

## POLITICAL SCIENCE I: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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### Introduction

Greetings to all online Political Science students! This welcome letter will introduce you to the terrains of Political Science I: Introduction to US Government course. Please read this entire document carefully. Enrolled students are responsible for all information contained in this document.

### Time commitment

When this course is offered as a traditional, face-to-face class, it meets for approximately 3 hours per week. That does not include time spent on the coursework outside of the classroom, such as reading the textbook and writing. Therefore, you should expect to spend the same amount of time for an online class as for a face-to-face class. Expect to log on to the class website at least 3 times per week, and to be spending a significant amount of time online.

### Read and follow all directions carefully

This is so crucial for success in an online course. I have found that some students don't do well in my online courses simply because they have failed to read and follow directions. Ensure a good start by reading this document carefully. Throughout the course, make sure to read all directions for the various assignments carefully and read all announcements.

### Procrastination...don't do it!

Do not wait until the last minute to complete the assignments. Just because an assignment is due on a particular day, does not mean that you should wait until that day to work on it. In fact, you should always try to work ahead of the due dates. *Excuses for missing deadlines, including technical difficulties and personal problems, will not be accepted.* **Please note that late work will not be accepted.**

### Stay connected

Every time you log on to Etudes, check the Announcements, your Private Messages and the Discussion Board for new entries.

## Technical FAQs and Helpful Tips

**Do we have any class meetings on campus?** There are no in-person class meetings. The class is 100% online.

**How do I set up my computer prior to the start of class?** LAVC uses an online software program called “Etudes”. Even if you have taken an Etudes class before, you will want to make certain you are using only the required browsers and the correct browser version. Failure to set up your computer properly may result in problems and impede your success in this class. The Etudes class software currently requires using either Firefox version 3.0 or Internet Explorer version 7, not 8. Below are the steps to ensure you have your computer set up properly for class:

Step 1: To learn how to set up your computer browser, please visit the [etudes system requirements link](#).

Step 2: Go the LAVC Virtual Valley website at <http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/index.htm>

(a) Click on the “technical information” link on the left and scroll down the page to add the plug-ins according to the instructions.

(b) Click on the link to take the “online learning success tutorial.”

(c) Click on the link and read the FAQ’s.

(d) Click on the “student resources” link, and then click on the “are you ready for online learning” link to take the student skills quiz. Surf around this site to learn more about online learning at LAVC.

**Can I use a Mac?** Yes, however, you need to use only the recommended browsers/versions or you will experience problems. See above.

**Do I need an email address?** YES! In order to receive important class information, reminders, and due dates, you need to have your most up-to-date email address listed with our LAVC Admissions and Records office. To check what email address you have listed on the system, go to the online student registration system [here](#). If you do not have an email address you can get one for free from websites such as Yahoo or Google. Once you login to Etudes you can also change or verify your email address again in the “my workspace” area.

**Where do I login to come to class?** The Virtual Valley website has instructions on how to login to the Etudes class system at: <http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/loggingonline.htm>

It’s also best to bookmark the Etudes site at <https://myetudes.org>

Note: Your Etudes login information is *different* from your LAVC user name and password so be careful to follow the login instructions carefully on the LAVC Virtual

Valley site.

Once you login, you will see a tab for “my workspace” where you can enter or verify your email address. The Poli Sci 001 class tab will appear approximately one day before the first day of classes.

**What if I cannot login or I have technical issues?** Visit the Virtual Valley “Help Desk” page at <http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/helpdesk.htm> where you can call, email, or walk in to get help. If you are unable to login, email me immediately at [oregana@lavc.edu](mailto:oregana@lavc.edu)

Note: The expectations of students who take an online class are that you know how to use a computer, the Internet, and word processing programs well. Technical problems will *not* be accepted as an excuse for missed deadlines or any other issues.

### **Course Description**

This introductory course on American government is organized in three parts. The first part of the course analyzes the basic historical and foundational aspects of the American political system. In this section we will analyze the Declaration of Independence, the crafting and continuing importance of the U.S. Constitution, the federal system, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights.

The second part of the course examines how individual citizens and groups in the United States are linked to various governance structures. At this point we will examine such "linkage organizations" as the media, public opinion, interest groups, political parties, as well as elections and campaigns.

The third part of the course focuses upon the roles played by our national political institutions. Hence, we will explore the functions of the Congress, the Presidency, the bureaucracy, and the Judiciary. Throughout the course I will incorporate relevant material on California state and local politics.

### **Required Reading**

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, and Margaret Weir. We the People: An Introduction to American Politics. Shorter Eighth ed., New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011. (ISBN# 978-0393935240) You also have access to the free student website at [wwnorton.com/wtp8e](http://wwnorton.com/wtp8e). You can also purchase We The People as an e-book (ISBN 978-0-393-11871-1) for around half the price of the regular print edition) through the bookstore or via the publishers at [nortonebooks.com](http://nortonebooks.com).

### **Course Level Student Learning Outcome**

Analyze the structure of US government and its historical and political impact on modern American society.

### **Disabled Students**

If you are a student with a disability requiring classroom accommodations, and have not contacted SSD, do so in a timely manner. SSD is located in the Student Services Annex, Room 175 or call SSD at (818) 947- 2681 or TTD (818) 947-2680 to meet with a SSD counselor. If SSD has already sent the memo to instructor confirming accommodations required by student for this class, please meet with me to discuss arrangements.

### Class Time

Be prepared to spend on average about 12 hours per week on this class. You will have weekly quizzes and frequent short essays and discussion boards to contribute to; hence its imperative to keep up with the work. I'd suggest logging in daily and checking in the Announcements, Private Messages and the Discussion Board for new entries. Missing deadlines due to procrastination or technical difficulties will not be accepted.

I am here to help—please stay connected and contact me either through my regular e-mail address or through ETUDES Private Messages. I will usually respond within 24 hours.

## READING AND LECTURE OUTLINE

### PART I: THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN POLITICS

#### I. American Political Culture

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 1.

#### II. The Constitution

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 2, The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution of the United States (From the Appendix of Ginsberg et al).

#### III. Federalism

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 3.

#### IV. Civil Liberties

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 4.

#### VI. Civil Rights

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 5.

### PART II: LINKAGE ORGANIZATIONS

#### VI. Public Opinion

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 6.

**VII. The Media**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 7.

**VIII. Political Participation and Voting**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 8.

**IX. Political Parties**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 9.

**X. Elections and Campaigns**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 10.

**XI. Interest Groups**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 11.

**PART III. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS****XII: The Congress**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 12.

**XIII. The Presidency**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 13.

**XIII. The Bureaucracy**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 14.

**XV. The Judiciary**

**Required Reading:** Ginsberg et al, Chapter 15.

**Course Requirements****Weekly Quizzes (300 Points Total)**

There are 15 weekly quizzes on a chapter of the textbook. Each quiz consists of 20 multiple-choice questions. These will be timed assignments in which you have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. There are deadlines posted when the quiz is available and when the quiz deadline has been reached. Once the deadline has been reached that chapter quiz is then closed.

**Short Written Assignments (300 Points Total)**

There are three short assignments that will test your ability to synthesize and critically evaluate the material that you are studying in written form. Think of these assignments as 500 word essays. I will post more information about the assignments when they become due. Each assignment is worth 100 points. These assignments are due roughly

every four to five weeks. I will post these assignments in the "Tasks, Tests, Surveys" Section of the ETUDES website. Once an assignment is graded you will be able to see comments and feedback from me.

### **Discussions (375 Points)**

Over the course of the semester there will be five discussions, each worth 75 points. Each student will be evaluated based upon the quality of their insights and how well they interact with other student comments. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates' opinion when operating in the discussion section. I will provide more in-depth guidance when the first discussion post is made available.

### **Introductions (50 Points)**

Introduce yourself to the class. Include any personal information you wish to share. Include previous college experience and any online classes you have completed. Respond to at least two classmates although I am sure all would like to hear from you (Post Reply). 25 points earned for discussion participation and 25 points for adding your picture to Etudes. Go to "My Profile" above, scroll to the Avatar Control Panel at the bottom and insert a picture of yourself (no larger than 130 pixels). Other than the extra points on the introduction there are no additional extra credit opportunities.

### **Course Grades**

<b>A=</b>	<b>900 or more points</b>
<b>B=</b>	<b>800-899 points</b>
<b>C=</b>	<b>700-799 points</b>
<b>D=</b>	<b>600-699 points</b>
<b>F=</b>	<b>599 or below</b>