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

You can also purchase We the People: An Introduction to American Politics as an e-book for around half the price of the regular print edition. For more information contact: http://books.wwnorton.com/nortonebooks/.

Make sure to purchase the correct textbook—check the ISBN number as listed. Not having the textbook is not an acceptable excuse for not doing the work.

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.

**Time Commitment**
Most students who have taken an online class will tell you that most online classes are more difficult than face-to-face classes. You need to be self-motivated and self-disciplined to succeed in an online class. There will be a lot of reading and writing involved in an online class. Online classes are not for everyone. Take the online tutorial on the Virtual Valley website to see if online classes are for you: [http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/index.html](http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/index.html)

**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. I post a weekly reminder post of the work that is pending to help students stay on top of what work is due.

**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. Students who post their work at the last minute usually score significantly below the class average for their work. Students frequently wait until the last minute and seemingly inexplicable events occur that results in them not being able to complete the assignment. As each assignment is opened two weeks ahead of the deadline students who “miss” (student vocabulary for not doing the work) the deadline for the assignment are therefore engaging in highly self-destructive behavior. Please note that there is no window for late work as missing deadlines, including technical difficulties (unless of course the ETUDES system is at fault) and personal problems, will not be accepted.

**Student Online Participation and Registration Status**
Although there is no "attendance" in an online course if you do not complete the first week’s work (Introductions and Chapter One Quiz) by **Sunday, September 7, 2014 at 11 PM** you will be considered "inactive" and will be dropped from the course.
If you fail to complete three assignments throughout the semester (quizzes, discussion board posts, discussion board responses or written essays) you will be considered "inactive" and could be dropped from the course.

READING AND LECTURE OUTLINE

PART I: THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN POLITICS

I. American Political Culture (Sep 1 to Sep 7)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 1.

II. The Constitution (Sep 8 to Sep 14)
   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 (Sep 15 to Sep 21)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 3.

IV. Civil Liberties (Sep 22 to Sep 28)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 4.

V. Civil Rights (Sep 29 to Oct 5)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 5.

PART II: LINKAGE ORGANIZATIONS

VI. Public Opinion (Oct 6 to Oct 12)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 6.

VII. The Media (Oct 13 to Oct 19)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 7.

VIII. Political Participation and Voting (Oct 20 to Oct 26)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 8.

IX. Political Parties (Oct 27 to Nov 2)
   Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 9.
X. Elections and Campaigns (Nov 3 to Nov 9)
Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 10.

XI. Interest Groups (Nov 10 to Nov 16)
Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 11.

PART III. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

XII. The Congress (Nov 17 to Nov 23)
Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 12.

XIII. The Presidency (Nov 24 to Nov 30)
Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 13.

XIV. The Bureaucracy (Dec 1 to Dec 7)
Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 14.

XV. The Judiciary (Dec 8 to Dec 14)
Required Reading: Ginsberg et al, Chapter 15.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Quizzes (375 Points Total)
There are 15 weekly quizzes on a chapter of the textbook. Each quiz consists of 25 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. For security reasons I do not allow reviews of completed quizzes.

Written Assignments (400 Points Total)
There are two written assignments that will test your ability to synthesize and critically evaluate the material that you are studying in written form. Each essay is worth 200 points and should be around 1000-1250 words in length. I will post these assignments in the “Assignments, Tests, and Surveys” (AT & S) section of the ETUDES website. Once an assignment is graded you will be able to see comments and feedback from me by going to the AT & S section or by clicking on the “hotlink” on the Course Map tab.
Discussions (225 Points)
Over the course of the semester there will be three discussions, each worth a maximum of 75 points. There is an original post worth up to 50 points and a set of response posts with a different deadline worth a maximum of 25 points. Each student will be evaluated based upon the quality of their insights and how well they interact with other student comments. Please refrain from writing in an academic forum as if it were a text message—good quality writing is rewarded at the same level as poor quality writing is penalized. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates’ opinion when operating in the discussion section. Once a discussion assignment is graded you will be able to see comments and feedback from me by clicking on the “View Forum Section” button at the Discussion and Private Message section.

Introductions (25 Points)
Introduce yourself to the class (Press New Topic Button). 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. 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). Posting a picture of you is worth 5 points, your original post is worth up to 10 points and your response is also worth 10 points for a maximum score of 25 points. Due Sunday, September 7, 2014 at 11 PM.

Course Grades
There are a total of 1025 points available. Your final course grade will be based on the total earned in the class session. Other than the introductions there is no extra credit offered in this course.

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\begin{align*}
A &= 900 \text{ or more points} \\
B &= 800-899 \text{ points} \\
C &= 700-799 \text{ points} \\
D &= 600-699 \text{ points} \\
F &= 599 \text{ or below}
\end{align*}
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MISCELLENEOUS COURSE POLICIES
I. Late Work
Note that there is no grace period for late work. Please don’t ask to “make up” work that you “missed” later in the course.

II. Technical Issues
“Technical problems” are not an acceptable excuse—unless of course the ETUDES system is at fault. I would suggest that you have a backup plan in case of personal computing or personal technical failures. The college has computers available, as do public libraries, and private outlets such as Fed-Ex/Kinko’s.

Make sure to log on to the ETUDES system rather than connecting through the LAVC website as the latter does have more frequent outages than the ETUDES system. Not being able to log on to the LAVC website is not an acceptable excuse for late or missing work when the ETUDES system is operational.

III. Plagiarism
The following link, created by the LAVC Writing Center, provides a short overview of plagiarism. You are responsible for all of the information found at this link. Please read through it carefully:
http://www.lavc.edu/writingcenter/handouts/plagiarism.html

Plagiarism is intellectual property theft. Plagiarism is a serious academic violation. If you are found to have engaged in plagiarism you will receive a zero for the entire assignment. If after reading the LAVC policies on Plagiarism you are still unclear then please contact me.

Plagiarism is behavior not intent—please don't tell me later that you "didn't mean to" or "were unaware" of what acts of Plagiarism consist of. By turning the assignment in you are consenting to all of my stated policies on Plagiarism.

Please visit this website at Indiana University for more information and please take the online quiz to check your understanding of plagiarism:
http://www.indiana.edu/~tedfrick/plagiarism/index2.html