



## **POLI 120 - Introduction to the Principles of American Government Course Outline**

**Approval Date:**

**Effective Date:** 08/11/2013

### **SECTION A**

**Unique ID Number** CCC000327152

**Discipline(s)** Political Science

**Division** Social Sciences

**Subject Area** Political Science

**Subject Code** POLI

**Course Number** 120

**Course Title** Introduction to the Principles of American Government

**TOP Code/SAM Code** 0000.00 - N/A / E - Non-Occupational

**Rationale for adding this course to the curriculum** Updating to meet PEP requirements.

**Units** 3

**Cross List** N/A

**Typical Course Weeks**

**Total Instructional Hours**

**Contact Hours**

**Lecture** 54.00

**Lab** 0.00

**Activity** 0.00

**Work Experience** 0.00

**Outside of Class Hours** 108.00

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**Total Contact Hours** 54

**Total Student Hours** 162

**Open Entry/Open Exit** No

**Maximum Enrollment**

**Grading Option** Letter Grade or P/NP

**Distance Education Mode of Instruction** Hybrid  
Entirely Online

## SECTION B

**General Education Information:**

## SECTION C

### Course Description

**Repeatability** May be repeated 0 times

**Catalog Description** Introduction to American political processes and institutions. Topics include the constitutional framework of national, state, and local government, federalism, the presidency, Congress, political parties, voting and elections, public opinion and the role of the media.

**Schedule Description**

## SECTION D

### Condition on Enrollment

**1a. Prerequisite(s):** *None*

**1b. Corequisite(s):** *None*

**1c. Recommended**

- ENGL 90 with a minimum grade of C or better

**1d. Limitation on Enrollment:** *None*

## SECTION E

### Course Outline Information

#### 1. Student Learning Outcomes:

- Understand and explain the foundations of government in the United States: the organization, powers, and procedures of the national government; the patterns of state and local government.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and write effectively about the political process.
- Discuss and analyze contemporary political issues, interests, and behavior in the United States and California.

#### 2. Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Explain the founding and development of the US Constitution.
- Identify and evaluate institutions and political processes within the United States and California.
- Discuss and analyze contemporary political issues and operations in the United States and California.
- Explain the civil liberties and civil rights of individuals as articulated in the US Constitution and federal court decisions.
- Analyze the role of culture, diversity, and ideology in shaping public opinion and public policy in the United States and California.
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#### 3. Course Content

- The political philosophies of the framers of the US Constitution and critics of the Constitution.
- The process of amending and interpreting the US Constitution and California constitution.
- The theory and practice of federalism.

- D. Contemporary operations of the United States political institutions and processes including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government and nongovernmental institutions.
- E. The rights and liberties of individuals as articulated in the US Constitution and federal court decisions.
- F. Contemporary operations of California state and local political institutions within the framework of federal-state relations.
- G. Individual and group political behavior of Americans and Californians with the frameworks established by the US Constitution and California constitution such as elections, interest groups, political parties, and the media.
- H. Factors that shape politics and policymaking including diversity, political culture, political socialization, political ideologies, and public opinion.
- I. Domestic, economic, and foreign issues and policies.
- J.

**4. Methods of Instruction:**

**Activity:**

**Discussion:** Group-based interactive instruction

**Distance Education:** Computer-based distance instruction

**Lecture:** Presentation based instruction

**Projects:**

**5. Methods of Evaluation:** Describe the general types of evaluations for this course and provide at least two, specific examples.

**Typical classroom assessment techniques**

Exams/Tests --

Quizzes --

Research Projects --

Papers --

Simulation --

Class Participation --

Final Exam --

Mid Term --

Additional assessment information:

Grade will be based on

1. Midterm and Final Exams using both objective and essay formats.

- example: Identify and explain the concepts of "natural rights" and the "social contract" as found in the Declaration of Independence.

2. Term research assignment.

- example: develop an argumentative essay about any of the major topics in contemporary politics suitable for publication as an editorial.

Letter Grade or P/NP

**6. Assignments:** State the general types of assignments for this course under the following categories and provide at least two specific examples for each section.

A. Reading Assignments

Supplemental readings and assignments from periodical sources:

"Will Higher Education Be the Next Bubble to Burst?" The Chronicle of Higher Education, 22 May 2009.

- Analyze the article and describe the political causes and consequences of this

phenomenon.

"Running Unopposed" Politics and Policy, February 2009.

- Identify and assess the pros and cons of term limits.

**B. Writing Assignments**

? Writing will include some/all of the following: Critical thinking papers of 3 to 5 pages, research projects, book and journal reports, and critical thinking exam essays.

Example:

? Based on the information you have studied this semester, explain which of the three branches of government is the most powerful. Defend your position.

? Write a letter to an elected official about a matter of public policy. Identify the issue, explain why the issue is important to you, and finally suggest a course of action you wish the official to take in order to rectify the problem.

**C. Other Assignments**

An example of a research project might include the following: Research the California ballot initiative process, then identify a law that needs to be added, amended, or eliminated, and prepare it for submission to a legislator for inclusion on a subsequent ballot.

**7. Required Materials**

**A. EXAMPLES of typical college-level textbooks (for degree-applicable courses) or other print materials.**

Book #1:

Author: Bardes, B.A., Shelley, M. and Schmidt S  
Title: American Government and Politics Today  
Publisher: Cengage  
Date of Publication: 2014  
Edition: 17th

Book #2:

Author: O'Conner, K. and Sabato L  
Title: American Government: Roots and Reform  
Publisher: Pearson  
Date of Publication: 2011  
Edition: 11th

Book #3:

Author: Shea, D  
Title: Living Democracy  
Publisher: Pearson  
Date of Publication: 2012  
Edition: 4th

**B. Other required materials/supplies.**