

Political Science 1
Saddleback College
American Government
Room: VIL 12-04
Time: Mondays/Wed 10:30am-12:00pm
Semester: Spring 2007

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SYLLABUS **AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

“Political Science is not a proper study for the young.”
- Aristotle

“There is no political science, I can assure you.”
- Richard Nixon

“Vote not with a mere strip of paper, but with your whole life.”
- Henry David Thoreau

General Information About Course

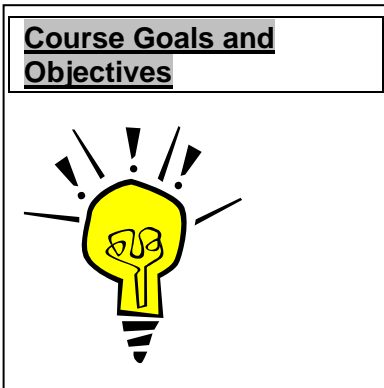
This course is a survey of American Government, which means we will briefly cover important topics in American government. Remember, each topic could be studied in depth (and, in fact is, in upper division coursework).

It also satisfies the state requirements in state and local governments of California. It is a general education requirement for AA/BS degrees, as well as CSU transferable. It presumes only that the student has completed high school courses in Civics and American History.

I will use an outline of the lecture topic during each class to assist you in developing critical note-taking skills. Its purpose is to guide you in recognizing the main points of the lecture, examples of those points, and additional information that adds color to the lecture, but is not necessary for you to recall. I welcome questions and comments anytime before, during, or after class.

I do not lecture directly from the book, so if you do not read it, you will not be able to do well on the exams. Approximately fifty percent (**50%**) of the questions on each exam are derived directly from your book, so **please do not save all of the reading for the night before your exams!**

Finally, I do utilize **Blackboard** . This is a helpful tool which allows students to access powerpoint slides used in class, obtain additional copies of handouts, syllabi, etc. and check individual grades received on assignments. Simply log on to blackboard.com.



Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- ◆ Explain the fundamental principles underlying the Constitution, including Civil Liberties and Civil Rights.
- ◆ Understand American political culture; (the media, personalities, public opinion, problems, and public participation), and its relationships to policy decisions.
- ◆ Analyze American political parties' and electoral systems' role in government institutions
- ◆ Examine current events within a political context.

◆ **To TRULY THINK FOR YOURSELVES!**

Required Readings

1. Edwards III, Wattenberg, Lineberry, Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, 2004, Brief 8th Edition.
2. Walt Huber, California: State and Local Government in Crisis, 2004, Fifth Edition.

Course Requirements

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Attendance	10
Exam 1	110
Exam 2	110
Final Exam	200
Oral Presentation	55
Experience Paper	50

Total Points Possible 535

All exam grades are based on a standard grading curve, whereby the highest grade will determine the total number of points possible on each exam.

Attendance/Participation

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Per Saddleback College Academic Regulations, failure to attend class may be taken into consideration by instructor in assigning grades. As such, role will be taken, and **10 points** will be issued according to attendance records. Instructors may drop students from a class after six (6) cumulative instructional hours of inexcusable absence. It is the student's responsibility to drop classes he/she is no longer attending.

Discretionary points may also be deducted from participation score if a student is considered by instructor to be a distraction and /or disrespectful disturbance to the learning process.

Exam Rules

The first two exams consist of **50 multiple** choice questions and one short essay. A scantron form is required for each exam. **Each exam** is worth a **total of 110 points**.

The final exam consists of **100 multiple choice** questions. Approximately one quarter (1/4) of the questions on the final will be cumulative. The final exam is worth 200 points.

Make-up Exams

If you cannot be in class the day of the exam, you **must notify me** (leave a message on my voice mail, or e-mail me) **before class** stating the reason that you will not be in class. E-mail is the most effective way to reach me, so please note my e-mail address on the first page of the syllabus.

Make-up exams are not automatically given. If you do not inform me PRIOR to the exam, you will not make up the exam!

Further, make-ups tend to be more difficult as **all make-up exams are entirely essay!** Obviously, it is to your advantage to take the exam in class. If I am not notified before the exam, a failing grade will be given for the missed exam. If you miss an exam, and clear a make-up with me, it is **your responsibility** to meet with me to schedule the make-up.

Oral Presentations

You will be required to present a **short** oral report on a current “hot topic.” Each topic will be assigned, and a presentation date given during the **first class meeting**. It is **your responsibility** to sign up for a topic. This report will be worth **50 points total**, and should take approximately **20 minutes** to deliver. A brief 10 minute question and answer period will follow with the class.

This is a **group activity**, and it is therefore, the groups’ responsibility to form an instructive and fluid report. Redundant or excessive irrelevant material will result in a reduced group grade.

Grading criteria for presentations:

Each report **MUST COVER** the following criteria to receive full credit on this assignment:

1. **Explain the topic.** Act as if the class had never heard of the subject. (i.e. What is a recall? How does it work?) **(10 points)**
2. **Provide a brief history of the subject.** (Has there ever been a recall effort in California before? Was it successful? When?) **(10 points)**
3. **What is the current news story surrounding this topic?** (Why is it hot now?) **(5 points)**
4. **Applicable laws and legislation:** what is the current status of the laws regarding this subject? Are there any new laws being proposed? Where are they in the legislative process? **(10 points)**
5. **What are the pro's AND con's** of this subject? You must always present both sides of an issue in order for your information to be credible. (Why would recalling the governor be good? What may be the negative consequences?) **(10 points)**
6. **Additional Information:** This includes any/all information not covered above, but necessary to completely inform classmates about the topic. This will be topic-specific, and I will assist groups in this area if needed. **(5 points)**
7. What is your **personal opinion** on the subject? If you are not comfortable giving your opinion, or simply to be of interest, survey friends and family to find out how others weigh in on the issue. **(5 points)**

****8. Each student will submit in writing** his/her written copy of the presentation. This report **MUST BE PROPERLY CITED**, and credit given to appropriate sources. Each student must submit **AT LEAST 3 SOURCES** for his/her portion of the report. **Additionally, only 2/3 sources may be internet sources. Failure to cite works properly will result in point deduction.**

All papers will be submitted through turnitin.com and scanned for plagiarism. Turnitin gives me a percentage of the paper that is not original. That percentage of points will be deducted from your personal grade

No extra points will be given for this written requirement, however, **INDIVIDUAL** points will be deducted from a students' grade if aforementioned standards are not met.

An **overall group grade will be assigned.** This grade will be the same for each group member unless either of the following occurs:

- a) There is a group complaint against an individual for his/her lack of contribution
- b) His/her written work (#7 above) was incorrectly submitted

Turnitin.com Instructions

1. Log on to www.turnitin.com
2. Click on “create user profile” in the top right corner of the homepage
 - a. Be sure to use your Saddleback email address
3. New User Wizard will open and walk you through profile creation process
4. When creating user profile, you will need the following:
 - a. Class ID # **1765024**
 - b. Account Password: **government**
 - c. Be sure to put your presentation subject in the “submission title” section

Political Experience Paper

You will be **required to attend (1) “political meeting” this semester**, at a time and location of your choice. A “political meeting” is defined as any area city council meeting, school board meeting, or County Board of Supervisors Meeting. The dates and times of these meetings are listed in a supplement to this syllabus, and will be provided to you the first class meeting. **Double check times and dates before attending meeting.**

A “political meeting” may also include most meetings listed in the **Monday edition** of the **Orange County Register** (or online at ocregister.com). Every Monday, the Register posts, in the local section, any congressional or legislative town hall meetings, political party meetings with speakers, and other lectures or forums. Most of these are acceptable for the assignment, just check with me before attending.

After the meeting, write a 2-3 page paper detailing your thoughts on the event - not a summary of the event, but what you thought was interesting, or a waste of time, worthwhile, or different than expected. Be sure to include the date, time, and location of the meeting in the report. Also, any agendas or supplemental handouts distributed are **REQUIRED** attachments for this project. This report is worth **50 points, and is due the last class meeting BEFORE THE FINAL**. This **does not** need to be submitted to turnitin.com.

Finally, YOU MUST GIVE DETAILS OF THE “OPEN FORUM” session of the meeting (specific homeowner complaints or others that address the group). This assists in establishing your presence at the meeting.

Suggestions for Experience Paper

1. Orange County Board of Education

When: 3rd Thursday of every month
Time: 11:am
Where: Board Room, Orange County Department of Education
200 Kalmus Dr., Costa Mesa CA
Phone: (714)966-4012
e-mail: <http://www.ocde.k12.ca.us/board/default.html>

2. All Local School Boards

Local School Board meetings and times are listed on an individual basis. All of the Boards may be accessed via the following web-site:
<http://www.ocde.k12.ca.us/schools.html>

3. The Community College Board

All of these meetings take place at Saddleback College, and meeting days vary. Meeting times begin at 5:00pm, and they suggest you call the chancellor’s office at 582-4840 prior to the meeting to receive information on any time changes.
<http://www.socccd.cc.ca.us/board/meetings.htm>

4. Orange County Board of Supervisors

All of these meetings are open to the public
When: Every Tuesday
Time: 9:30am
Where: Hall of Administration, Board Hearing Room, First Floor,
10 Civic Center Plaza, corner of Broadway and Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana
<http://www.oc.ca.gov/supes/>

5. The Orange County Transportation Agency

When: Second (2nd) and Fourth (4th) Monday each month

Time: 9:00am

Where: County of Orange hall of Administration, Planning Commission Hearing Room, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana
Phone: (714)560-6282

<http://www.occities.org/occities/pdf/OCTA.pdf>

6. All City Council Meetings

Times and locations for each city differ, but all 34 Orange County City web-sites can be accessed via the Orange County Cities Web-site at:

<http://www.occities.org/occities/cities.htm>

Click on the city of your choice to find out meeting times and locations.

7. Orange County Register

If none of these accommodate your needs, the Orange County Register prints a list of political meetings every Monday in the local section. You may also access this information via their website ocregister.com.

Check these listings and review your choice with me before attending. Most of these listings are suitable for this assignment.

***** NOTE: BE SURE TO CHECK ALL MEETING TIMES/LOCATIONS BEFORE ATTENDING MEETING******

GOOD LUCK, AND HAVE FUN!!!!!!

Academic Honesty Policy

According to Saddleback Policy: "It is each student's responsibility to adhere to the Saddleback College Academic Honor Code, which upholds the integrity of the instruction and the educational process so that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their academic abilities. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated." Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and falsification/fabrication of information. These infractions are further described in the Saddleback Handbook.

Disciplinary actions may include verbal or written warning, student assigned a rewrite of the assignment (or take another version of the test), lower grade on the assignment or test, given a score of zero, or "F" on that assignment, assignment of an "F" in the course.

Special Services

If you need special classroom accommodations we will create an appropriate learning environment for you with the assistance of the Special Services Program. They are

located in the Student Services Center Monday -Thursday 8:00am - 5:00pm and Fridays 8:00am-noon, rm. 113 (582-4885). You must let me know **at the beginning of the semester** in order for us to make special arrangements.

Additional Information

Additional political information may be found in newspapers and on television on CNN MSNBC, FOX, or CNBC. The News Hour with Jim Lehrer on PBS is also a great source of information along with the weekly newsmagazines (60 Minutes, Dateline, 20/20). Further, listed below are some political web-sites that you may be interested in, and may even enjoy...

www.sen.ca.gov --- This is the California State Senate web-site, with links to all (or most) other state agencies on-line and searchable legislative database. You can obtain your Senator or Assemblyman’s names by submitting your zip code here also. All of the members have web pages with editorials, press releases, bios, and maps of their districts (you may also see maps of districts and Congressional names in the governmental pages of your phone book).

www.vote-smart.org/ --- A non-profit group that links a lot of information on voting records, activist groups, political news and resources.

A final note.....

For those of you that are certain that you **“hate politics”** and that **“it has nothing to do with your life,”** stay with me. This class may actually prove to be interesting, and somewhat pertinent to you.

Assignments:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignment</u>	
	<i>Building Blocks of Democracy</i>	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Huber</u>
Jan 8/10	Introduction/ Group Meetings	Chapter 1	Chapter 1

Jan 17/22	The Constitution & Federalism	Chapters 2,3	Chapter 2
Jan 24/29	Civil Liberties & Civil Rights	Chapter 4	
Jan31/Feb5	Introduction to Public Policy	Chapter 15,16	
Feb7/Feb12	Ideology	*Handouts	

Political Culture & Politics

Govt.

Huber

Feb 14	**EXAM I		
Feb 21	Interest Groups	Chapter 9	Chapter 5
Feb 26/28	Media/ Public Opinion	Chapters 5,6	
Mar 5/7	Political Participation	Chapter 8	
Mar 19/21	Political Parties	Chapter 7	
Mar 26/28	Campaigns and Elections	Ch. 5 (review)	
Apr 2/4	Campaign Finance		

Institutional Aspects of Government

Govt.

Huber

Apr 9	** EXAM II		
Apr 11	The Bureaucracy	Chapter12,14	Chapter 10
Apr 16/18	Local Government		Chapters 4,9

Apr 23/25	Legislative Branch	Chapter 10	Chapter 7
Apr30/May2	Executive Branch	Chapter 11	Chapters 6,3
May7/9	Courts	Chapter 13	Chapter 8
May 16th	**FINAL EXAM **	Wednesday, May 16th 10:15am-12:15pm	