Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes: This course is designed to provide students with a basic working knowledge and understanding of the theory, structure and functions of the American Democratic system of constitutional government at the national, state and local levels, and develop in them a desire to participate effectively in the political decision making process of our democratic system. Students will be introduced to a variety of perspectives on current political issues and policies through open discussion and debate.

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

- Describe the nature of government, its theoretical foundations and functions, relate American and global political thought, the Constitution, and governing institutions to one another, evaluate the relationship between the governing process and public policy.
- Compare and contrast the federal, state and local governments with respect to their political foundations, functions, and contemporary problems, assess relationships between individuals and the state with emphasis on political objectives, rights & liberties.
- Analyze the American political process, including the development of ideologies, voting behavior and other forms of political participation, explain how the American system affects their lives in terms of freedoms and restraints, utilize the knowledge gained to become engaged with the American political process.

Course Requirements:
Grades will be based on a series of comprehensive exams, in-class quizzes, a research paper, a group project, a final essay, current event summaries, attendance and class participation.

Exams: Exams will include multiple choice questions, short answer definitions and essays. Final will also involve a take-home essay question. Exams will cover information from both lecture and reading assignments. (Not all readings will be covered in lecture.) You will need a scantron form #882, a number two pencil, and a black pen for each exam. Your grade will be based on the best four of five exams, your lowest score will be dropped. You may choose not to take the in-class portion of the final exam, but must complete the take-home essay.

Analytical Term Paper: A five page paper analyzing the experiences of a minority individual or group, past or present, who has had a significant impact on government or who has been affected by government at the national or state level. (Select from the attached book list, or see me for approval of additional titles). Examples include Malcom X, Cesar Chavez, Ishi. A prospectus (one paragraph description of your plans for the paper), an outline, and a draft will be required. Papers are due the eleventh week of the semester, and require the signature of my Political Science Tutor. This is not a book report! Your paper must include analysis and the thesis should focus on how government affected this minority, or how this minority affected government. Late papers will not be accepted. See Term Paper Guide for more details, and me with questions!

Group presentations: Teams will be assigned the sixth week of the semester. Each group is responsible for selecting or designing a piece of legislation to propose and argue during a mock legislative committee hearing. Group members will testify in front of a student committee, presenting arguments both supporting and opposing their legislation. Each group will turn in one copy of the bill summary and testimonies. Some class time will be allotted for preparation. Groups will need to meet additionally outside of class to research, design, and practice.

Current Events: Students will be expected to submit current event summaries on a news or political magazine article dealing with a national or state governmental policy decision, event or issue. Summaries should include a copy of the article, and be at least three paragraphs in length. They should include 1) summary of the article, 2) analysis of the author’s position on the issue, and 3) your opinion of the article and the issue. You must complete at least one current event to pass the course. See attached sample for formatting guide.
Attendance & Participation: Class participation and attendance will also affect your grade. Please arrive on time! I do not expect a contribution each class period, nor do I expect you to be an expert on each topic of discussion. I do expect you to have completed the assigned reading and to be prepared to contribute to class discussions. Your opinions matter, and I want to hear them! You are allowed one absence, any additional will reduce your overall grade. Following three absences, you may be dropped from class. If you are unable to attend class, please do not call campus administration, notify me by voice mail or e-mail.

Plagiarism Policy: Students are responsible for citing all sources, including direct quotes and paraphrased information. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and confirmed cases will result in an F grade for the course. Please see attached Folsom Lake College Plagiarism Policy for more detailed information or questions.

Make up exams will not be granted. My regular office hours will be posted, but I am willing to set up appointments to meet with students any time who are concerned about their progress or interested in further discussion of a course topic. Please see me with concerns when the problem is small, do not wait for it to get worse! Contact me any time by e-mail at rockyridge@jps.net.

Texts: (Additional required reading materials may be distributed in class.)

2. California Government & Politics Today, Field and Sohner

2. What Every Student Should Know About Citing Sources (MLA Documentation), M. Greer
3. Enrollment in English Lab 71

Teaching Assistant: Shannon Clark shannon_niccole@yahoo.com Tu-Th 9:30am-12:00 noon

Grading:
1. Paper: 3-5 page analysis on experiences of influential minority 15% (150 Points)
2. Four Exams: Multiple Choice, Definitions, Essay 50% (125 Points Each)
3. Group Assignment: Legislative Hearing Presentation 8% (80 Points)
4. Final Take Home Essay 10% (100 Points)
5. Current Events: Five total due @ 20 points each 10% (100 Points)
6. In-Class Quiz: Five Total @ 10 points each 5% (50 points)
6. Class Discussion: Participation and Attendance 2% (20 Points)
100% (1000 Points)

Extra Credit: A maximum of 50 extra credit points are available. Please see me before you begin your extra credit project so we are both clear on your goal. Each project requires a minimum of two typed (single spaced) pages of summary and analysis, due by May 4th.

Extra Credit Options (50 points maximum) See me first! You may only do one of each!:
(10 pts) 1. Film Review: Select Film From Attached List
(10 pts) 2. Attend a Hearing: Legislative, City Council, County Board of Supervisors
(10 pts) 3. Attend Court Hearing or Trial: Describe Case and Proceedings
(15 pts) 4. Interview An Elected Official Regarding Current Issue (3 pgs minimum)
(20 pts) 5. State Capitol Tour or Other (see me for options!)

POINT SCALE CONVERSION TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>EXAMS</th>
<th>PAPER</th>
<th>TAKE HOME ESSAY</th>
<th>ATTN/PART</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100% = A</td>
<td>113-125 = A</td>
<td>135-150 = A</td>
<td>90-100 = A</td>
<td>18-20 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89% = B</td>
<td>100-112 = B</td>
<td>120-134 = B</td>
<td>80-89 = B</td>
<td>16-17 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79% = C</td>
<td>87-99 = C</td>
<td>105-119 = C</td>
<td>70-79 = C</td>
<td>14-15 = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69% = D</td>
<td>74-86 = D</td>
<td>90-104 = D</td>
<td>60-69 = D</td>
<td>12-13 = D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part One: Where did our government come from?

Jan 19/21: Introduction (Text Chapter 1) Course requirements and key concepts, in-class interviews, theoretical discussions, review of terminology. Justification for government. Conditions, values and action necessary for democracy. Discussion of pathways of action.

Jan 26/28: Establishing a Government (Text Chapter 2) Early American History, European origins / the revolution, Articles of Confederation, Philadelphia Convention and compromise. (Paper Prospectus Due on the 3rd: one page, typed description of plans for your paper. Proofread before submitting!)

Feb 2/4: Limiting Government (Text Chapter 3) Checks & Balances, Separation of Powers, Marbury vs. Madison / Federalism. (Current Event #1 Due on the 4th! Check syllabus for required format and content, PLEASE proofread before submitting!)

February 9th = Exam #1: (Chapters 1, 2, & 3)

Part Two: How are we protected from and by government?

Feb 11/16: The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties/Civil Rights (Text Chapter 5) Discussion of the Bill of Rights and the First Amendment as protection for individuals from government. Discuss the responsibilities of citizens as they relate to current events. Explore how citizens are protected by government. (Current Event #2 Due on the 16th!)

Feb 18/23: History of Civil Rights Struggles and Cases, (MLK Movie) Civil rights movements, the history of equal protection legislation, affirmative action discussion. (Groups Assigned)

Feb 25: Judicial Branch (Text Chapter 4) Discussion of court structure, powers, terms, judicial review, restraint, activism, and judicial appointments.

March 2: Jeopardy Game Exam Review: A chance to practice and prepare for the next exam!

March 4th = Exam #2: (Chapters 4 & 5)

Part Three: Who are the players and what are the rules of the game?

Mar ♠ 9/11: (Text Chapter 6) Political Decision Making Activity / discussion of reelection goals, structure, process of lawmaking, oversight, representation, and effectiveness. (Current Event #3 Due 9th!) (Paper Outline Due 11th! – See Tutor Early!)

Mar 16: Presidency (Text Chapter 7) Ideal President & Fact Pack Activity. Growth of presidential powers, responsibilities, problems, campaigning and personality. (Group Bills Due)

Mar ♠ 18: Bureaucracy: (Text Chapter 8) Discussion of structure, powers, influence, public opinion, effectiveness and Iron triangles. (Current Event #4 Due - PROOFREAD!)
March 23:

**Jeopardy Game Exam Review:** A chance to practice and prepare for the next exam (Term Paper Draft is Due to Teaching Assistant/English Center Consultant!!)

**March 25th** = Exam #3: (Chapters 6, 7 & 8)

*March 29- April 2nd = Spring Break! Enjoy!*  

---

**Part Four: How do state and local government fit into the system?**

**April 6:**

History of California Government (Field Text #1-7) Historical review, Railroad Influence, Constitutional Development, Progressive reforms and legacies.

**April 8/13:**

California Branches (Field Text #8-15) Structure, leadership, process, comparative power, current issues. *(Current Event #5 Due – Last One!)*

**April 15:**

Local Government Local government structures, process, power, players and pathways. Term Paper Due by 5pm! NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED!

**April 20/22:**

Group Presentations (Simulated Legislative Hearings) Each team will present supporting and opposing testimony on their hypothetical legislation. *(Group Legislative Bill Summaries & Testimonies Due)*

*April 27th = Exam #4: (Field & Sohner Text #1-15)*

---

**Part Five: What other factors influence our system?**

**April 29:**

Elections, Campaigns and Public Opinion (Text Chapter 12) Campaign Activity/ Discuss nomination and election processes, the influence of money, public opinion. Campaign reform options and The Electoral College.

**May 4:**

Political Parties (Text Chapter 13) Party ID Activity, discussion of origins, development, influence and functions of parties. *(Take Home Final Essay Due, Last Day to Submit Extra Credit.)*

**May 6:**

Interest Groups and Lobbying (Text Chapter 11) Interest Group growth, lobbying practices, methods of influence, regulations, political action committee impact.

**May 11:**

The Media and Politics (Text Chapter 10) Influence and role of media on policy and elections, public opinion, and voting behavior.

Domestic and Foreign Policy (Text Chapter 14) Changes in domestic priorities, spending trends, balancing the budget/ The end of the Cold War, defense, the US role in foreign policy, intervention.

**Thursday, May 13th (10:00 am -11:50 am) = Exam #5: (Chapters 10-13)**

(Optional if you have taken all other exams and are happy with your grade!)

---

*Folsom Lake College/EDC  Political Science 301: D. Repetto*
1. **Summary of Article (5 points):** Provide a brief description of the information covered in the article. The article should cover a political event or issue at the national, state or local level. Include the main points and any important statistics or references.

2. **Author's Position (5 points):** Provide a brief analysis of the author's position on the issue. Why did s/he choose to write this article? What side was the author on? Was information provided on both sides of the issue? Look at the language used in the article. Was it a neutral article that just provided the facts? *Include specific examples and quotes from the article to support your statements.*

3. **Opinion of Article and Issue (10 points):** Describe your opinion of the article. Was it well written? Were you given enough information? Select an issue from the article – Do you agree or disagree with the author on this issue? Why? Why did you select this article? (This section should be the bulk of your writing!) *Be sure to use examples to support your opinions!*
The take home portion of your final exam involves the following essay question worth one hundred points. This portion of the final is not optional! Your answers should include information from lecture and the texts, as well as your own insightful comments and thoughts. Be sure to answer the entire question. There is no required length for your essay, but it should be no more than 3 pages. Please type your answers! There is no right answer, only complete, well thought out answers! This is a thinking question! I want to hear your thoughts! This is not an opportunity for you to complain about government, but a chance to share your ideas on how to improve a particular aspect of government. Provide a plan of action to implement your change. Keep in mind that this essay is worth 100 points and ten percent of your grade. Be sure to answer the entire question, and provide 100 points worth of insight and information! Weight is put particularly on section three, be specific! I cannot overstate the value of having your paper proofread! If you would like to have a tutor review your paper, visit the English Lab with a draft at least two weeks prior to due date.

“As a United States citizen, describe what pathway of action you could take to change an aspect of American or California Government. How will you accomplish your goal of influencing government policy? Describe the specific actions YOU would need to take”

Include in your answer:

1. **What it is you want changed, why, and what you want it changed to.** Be very brief! This is NOT an opportunity for you to complain or expand on what you see as an existing problem, just tell me what specific policy you want to change, why, and what you want it changed to.

2. **Which pathway of action you would take to implement the change and why?** What options do you have as a citizen to initiate and participate in the process? Which would be most effective for the change you’d like to make?

3. Most importantly, **describe exactly how you would implement the change. Include the exact steps YOU would take to implement your change. This is your plan of action, directions for changing policy.** What specific actions would you need to perform to ensure change? (Do NOT restate the steps of how a bill becomes a law! If you choose the legislative process for implementing your change, tell me what role YOU would/could play, and what steps YOU would take in that process. Provide a Plan of Action. “My first step would be….., then I would……, following that, I would….., next, I would……, etc.”)

4. **Keeping in mind the current political culture, how likely is it that your desired results would occur?**