

POLS 1000H: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS - HONORS

Citrus College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2025
Credits:	3
Total Contact Hours:	54
Lecture Hours :	54
Lab Hours:	0
Hours Arranged:	0
Outside of Class Hours:	108
Total Student Learning Hours:	162
District General Education:	D1. History and Political Science
Transferable to CSU:	Yes
Transferable to UC:	Yes - Approved
Grading Method:	Standard Letter

Catalog Course Description

This course is an introduction to government and politics in the United States and California. Students examine the constitutions, structure, and operation of governing institutions, civil liberties and civil rights, political behaviors, political issues, and public policy using political science theory and methodology. This is an honors course. This course deals with the origins and functions of the government of the United States with special emphasis on the background and causes of present problems. It meets the United States Constitution graduation requirement and includes local and state government. Students are expected to work and participate at an honors level which includes demonstrating strong critical thinking skills through analysis of social scientific literature and original research in a seminar style class format. Student must be eligible for the Citrus College Honors Program or obtain a recommendation from an Honors instructor. Formerly POLI 103H. 54 lecture hours.

Course Objectives

- Part I: Explain the founding and development of the U.S. and California Constitution.
- Part I: Critique governing institutions and political processes within the United States and California.
- Part I: Employ introductory political science research methods to contextualize contemporary political issues and operations in the United States and California
- Part I: Assess civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and subsequent court decisions.
- Part I: Investigate the role of identity and political ideology in shaping public opinion and public policy in the United States and California.
- Part I: Analyze how to effectively participate in politics at the national, state, county, and/or city levels.

Major Course Content

Part I:

Part 1: Required Topics (Identical):

1. The purpose of government and nature of democratic governance
 - a. Political philosophies that underlie democratic government
 - b. Comparison of representative and direct democracy
 - c. The value of, influences on, and consequences of participation and nonparticipation in democratic government
2. The U.S. and California Constitutions as frameworks for government
 - a. Political philosophies of the framers and critics of the U.S. Constitution
 - b. Processes for amending and interpreting the U.S. and California Constitutions
3. The theory and practice of federalism in the United States, focusing on California
 - a. The framework and operation of federal, state, and local relations
 - b. Interaction between the federal government and Native American tribes and entities
4. The structure and contemporary operations of federal, state, and local governing institutions in the United States and California including the
 - a. Executive branch
 - b. Legislative branch
 - c. Judicial branch
5. Civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups
 - a. Civil liberties and rights as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and federal and state court decisions
 - b. Contemporary and historical interactions between government and marginalized populations within the United States based on factors such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, class, ability status, age, citizenship status, language, religion, and/or other forms of identity
6. Individual and group behaviors within the context of the U.S. and California constitutions, including
 - a. Elections, campaigns, and voting
 - b. Political parties
 - c. Interest groups
 - d. Social movements
7. Factors that shape politics and policymaking including
 - a. Political culture
 - b. Political socialization
 - c. Political ideologies
 - d. Public opinion
 - e. Media
8. Political issues and public policies
 - a. Domestic
 - b. Economic
 - c. Foreign
9. Introductory research methods used in political science including
 - a. qualitative tools and techniques
 - b. quantitative tools and techniques

Part II:

1. Background and Foundations
 - a. The Functions of Government and Political Ideologies
 - b. American Political Culture
 - c. The Constitution
 - d. Federalism
2. Political Processes (Inputs)
 - a. Public Opinion
 - b. Interest Groups
 - c. Political Parties
 - d. Political Participation
 - e. Elections and Campaigns
3. Decision Making Agencies
 - a. The Legislative Branch (Congress)
 - b. The Executive Branch
 - i. The Presidency
 - ii. The Bureaucracy
 - c. The Judiciary
4. Public Policy (Outputs)
 - a. Civil rights and Civil Liberties
 - b. Foreign Policy and National Security
 - c. Domestic and Economic Policy
5. California
 - a. Society
 - b. Construction
 - c. Legislature
 - d. Courts
 - e. Executive

survey's methodology to determine if there might be problems with the survey's reliability or validity.

Instruction Type(s)

Lecture, Online Education Lecture

IGETC Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences

4H. Political Science, Government & Legal Institutions

Suggested Reading Other Than Required Textbook

Class handouts and assigned essays from various readers such as, "Classic Ideas in American Government," the New York Times, and The Economist. In the honors section, students may also be assigned a package of articles from various Political Science journals.

Examples of Required Writing Assignments

Students are asked to write an in-class Blue Book essay on an assigned topic showing knowledge on information provided through lecture, readings, discussion and/or media. Students are asked to write a two to three page take-home response paper to a question presented by the instructor using readings other than the course textbook. (Supplements listed under "Suggested Reading Other Than Required Textbook"). In the honors section, student will also be required to submit a final term paper demonstrating research and analytic skills.

Examples of Outside Assignments

Students are asked to synthesize knowledge gained in the classroom and texts with contemporary issues in American Politics by completing assignments that require library and directed Internet research. One specific assignment used in this course directs students to websites of various scientific public opinion polling organizations. Students then research actual surveys and analyze them based on what they have learned about "reliability" and "validity." Students then identify specific question phrasing, sample size, sampling methods, and analyze the