html>

Class Accommodations

Students with Disabilities

<http://www.csun.edu/cod/index.php>

Students with disabilities must first register with the Center on Disabilities (and complete a service agreement each semester. You may contact them for the specifics at 818-677-2684.

If you are a student utilizing the Center's services and you are registered with them, please notify me at the beginning of the class.

Support Services for Students

Learning Resource Center:

677-2033, Bayramian Hall 408.

"The mission of the LRC is to enable students to improve their academic performance through a variety of learning programs including workshops, one-on-one and group tutoring, Supplemental Instruction classes and interactive subject area computer programs and videos. Students who use LRC learning programs will develop and strengthen their critical thinking skills, study strategies, writing skills and performance in subject matter courses". <http://www.csun.edu/lrc>

Academic Advisement:

"The college-based academic advisement centers are available to assist students in selecting courses and programs of study and in choosing or declaring a major or minor. Visit the website to locate the advising center for your major, or for undeclared majors". <http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html>

University Counseling Services:

677-2366, Bayramian Hall 520.

"UCS provides resources and information to assist students in dealing with a variety of large and small psychological obstacles that may interfere with academic progress and/or relationship satisfaction. Services

include individual, group and crisis counseling". <http://www.csun.edu/counseling>

Center on Disabilities:

677-2684, Bayramian Hall 110.

"The Center on Disabilities serves students with a wide range of visible and hidden disabilities, in a confidential environment. Students are encouraged to meet with the professional staff and explore the services available to support their academic, career and personal goals. Discover accommodations and strategies for help with disabilities in an academic setting". <http://www.csun.edu/cod/index.php>

The Career Center:

677-2878, University Hall 105.

"Need some help in deciding on a career? Or do you know your career and need to meet employers? Perhaps your resume needs some sprucing up? The Career Center offers a variety of services for students, from those new to the University to those about to graduate into the world of work".
<http://www.csun.edu/career/students>

National Center on Deafness:

677-2054, Chisholm Hall 234.

"The National Center on Deafness (NCOD) has served over 2,500 students who are deaf and hard of hearing over the past 44 years. NCOD provides communication access, leadership opportunities, scholarships, academic advisement, tutoring, and direct communication classes for approximately 200 students who are deaf and hard of hearing each year". <http://www.csun.edu/ncod/programs/mission.html>

At any time this syllabus may be amended or revised. Students will be notified if any changes are made.