



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

POS 16 - Vital Political Problems

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: An introduction to political science designed to familiarize students with basic political concepts, political ideologies, political systems, and subfields within political science. (C-ID POLS 150).

Objectives

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

1. Explain the development of political science and its subfields.
2. Identify the key concepts in political science.
3. Evaluate and analyze normative and empirical approaches.
4. Identify and analyze basic political systems and their differences.
5. Analyze political behavior in international affairs.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Political Science as a field of study.	9.00
Key concepts in political science, such as nations, states, power, institutions, and political behavior.	12.00
Introduction to the methods of political science.	9.00
Political theory and ideologies	9.00
Comparative politics, including types of governments, institutional arrangements, and political processes.	6.00
International relations, including theories, actors, and levels of analysis.	6.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Class Activities
- B. Discussion
- C. Guest Speakers
- D. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- E. Lecture
- F. Multimedia Presentations

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Quizzes
- C. Research Projects
- D. Oral Presentation
- E. Class participation
- F. Written Assignments

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the article from the New York Times about the Crisis in Ukraine. As you read try to make annotations and connections to terms we have discussed in class: sovereignty, democracy, globalization, etc. Be prepared to discuss this reading with peers.
2. Read the article that explains normative and empirical approaches in political science. Be prepared to discuss which approach you favor and why.

Writing Assignments

1. Write a three-page essay focusing on the amount of money spent in the most recent presidential election by both Super PACs and small individual donors . Review the blog piece by The Monkey Cage that discusses the Citizens United SCOTUS case. Your paper should include citations and 5 key terms from the chapter on elections.
2. Conduct preliminary research on two contemporary issues or problems facing local government in the city that you live in. Create an annotated bibliography of at least 5 newspaper sources published within the last year for each issue or problem.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Attend a meeting of the Diversity and Hiring Committee. Be prepared to summarize the meeting's discussion in our class. Some states have active affirmative action programs while others do not. What is California's current position on affirmative action and what proposals were being advanced by this college with regard to diversity in hiring?
2. Please attend a local government meeting on the topic of housing and homelessness, some are even available via Zoom or recorded. Report your observations to class. Make notes comparing what you heard with the reading from the Sacramento Bee article discussed in class and Governor's speech (see Canvas). Be prepared to discuss with peers.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Magstadt, T. (2021). Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions and Issues. *Cengage Learning*, 13th. 9780357137352.

Amy I. Atchison. (2021). Political Science is For Everybody. *University of Toronto Press*, 1st. 9781487523909.

Other Learning Materials

There is no perfectly designed textbook for this course, so a combination of reading materials would be required to address all of the SLOs. It is recommended that a news publication with an international focus, as well as some political methods articles, be used as supplements to the textbooks.

Minimum Qualifications

Political Science (Masters Required)

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