

American Government

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Classroom: Building 9, Room 247

Time: MW 2:00PM - 3:50PM

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Office Hours: MW 12 - 2:00 PM; T 3 - 5:00 PM

1 Course Description

This course provides an introduction to American government and politics. It prepares students to think analytically about the interplay of ideas, people, and institutions in US politics. The course covers principles on which the national government rests, the nature of political behavior, the media, intermediary organizations, and the dynamics of Congress, the presidency, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy.

This course is intended for students of all majors interested in an introductory survey of the American political landscape, including those students completing the requirements of the political science major.

2 Required Text

Lowi, T.J., B. Ginsberg, K.A. Shepsle, and S. Ansolabehere. 2012. *American Government: Power and Purpose*, Brief 12th Edition. WW Norton & Company.

Kollman, K. 2011. *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives*. WW Norton & Company.

Special Note on Used Editions of the Book: Students are strongly encouraged to find used books, which are likely to be considerably less expensive than the new books from the publisher. Buying used also saves trees. Be aware that Norton sells many versions of *American Government*. For each numerical edition (e.g 11th, 12nd) Norton puts out a Brief Edition, a Core Edition, and a Full Edition. In addition, Norton puts out an interim version of various editions after each election, and calls that an Election Update. So there are many editions that you may find on the used market, and many do not differ

much. You may use any Brief, Core, or Full version of the 11th or 12th editions, with or without an Election Update. Also note that *American Government* can be purchased in eBook format from Norton.

The publisher of *American Government* provides a website called StudySpace with a variety of study aids. You may (or may not) find these helpful in mastering the material in *American Government*.

Be aware that these will provide no assistance with material in lectures, most of which does not summarize or duplicate the content of *American Government*. This is especially important if you rely on the practice tests, because examinations in PS 201 will cover material from lectures and reading that is not covered in the Norton Study Space. Also, examinations in PS 201 will not necessarily follow the format or style of the material there. You are accountable for the substance of the book itself; if you find that the Norton Study Space helps you learn what is in the book, then take advantage of it. But be aware that there is no substitute for developing your own skills and judgment at how to assimilate and understand large amounts of material.

3 Course Requirements

Your final grade is based on four different components. These components are designed to give a fair and comprehensive assessment of your progress in this course.

Percentage	Assignment
30%	<i>Midterm Exam:</i> To held on Wednesday, February 13.
10%	<i>Panel Project:</i> Students will be required to work together to provide a 15-20 minute group assessment of current political events. "Panel days" are typically scheduled on Wednesdays throughout the quarter.
25%	<i>Term Paper:</i> Students will be required to synthesize the course material in a 4-5 page paper. The paper is due Monday, March 11.
35%	<i>Final Exam:</i> To be held on Monday, March 18, 1:30-3:40pm.

4 Communication

Office hours are great for getting detailed answers and clarification. I encourage **every-one** to come to office hours at some point in the quarter. It will help me to get to know you better and it will help you do well in this class. Office hours have been statistically proven to help your grade.

Whenever I am in my office (94-316), I am happy to meet with you. I am guaranteed to be in my office during dedicated office hours, but you can also schedule an appointment so we can meet when it is convenient for you. Feel free to contact me online via gchat

(mariog), Facebook chat (marioguerrero), or AIM (SuperMario917). I am frequently online and will be happy to answer your questions whenever I can.

5 Academic Honesty

Cal Poly Pomona takes academic honesty very seriously. Cheating is not tolerated and students will be held accountable for cheating on an assignment or an exam. Violators will receive an F in the course and then be referred to the Dean of Students and Judicial Affairs for further disciplinary action that may result in suspension. There should be no reason for you to feel compelled to cheat in this class. If you feel overwhelmed with the course, please do not hesitate to contact me for help.

6 Special Assistance

A wide range of services is available to support students in their efforts to meet the course requirements. Cal Poly Pomona offers counseling for personal and academic concerns at the Counseling and Psychological Services at no additional charge to students (Building 66-110, 909-869-3220). Additionally, Student Health Mental Services (Building 46, 909-869-3070) provides a range of services to help students identify and overcome obstacles stemming from financial, emotional, social, or family situations. The Disability Resource Center (Building 9-103, 909-869-3333) also provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. You must register with DRC prior to receiving these accommodations.

Separately from these services, the University Writing Center (Library 2921) provides assistance to students writing papers. The Writing Center offers students 30-minute one-on-one appointments. Writing Center tutors specialize in reading for content, but will also read papers for grammar and style. Please utilize this resource if you know you need help with your writing.

7 Course Schedule

Please note that the following schedule is subject to change throughout the quarter.

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION, GOVERNMENT, & DEMOCRACY

Monday, January 7, 2013 Course overview. What is political science? Why do we study American Government?

Terms Political science, American Politics, comparative politics, international politics, political theory, public law, public administration, methodology, political institutions, political behavior

Readings *American Government*, Chapter 1
Mancur Olson, "The Logic of Collective Action" (Kollman, pp. 6-23)

Resources [Google News](#), [New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)

Wednesday, January 9, 2013 Democracy and Power. What is conflict? Why is politics contentious?

Terms Government, democracy, policy, politics, freedom, order, equality, majoritarianism, pluralism

Readings *American Government*, Chapter 2
Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" (Kollman, pp. 24-37)

Resources [Freedom House](#), [Political Maps](#)

UNIT 2 FEDERALISM & FREEDOM

Monday, January 14, 2013 Federalism. What is federalism? What is the tension between state and federal government?

Terms Federal state, unitary state, Articles of Confederation, Supremacy Clause, Elastic Clause, Commerce Clause, 10th Amendment, Dual Federalism, Cooperative Federalism

Readings *American Government*, Chapter 3
Jonathan Walters and Donald F. Kettl, "The Katrina Breakdown" (Kollman, pp. 107-112)

Resources [State of California](#), [Los Angeles County](#), [City of Pomona](#)

Wednesday, January 16, 2013 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights. What are your liberties and rights as a citizen? How have your liberties and rights evolved over time?

Terms Civil liberties, civil rights, Bill of Rights, 14th Amendment, gun control, gay marriage

Readings *American Government*, Chapter 4
District of Columbia vs. Heller (Kollman, pp. 133-148)
Lawrence vs. Texas (Kollman, pp. 303-313)

Resources [NRA](#), [Brady Campaign](#), [Protect Marriage](#), [Human Rights Campaign](#)

UNIT 3 AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS: LEGISLATIVE

Monday, January 21, 2013 NO CLASS. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday.

Wednesday, January 23, 2013 Congress. How is Congress structured? What are the functions of Congress?

- Terms* Bill, law, committee, conference committee, rules committee, veto, filibuster, cloture, term length, chamber size, tyranny, efficiency
- Readings* *American Government*, Chapter 5
David Mayhew, "Congress: The Electoral Connection" (Kollman, pp. 149-161)
- Resources* [Thomas](#), [Library of Congress](#)

Monday, January 28, 2013 Congress II. What is representation? How does the Constitutional structure of Congress influence how representatives behave?

- Terms* Incumbency, reapportionment, redistricting, gerrymandering, advertising, credit-claiming, position-taking, delegate, trustee, representation
- Readings* Richard Fenno, "Home Style: House Members in Their Districts" (Kollman, pp. 162-166)
Michele Swers, "The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress" (Kollman, pp. 167-171)
- Resources* [Roll Call](#), [GovTrack](#), [Vote View](#)

UNIT 4 AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS: EXECUTIVE

Wednesday, January 30, 2013 The Presidency. What are the constitutional powers of the presidency? How have the powers of the presidency evolved over time?

- Terms* Commander-in-chief, expressed power, inherent power, delegated power, persuasion, bargaining
- Readings* *American Government*, Chapter 6
Richard Neustadt, "Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents" (Kollman, pp. 193-201)
- Resources* [White House](#), [Presidency Project](#)

Monday, February 4, 2013 The Bureaucracy. What is the structure of the federal bureaucracy? Why is the bureaucracy powerful?

- Terms* Bureaucracy, agency manipulation, logrolling, concentrated benefits, distributed costs
- Readings* *American Government*, Chapter 7
James Q, Wilson, "Bureaucracy: What government Agencies Do and Why They Do It" (Kollman, pp. 253-266)
- Resources* [USA.gov](#)

UNIT 5 AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS: JUDICIARY

Wednesday, February 6, 2013 The Judiciary. What are the constitutional powers of the judiciary? How did the courts come to have power?

- Terms* Supreme Court, Circuit Court of Appeals, District Courts, Marbury v. Madison
- Readings* *American Government*, Chapter 8
Marbury vs. Madison (Kollman, pp. 294-302)
- Resources* [Supreme Court](#)

Monday, February 11, 2013 The Judiciary II. How do Supreme Court justices interpret constitutional law? What is the current makeup of the Roberts Court?

- Terms* Constitutional interpretation, judicial activism, judicial restraint
- Readings* Gerald Rosenberg, "The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring about Social Change?" (Kollman, pp. 287-301)
- Resources* [Oyez](#)

MIDTERM EXAM: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2013

UNIT 6 POLITICAL BEHAVIOR: PUBLIC OPINION & PARTICIPATION

Monday, February 18, 2013 Public Opinion. What is public opinion? How does the public come to specific opinions?

- Terms* Public opinion, values, beliefs, attitudes, political knowledge, political psychology
- Readings* *American Government*, Chapter 9
Arthur Lupia and Mathew D. McCubbins, "The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?" (Kollman, pp. 327-339)
- Resources* [Pew Research](#), [Polling Report](#)

Wednesday, February 20, 2013 Participation and Elections. How does the American electorate participate in elections? What are primary elections?

- Terms* Closed primaries, semi-open primaries, open primaries, national conventions, primary elections, caucuses
- Readings* *American Government*, Chapter 10
Steven Rosenstone and John M. Hansen, "Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America" (Kollman, pp. 351-368)
- Resources* [California Secretary of State](#)

Monday, February 25, 2013 Participation and Elections II. What is the Electoral College? How equitable is participation in America?

- Terms* Electoral College, electoral vote, popular vote, electors
- Readings* *Bush v. Gore* (Kollman, pp. 314-326)
Nancy Burns, Kay Scholzman, and Sidney Verba, "The Private Roots of Public Action" (Kollman, pp. 369-385)
- Resources* [FiveThirtyEight](#), [Rock The Vote](#)

UNIT 7 POLITICAL BEHAVIOR: PARTIES & INTEREST GROUPS

Wednesday, February 27, 2013 Political Parties. Why are there only two major political parties in the American system? What are the functions of the major political parties?

Terms Republicans, Democrats, political polarization

Readings *American Government*, Chapter 11

Angus Campbell, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, "The American Voter" (Kollman, pp. 445-452)

Resources [Democratic Party](#), [Republican Party](#), [Green Party](#), [Libertarian Party](#)

Monday, March 4, 2013 Interest Groups. What are interest groups? By what means do interest groups function?

Terms Interest group, iron triangles, lobbying, hard money, soft money, PACs

Readings *American Government*, Chapter 12

Ken Kollman, "Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies" (Kollman, pp. 404-418)

Resources [Federal Election Commission](#), [Open Secrets](#), [AARP](#), [National Association of Manufactures](#), [Move On](#), [Sierra Club](#), [Surfrider](#)

UNIT 8 POLITICAL BEHAVIOR: MEDIA

Wednesday, March 6, 2013 Media. What is the place of news media in a democracy? What are the effects of news media on public opinion?

Terms Agenda setting, framing, selective exposure, direct effects, soft news, hard news

Readings Matthew A. Baum, "Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media." (Kollman, pp. 491-494)

Resources [Media Watch](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#)

Monday, March 11, 2013 Media II. What is new media? How does free speech apply to the media?

Terms New media, broadcast television, cable television, Obscurity, Inadvertency

Readings Shanto Iyengar, "Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide" (Kollman, pp. 495-504)

Resources [Wikileaks](#), [Reddit](#)

TERM PAPER DUE: MONDAY, MARCH 11

UNIT 9 CONCLUSION

Wednesday, March 13, 2013 Conclusion.

Terms All terms in the textbook

Readings NO READING

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, MARCH 18, 1:30 - 3:40PM