

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE
Political Science 102 Online – Spring 2010

POLS 102: American Government & Politics
Spring 2010 – 3.0 Units
Online CRN 20786 and 20787

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the origin, development and operation of local, state and national political institutions within the United States, emphasizing the contemporary operations of the American political system. Students will gain an understanding of important American documents, the rights and powers provided therein, and the structure of the American system of government.

The goal of this course is to foster informed, responsible participation in public life. Knowing how to be a good citizen is essential to the preservation and improvement of the United States democracy. Upon completion of this course, the student will understand the major ideas, protections, privileges, and structures that affect the life of a citizen in the United States political system.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion."

~Thomas Jefferson (1820)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Course SLOs: Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are written statements that represent faculty and departmental learning goals for students. During this course, students will:

Outcome 1:	Develop an understanding of civic responsibility.
Outcome 2:	Participate in activities that promote the public good (e.g., the voting process, jury duty, community service).
Outcome 3:	Examine the election and voting process.

Institutional SLOs: Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) are areas of learning that students, faculty, staff, and administrators work toward and assess on a regular basis. After successful completion of a program or degree at Imperial Valley College, students are expected to have measurable improvement in the following areas: **ISLO1** - Communication Skills, **ISLO2** - Critical Thinking Skills, **ISLO3** - Personal Responsibility, **ISLO4** - Information Literacy, and **ISLO5** - Global Awareness.

POLS 102 American Government & Politics will provide students with learning opportunities to improve in all five of the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE COURSE

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the following course objectives:

Objective 1	The Articles of Confederation and the principal reasons why they were replaced by the Constitution.
Objective 2	The significance of the Declaration of Independence concerning the American political philosophy.
Objective 3	The significant features of the Constitution and the major ways that the Constitution changes.
Objective 4	The concept of federalism and how it has changed throughout American history.
Objective 5	The significance of the Bill of Rights, and the continuing debate over civil liberties.
Objective 6	The role of public opinion and the media in the American political system.
Objective 7	The importance of the American political parties, lobbying, and interest groups.
Objective 8	The American election process, including political campaigning and voter behavior.
Objective 9	The formal structure of the Congress and the committee system, the legislative process and congressional powers.
Objective 10	The principal powers of the presidency and how they expanded dramatically in the 20th century.
Objective 11	The American bureaucracy.
Objective 12	The American judicial system and how it is affected by critical issues in American society.
Objective 13	The organizational structure, powers, and challenges confronting California's state and local governments.

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION

This course is presented in an online format, available through the Imperial Valley College Distance Education program. Students are required to attend three face-to-face meetings during the Spring semester (orientation, midterm and final exam). For more information regarding IVC Distance Education go to [http://www.ivc.edu/distance](#). For instructions on logging into the Etudes system, go to [http://www.ivc.edu/etudes](#).

COURSE FORMAT

This class is divided into 14 modules. Each module contains various activities and tasks. All of the modules will be accessible from the Course Menu under "Modules," with due dates listed. You can read explanations of each module once you click on it.

On the due date of each module, the quizzes, assignments, and discussions required in that module will close and cease to be accessible, so don't get behind. You will still be able to see the modules throughout the semester for review. This strict schedule is necessary to keep you on track in the course. Students who get behind in their coursework often end up failing the course as a result.

EXAMPLE OF MODULE REQUIREMENTS	
Module	Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter assignment re Federal system <u>Huber</u> : Chapter assignment re State and Local systems Video: Viewing of video to enhance reading material
Quiz	Multiple-choice quiz over readings (10 points)
Assignment	Written assignment based on material presented in module (20 points)
Discussion	Discussion question based on material presented in module (10 points)

TEXTBOOKS

The following two textbooks are required for this course:

1. **Cummings:** Democracy Under Pressure, An Introduction to the American Political System, Alternate 10th Edition, Thomson/Wadsworth, 2005, or Election Update 2006 Edition, 2007.
Authors: Cummings, Milton C., and David Wise.

This is your main textbook for the course. The multiple-choice questions contained in both the quizzes and the exams will come from this book (and the **Huber** book), so read and study it carefully. This textbook takes an in-depth look at the American federal system of government.

The **Cummings** textbook companion website has many helpful tools to enhance your learning experience, including PowerPoint slides, glossaries, and practice quizzes. You should bookmark the following website for easy access:

2. **Huber:** California State & Local Government in Crisis, 6th Edition.
Educational Textbook Company, 2006.
Author: Huber, Walt.

This is the required textbook for California state and local government. Students enjoy this textbook and find it a good complement to the **Cummings** textbook. The multiple-choice questions contained in both the quizzes and the exams will come from this book (and the **Cummings** book), so read and study it carefully. This textbook takes an in-depth look at the issues facing California state and local governments.

COURSE RESOURCES

Under the Resources tool, you will find chapter study guides and other resources. The study guides contain key points and key terms you should learn from your reading. Using the study guides will increase the efficiency of your reading and hopefully improve your performance on the exams. There are also lecture slides (PowerPoint format) for each chapter in your **Cummings** textbook.

MODULES

The Modules are where you will find the "lecture" for each session. It is important to start each session by going to the Module and completing each section, in the order listed. Each module will have required readings, a video, a quiz, an assignment, and a discussion.

QUIZZES

After completing the module readings and video, students are to take the required Module Quiz in the test center accessible through the Assignments, Tests & Surveys tool. The quizzes consist of ten multiple choice questions and are worth 10 points. Be sure to submit your quiz before the posted deadline. *No late submissions are accepted.*

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

After completing the module requirements, students will go to the Assignments, Tests & Surveys tool and prepare a written assignment in accordance with the instructions. Each written assignment is worth 20 points. It is the quality of what you write versus the quantity that will be graded, but each entry must be as long as necessary to answer the question(s).

Grading of Assignments: The most common problem students experience is not being detailed enough in their answers. Always be as specific as you can and use examples from your readings. Make sure to answer all questions. Points will be deducted for inadequate responses. The following grading rubric is used when grading assignments:

Grading Rubric for Module Assignments		
A	Focused and clearly organized. Contains advanced critical thinking and content analysis. Convincing evidence is provided to support conclusions. Language is precise and ideas are clearly communicated. Clearly meets or exceeds assignment requirements.	18-20
B	Generally focused and contains some development of ideas, but the discussion may be simplistic or repetitive. Evidence is provided which supports conclusions. May have occasional grammatical errors. Meets assignment requirements.	16-17
C	May be somewhat unfocused, underdeveloped, or rambling, but it does have some coherence. Some evidence is provided which supports conclusions. May have several grammatical errors. Meets minimum assignment requirements.	14-15
D	Unfocused, underdeveloped, and/or rambling. Minimal evidence is used to support conclusions. May contain serious grammatical errors that impede overall understanding. Does not respond appropriately to the assignment.	12-13
F	Minimal effort by student. Unfocused, underdeveloped, and/or rambling. May be unduly brief. Evidence is not used to support conclusions. May contain serious grammatical errors that block overall understanding. Does not meet assignment requirements.	0-11

All the assignments will be answered using the Assignments, Tests & Surveys tool. You can prepare your assignment in the box provided (make sure you paragraph and format), or type it in a word processing program, save it on your computer, and then either cut and paste it or attach it as a document. All essays should be double-spaced and prepared with a 12-point font.

You also need to check the Honor Pledge box or the system will not let you submit the assignment. Checking this box means that you did your own work and did not plagiarize or cheat on the assignment. A two-day grace period will be given before closing off submittals, but assignments will be deemed late and lose points if submitted after the due date for that module. If for some reason Etudes does not let you submit your assignment, it should be emailed to the instructor ON TIME, to insure proper credit. (Be sure to put "POLS 102 Online" in the subject area of your email.)

DISCUSSIONS

All class discussions will take place in the Discussion tool of Etudes. These discussions will be worth 10 points each. Discussions will center on a question posed by your instructor in the Discussion forum for a particular module. These questions will primarily ask for your opinion and there will probably not be a "right or wrong" answer.

Grading of Discussions: Your discussion response will be graded on whether it is a well thought-out response. It must be clear from your response that you did the reading, and that your opinion is based on evidence from your readings. Don't try to respond to a discussion question if you haven't done the reading, because it will be very obvious and you will not get full credit for that discussion.

Discussion also means interacting with your fellow students, so it is important that you read all the other student responses and respond to your fellow students with meaningful comments. Don't just respond by saying "I agree with you." If you agree or disagree, you must have a reason why. You do not have to respond to everyone, or even respond to other students in every forum. You should respond when you have something to say and don't be afraid to engage in an argument. Political opinions can be very controversial, since we each have our own values, traditions and beliefs. Just remember that you need to be respectful of all students. We each have the right to our own opinions, even if others don't agree.

At the end of the course, I will give 20 extra credit points to any student that responded to other students with meaningful replies at least 5 times in the Discussions throughout the course.

For the most part, the instructor will not be participating in these discussions (although she will be reading them and get involved if she has something to add). Feel free to engage in a conversation with your fellow students without fear that your instructor will be critiquing everything you write. Basically, *go for it!* However, remember to be respectful of your fellow classmates. If any student uses inappropriate language or is disrespectful of another student, that student will lose points and need to have a personal conversation with the instructor. Remember, this is a college course and the discussion should be academic in nature. Don't get off topic or you will also lose points.

Obviously you will be writing throughout this class, either through the written assignments or in the group discussions. Remember, this is a college course and you should take care to present polished work. This includes checking your spelling and grammar. (Remember, spell check alone is not enough. You must also proofread since spell check does not catch all errors.) If your assignments contain several spelling and/or grammatical errors, points will be deducted.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All tasks for each module are to be completed and submitted by the due date indicated for that module. If you miss a deadline for an assignment, please submit it as soon as possible. Late assignments will be accepted for two days following the due date, but will be assessed a penalty of **5 points per day** they are late. Quizzes cannot be accessed after the due date and must be completed on time. Discussions must be completed on time; otherwise, it isn't a discussion as other students have moved on. *There are **no exceptions** to this late assignment policy.*

EXAMS

There are two exams for this course, the midterm exam and the final exam. Each are worth 75 points. Students are allowed one *handwritten*, 8-1/2" x 11" sheet of notes during the exams (notes can be on both sides of the sheet). Students are encouraged to use the study guides available under the course Resources tool when preparing for the exams. The exams must be taken as scheduled unless *prior* approval has been obtained from the instructor. The exams will be given as follows:

SCHEDULE OF EXAMS	
Midterm Exam (Modules 1-7)	Friday, April 16, 2010, at IVC 6:00pm-8:00pm, Room 208
Final Exam (Modules 8-14)	Friday, June 11, 2010, at IVC 6:00pm-8:00pm, Room 208

GRADES

How much you learn in the course, as well as your final grade, depends on the effort you put into the readings and assignments. There are a total of 14 modules, with a total of **710 points** available. Grades will be assigned on the basis of the following weights:

POSSIBLE POINTS		FINAL GRADES
Assignments	280 points	639 – 710 points = A
Quizzes	140 points	568 – 638 points = B
Discussions	140 points	497 – 567 points = C
Exams	<u>150 points</u>	426 – 496 points = D
Total	710 points	Zero – 425 points = F

EXTRA CREDIT

At the end of the course, 20 extra-credit points will be given to any student that replied to other students in the Discussions forum at least 5 times throughout the course, with meaningful responses. This is the only extra-credit option available in this course.

PLAGIARISM and CHEATING

Plagiarism is to take and present as one's own the writings or ideas of others, without citing the source. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking exams and preparing written materials.

Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials, or assisting others in using materials, which are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question, such as:

- copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment;
- communicating test information with another person during an examination;
- allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment, including the use of a commercial term paper service.

Basically, you cannot copy anything directly from any source, including your textbooks or the Internet, unless you are using a quotation. You must note the book or article or website and page number from the source of your quote. If you paraphrase something, you must also cite the source of your information. *If cheating or plagiarism is discovered, the assignment will be given "0" points. Repeated violations will be reported to IVC Administration.*

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COURSE

It is the responsibility of the student to officially withdraw from the course through the Office of Admissions and Records. If you stop actively participating in the course, it does not mean I will drop you, *but I can drop you at my discretion.* The last day to drop the course with a "W" is **February 1, 2010.** *You must officially drop the course yourself before the deadline or you will receive a grade on your official transcript.*

IMPORTANT: You must be an active participant in the course. If you do not turn in any assignments for two weeks without contacting the instructor, you may be dropped from the course.

AUDITING THE COURSE

If you register and pay for the course and fail to complete any assignments during the first two weeks of the course, the instructor may drop you and deny you further access to Etudes. Imperial Valley College explicitly prohibits auditing of classes; therefore, you may not register and review the course without turning in any assignments.

DOWNLOADS

In order to view certain multimedia elements on the Web, you need multimedia players. The most popular players are Acrobat, QuickTime, Real, Flash, and Shockwave, and they are all freely downloadable.

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QUESTIONS AND NETIQUETTE

Students should refer to the _____ website, especially the _____, to look for answers to their questions before e-mailing the instructor or posting a question to the class. If you want to post questions to the class, do so in the Discussions area topic called "Student Questions."

Netiquette, as you probably know, is a combination of the words "network" and "etiquette." Basically, it describes things you should and shouldn't do while communicating with other people online. This is especially important in a classroom environment. Here are some examples:

- Don't capitalize all letters while posting a thought or e-mailing someone. **THIS IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING, AND IT IMPLIES THAT YOU ARE ANGRY.** Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading.
- Never use profanity or make hurtful comments toward someone or when referring to someone's work. This is considered flaming.
- Be careful when using humor or sarcasm; you never know how someone else will interpret it.
- Be respectful of diverse opinions.

Learn more about Netiquette by viewing the _____, as excerpted from the book "Netiquette" by Virginia Shea. Also, you can test your knowledge by taking the _____. (Both links courtesy of Albion.com).

Overall, please be courteous to the instructor and to your fellow classmates. Working within a safe and friendly learning environment will be beneficial to everyone. If you see postings that are inappropriate, please bring them to the instructor's attention. If a problem occurs, you should be aware of the IVC Student Conduct and Complaint policy, accessible on pages 27-29 of the _____.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the right to experience a positive learning environment; students who disrupt that environment can be asked to leave the course. Faculty and students also have the right of due process. For further information regarding student rights and responsibilities please refer to the _____.

DISABLED STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. The DSP&S office is located in Room 2117, telephone 760-355-6312.

ACCESSIBILITY

Every effort has been made to ensure that this course is accessible to all students, including students with disabilities. If you encounter a problem accessing any portion of this course, please contact the instructor immediately.

OFFICE HOURS

The instructor is available in her office in Room 808, or online, during the following times:

- Monday: 1:30pm-2:30pm
- Tuesday: 1:30pm-2:30pm
- Wednesday: 3:00pm-4:00pm
- Thursday: 1:30pm-2:30pm
- Sunday: 7:00pm-8:00pm – Online Students' Chat Room

Students may contact the instructor at any time during the semester via email at
or by telephone at 760-355-6511 (office) or 760-336-0015 (home).

SCHEDULE OF MODULES and TASKS

Orientation	Friday, February 19, 2010, at Imperial Valley College 6:00pm-8:00pm, Room 2131 (Health Sciences Building)
Module 1 Due 02/28/10 @ 11:45pm	Introduction to Course Readings: Course Syllabus Video: Freedom to Fascism
Module 2 Due 03/07/10 @ 11:45pm	Government and People Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 1 <u>Huber</u> : Chapter 1 Video: State of the Union Address
Module 3 Due 03/14/10 @ 11:45pm	The Constitutional Framework Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 2 <u>Huber</u> : Chapter 2 Video: Constitutional Foundations: Impeaching the President
Module 4 Due 03/21/10 @ 11:45pm	The Federal System Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 3 <u>Huber</u> : Chapter 10 Video: Federalism: Deciding Who Decides
Module 5 Due 03/28/10 @ 11:45pm	Civil Liberties and Citizenship Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 4 <u>Huber</u> : Chapter 4 Video: Civil Liberties: Gun Control and the Second Amendment

Module 6 Due 04/11/10 @ 11:45pm	The Struggle for Equal Rights Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 5 Video: Civil Rights: Affirmative Action in Higher Education
Module 7 Due 04/18/10 @ 11:45pm	Public Opinion and Interest Groups Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapters 6 and 7 Huber: Chapter 5 Video: Public Opinion and Socialization: Measuring Public Opinion
Module 8 Due 04/25/10 @ 11:45pm	The Media and Politics Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 8 Video: Control Room
Module 9 Due 05/02/10 @ 11:45pm	Political Parties Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 9 Video: Political Parties: The National Convention
Module 10 Due 05/09/10 @ 11:45pm	Political Campaigns and Elections Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapters 10 and 11 Huber: Chapter 3 Video: Campaigns and Elections: Close Calls in Presidential Contests
▶ Last Day to withdraw from the course with a "W" is 05-15-10 ◀	
Module 11 Due 05/16/10 @ 11:45pm	The Congress Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 12 Huber: Chapter 7 Video: Congress: The Cost of Campaigning
Module 12 Due 05/23/10 @ 11:45pm	The President Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 13 Huber: Chapter 6 Video: The Presidency: Presidential Style
Module 13 Due 05/30/10 @ 11:45pm	The Bureaucracy Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 14 Huber: Chapter 9 Video: The Bureaucracy: The Power of Rule-Making
Module 14 Due 06/06/10 @ 11:45pm	Justice Readings: <u>Cummings</u> : Chapter 15 Huber: Chapter 8 Video: The Judiciary: Appointments to the Bench
Final Exam (Modules 1-14)	Friday, June 11, 2010, at Imperial Valley College 6:00pm-8:00pm, Room 208