

POLS C1000: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2025
Units:	5
Hours:	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249; not open to students with credit in POLI 1.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 4: Social & Behavioral Sciences
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable
Formerly:	POLI 1

Student Learning Outcomes

- A successful student in this course will demonstrate development of critical, analytical, research, and writing skills.
- Analytical use of concepts and research to support hypotheses and conclusions.
- Understand and utilize a variety of theoretical approaches to the analysis of institutional/policy outcomes of government.

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. Interactions between the federal government and Native tribes; a particular focus is placed on the political struggle, including through the lenses of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, in shaping politics and policymaking.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Explain the founding and development of the U.S. and California Constitution.
2. Critique governing institutions and political processes within the United States and California.
3. Employ introductory political science research methods to contextualize contemporary political issues and operations in the United States and California.
4. Assess civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and groups as articulated in the U.S. and California Constitutions and subsequent court decisions.

5. Investigate the role of identity and political ideology in shaping public opinion and public policy in the United States and California.
6. Analyze how to effectively participate in politics at the national, state, county, and/or city levels.

Course Content

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 non-participation 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

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus, no special facilities or equipment needed.
2. When taught as an online distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Examples of potential methods of evaluation used to observe or measure students'

achievement of course outcomes and objectives could include but are not limited to quizzes, exams, essays, field journals, projects, critical analysis papers, service learning, simulations, research demonstrations, etc. Methods of evaluation and appropriate representative assignments will be determined at the discretion of local faculty.

Research papers, which develop critical analytical, research, and writing skills, as well as testing for thematic understanding

Quizzes or exams in essay format, as well as true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple choice

Oral presentations, including debates, which foster critical thinking skills and teamwork

Participation in class discussions

Newspaper article summaries and analyses

Essays, field journals, service learning, simulations, research demonstrations, etc.

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture

Discussion

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Any college-level introduction to American government and politics textbook including, but not limited to:

Patterson. 2024. [We the People](#). 15th ed.

Krutz and Waskiewicz. 2024. [American Government 3e](#). OpenStax (OER)

Sidlow and Henschen. [GOVT 12: Principles of American Government](#). 2025

Reti. 2023. [Introduction to California Government and Politics](#). (OER)

Van Vechten. 2021. [California Politics: A Primer](#).

May also include supplementary materials such as, but not limited to, primary sources (e.g., *The Federalist Papers*), readers, etc.

Nichols, A.D. [Research in Political Science](#). 2021.

Franco, J., C. Lee, K. Vue, D. Bozonelos, et al. [Introduction to Political Science Research Methods](#). 2020.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. College-level reading and writing required.
2. Review, critique, and synthesis of political science journal articles.

Discipline(s)

Political Science