

# POLITICAL SCIENCE 1 : AMERICAN GOVERNMENT



Fall 2013 (8/27/13 to 12/10/13)

Section 1733 Room: GC 310 T-Th. 8 a.m.-9:25 a.m.

*Instructor: Olga Shewfelt*

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**Office Hours: Tuesdays: 11:45 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. at my office. I this time is not convenient for you, please talk to me after class or email me with a question or to see if we can schedule a different time.**

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**Course Materials**

**Required Texts:**

1. Bardes, Barbara A.; Shelly II, Mack C.; & Schmidt, Steffen W. (refer to as Bardes or "B" in the weekly assignments) *American Government & Politics Today, The Essentials 2013-2014* edition. Wadsworth.  
ISBN- 13 :978-1-133-60437-2
2. Korey, John L., *California Government*. Fourth or most recent edition.  
(refer as or "K" in weekly assignments)

**Other materials & Resources:**

**Provided in class and/ or available in the internet on selected course topics:**

- U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Bill of Rights.  
<http://www.archives.gov/national>
- Federalist Papers. <http://www.thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers>
- Library of Congress : <http://www.loc.gov/index.html>

- U.S. Budget : <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/overview>
- California Budget: <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/2013-14/BudgetSummary/BSS/BSS.html>
- Newspapers & Magazines: Los Angeles Times & New York Times, Washington Post, and selected magazines.
- Selected Videos/DVD's/ web links
- Handouts (study questions & articles)

## **POLITICAL CONCEPTS AND FEDERALISM**

**Week of**  
**8/27**

**Political Concepts/ Government & American society.  
Political Ideologies & Political Parties, Bardes, chapter 1**

**9/03**

**The Constitution. "B" Chapter 2  
California History & Constitution, "K" chapters 1&2**

**9/10**

**Federalism "B" chapter 3  
CA Budget "K" chapter 10**

**9/17**

**Federalism continues**

**9/24**

**EXAM I**

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## **THE CONSTITUTIONAL CENTERS OF POWER**

### **The Legislative Branch**

**10/01**

**Congress: The People's Branch. "B" chapter 10  
The California Legislature, "K" chapter 6**

**10/08**

**Campaigns and Elections.  
"B" chapter 9. California Elections "K" chapter 5**

### **The Executive Branch**

**10/15**

**The Presidency. "B" chapter 11  
The Plural California Executive. "K" chapter 7**

**10/22**

**The Presidency. Foreign Policy. Bardes, chapter 15**

10/29 *EXAM II*

**The Judicial Branch**

11/05 The U.S. Judiciary. The Rule of Law/ U.S. Supreme Court  
“B” chapter. 13. California Judiciary. “K” chapter. 8

11/12 Civil Liberties: Rights of the Accused. “B” chapter 4

11/19 Civil Liberties continues.

11/26 Exam III

11/28 Thanksgiving Holiday. College is closed.

12/03 Civil Rights. Political Participation: Voting and Interests Groups  
“B” chapters 5&7.

12/10 *Final Paper (Political Participation Project due  
& Presentations: 8am-10 am at GC 310)*

*Course Student Learning Objectives:*

**1. Critical Thinking Skills**

This American Government course is designed to provide the student with critical thinking skills through the examination of first and secondary historical sources regarding the establishment of the U.S. government and the most important issues that affect our government today. At the end of this course, the student would be able to describe, analyze what are the elements of the representative democratic government we adopted in this United states, what are its main differences with other forms of government, when and how was the U.S. Constitution, adopted, what are the differences between the two main U.S. political parties and what is the structure and practices of the three branches of the U.S. Government and its constitutional relation with the states, particularly with the state of California. These knowledge and critical thinking abilities are tested in all 3 exams and are worth 60% of the course grade.

**2. Civic participation**

This course provides the student with a practical opportunity to participate in issues of his/her concern/interest through the Political Participation Project (PPP) of his/her choice . This Project enables the student to connect his/her interests of any section of the course’s material, to a topic or an organization public or private that deals with programs and issues at the local, state and/or national level. The

successful completion of the PPP, gives the student the opportunity to participate in the political arena. This SLO is also enhanced by the study of the American process of campaigns and elections and the student's voluntary participation in "Voter Registration Drives" and other extra-curricular activities. This SLO is evaluated with the final course paper (PPP) which is worth 30% of the course grade.

**3. Communication Skills**

This course will improve the students' written and verbal communication skills by enhancing the student's analytical framework to understand U.S. politics and economics through the study of U.S. history, economics, political culture, and policies. These studies, as well as the written essay in each of the three course examinations, short homework assignments, class discussions, final written paper and oral presentation in class, enhances the student's lexicon and his/her abilities to communicate verbally and in writing about matters concerning U.S. government and politics. This SLO is evaluated in conjunction with the other two SLOs listed above.

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*Grade System: 3 exams: Total of 60%. Each is worth 20% of your final grade. Political Participation Project (PPP): 30% .of your grade. This project is counted as your final course exam.*

*Class Participation 10%.*

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**Exams:**

Each exam is worth 20% of your final course grade. Each exam has 3 sections: Multiple Choice (25 questions(2pts each=50 points). Be sure to bring a scantron form 882E(100 questions) to your test. Fill-in-section, 5 questions=(2 pts each=10 points) and an Essay Section( 2 essays (each worth 20 pts= 40 pts). For a total of 100 pts. These 3 sections add to a total of 100 pts, or a letter grade of "A".

**Grade Breakdown:**

100% .....	A+	88-89% .....	B+
94-99%.....	A	84-87%.....	B
90-93%.....	A-	80-83%.....	B-
78-79%.....	C+	68-69%.....	D+
74-77%.....	C	64-67%.....	D
70-73%.....	C-	60-63%.....	D-
		59% and below	F

*Note: Final course grades will be solid letter grades. No minus or pluses are accepted at the office of admissions and records. Therefore, your total course average from the 3 exams and the PPP will be calculated as 90% of your grade, and up to 10% will be added for class participation. The result of this computing operation will be your final course grade.*

**Make Up Exams:**

If you don't take an exam on the scheduled date, you may take a make-up exam provided that you present a valid excuse before or immediately after the scheduled

*exam. YOU MUST schedule a new exam immediately after the missed exam, to be taken no later than one week from the date of the regular exam. If you do not take the make up exam in this timeframe, your missed exam will be graded with a letter "F".*

**Class participation: 10% of your total course grade!** It includes but is not limited to, your class preparation, participation in class discussions, questions, comments and timely contributions of media resources to specific class topics.

**Class Attendance:** Good attendance is an essential part of your learning. Students who attend class regularly throughout the semester are more likely to succeed in the course. I expect you to arrive punctually or a few minutes before 8 a.m. so I can start the class right at 8 a.m. I keep strict records of attendance. If you fail to attend two (2) weeks of instruction or 4 classes, you will be dropped from the class. Three late arrivals or early departures will be considered as one absence. However, for all academic purposes, it is ultimately your obligation to drop officially from the class. You may do so by 9/06/13 without a "W" and by 11/15/13 with a "W". Failure to drop officially from the course may result in you being listed as active in the class at the end of the course and for this reason having an "F" as a final course grade.

**Political Participation Project (PPP) 30% of your grade!**

This is a very important part of your learning experience and performance in this course. It gives you an opportunity to choose a topic and organization that inspires you to become more active in the political process of your community, the state and/or the nation. Your topic choice and work in this project, would give you an opportunity to get involved in the political process and apply many of the concepts and facts learned in this course. Your Political Participation Project (PPP) is worth 30% of your final course grade.

In lieu of a regular final exam, you will work on a project of political participation in the United States. You need to choose a public or private organization that works in a topic/area of your interest and deals with government regulations and policy-making issues. After your first course Exam, I will give you written instructions with more details about this project and additional in-class explanation about potential topics/organizations for the project. Finally, you need to let me know your topic /organization choice in writing by 10/08/ 13. If you want my feedback on your draft, you must turn your draft by 11/19/13. **Final Projects are due on Tuesday, December 10 at 8 a.m. at GC 310. No extensions whatsoever! If you do not turn your PPP on this day, you will obtain an "F" on your PPP (final exam). There will be class presentations of the projects from 8 am. to 10 a.m. I will deduct 20% of this final project grade to anyone missing the PPP class presentations.**

**Course Material:**

It consists of the assigned chapters, plus study questions, handouts, videos and lectures. The student is responsible for keeping track of all course materials and studying them for every exam.

**Student Conduct:**

You are expected to abide by the norms of the Board of Trustees and the California Education Code. (See West Catalog). Student use of electronic devices during class, or voice taping and/or video taping of my lectures are not permitted unless there is a written request for accommodation of DSP students, or the uses of these devices is directed by the instructor as part of a learning exercise.

**Academic Honor Code:** Each student understands and honors the value of academic integrity in all his/her academic endeavors including tests, quizzes, written assignments and final paper (PPP). Cheating and Plagiarism in a particular test or written assignment will result in an “F” grade for that particular assignment and any other appropriate disciplinary actions related to student conduct.

**Communication with Instructor:** Feel free to contact me after class, or during my office hours. You may also leave a phone message at my office, or send me an e-mail. If the assigned office hours are not convenient for you please contact me via email or in person to set a different meeting time. *In case of an emergency (ONLY) contact me at my cell phone at (213) 392-0489.*

