

DE ANZA COLLEGE
Summer Session 2024 (online, asynchronous)
INSTRUCTOR: I. TARIKH
e-mail: tarikhismael@fhda.edu

CUPERTINO, CA
Poli-D001.50Z
CRN: 13347
Office Hours: tbd

Website: <http://faculty.deanza.fhda.edu/tarikhismael/>

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.

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 a 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.

This syllabus is subject to change with fair notice.

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 discussion can follow among the readers/students, and the instructor. In these required readings, the subject will be viewed from various sides, and a comparison will be made between what was in the writing prompt, and what was written in the required and general references relating to the subject or event. Remember, your response can be no better than the sources you rely on. In this course, students are required to participate in our class meetings. This means regular attendance (twice a week), and interacting either verbally, or through the Zoom Chat mechanism. The grade the student receives will result from a combination of online participation, writing assignments, an objective (multiple choice) Midterm examination, and an objective (multiple choice) Final examination.

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.

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. I do realize that COVID-19 has created a completely unique set of challenges, and I will do my very best to factor COVID-19 impacts on my decisions to grant indulgences.

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. Be sure to use reliable networks and equipment to get the job done.

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 do 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.

I will be available through Canvas, email, or through the possibility of individualized Zoom meetings. In fact, I would love for all enrolled students to join the dialogue around the “seismic shifts” in our current political landscape. There is no extra credit for this course.

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? Want to more personal connections this quarter? Student Success Center tutors and workshops are ready for you! Watch the [SSC Welcome Video](#) to learn more.

Tutoring: Go to <http://deanza.edu/studentsuccess> and click to join a Zoom tutoring room during open hours.

Workshops: Attend a [Skills Workshop](#), a [content-specific math/science workshop](#), an [Accounting chapter review workshop](#), or a [Listening and Speaking workshop](#).

Resources: Join the [SSC Resources Canvas site](#) to see content and learning skills links.

After-hours or weekend tutoring: See the [Online Tutoring](#) page for information about NetTutor (via Canvas) or Smarthinking (via MyPortal).

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

SEP

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) **Quizzes: 20% = 200 potential points [4 timed tests, with 25 multiple choice items, worth 2 points each].**
- 2) **Written Assignments: 50% = 500 potential points [2 assignments worth 250 points each].**
- 3) **Final Examination: 30% = 300 potential points [timed test, with 100 multiple choice items, worth 3 points each (it is cumulative)].**

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+ = 950-1000 pts A = 900-949 A- = 875-899 B+ = 850-874 B = 800-849
B- = 775-799 C+ = 750-774 C = 675-749 D+ = 650-674
D = 600-649 D- = 575-599 F = below 575 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)

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, Sexual Harassment

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"

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), 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

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