



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

POS 12 - California State and Local Government

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU

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: This course is an introduction to government with emphasis on California State and local governments. Government institutions and political processes are examined in the context of the state's diverse population and culture. Additionally, the course covers the historical development of federal, state and local government relations. Attention is given to local government institutions and the dilemmas they face in carrying out their governing roles.

Objectives

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

1. recall California political history from the early Native Americans to the present, including its ethnic and religious diversity.
2. identify and explain the basic provisions of the California Constitution, which may include: 1) the organization and working of the California legislative, executive and judicial branches; 2) the organization and working of county and municipal governments and their relationship to state government; 3) electoral organization at the state and county levels, including initiatives, referendums and recalls.
3. explain federalism and the evolution of government and politics in California within the federal Constitutional framework.
4. identify provisions and processes for cooperation and resolution of conflict between local, state and federal levels of government.
5. describe and analyze the organization of political parties and interest groups at the state and local levels.
6. examine the importance of basic civil rights and civil liberties, like voting, as per the California and U.S. Constitution.
7. analyze and evaluate contemporary political issues and processes in California and the United States.
8. connect and extend knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from class to one's own participation in civic life and government (civic engagement).

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Introduction to Political Science and Political Analysis	2.00
Research Techniques and Critical Analysis	2.00
Philosophies of the Founding Fathers and the Federal Constitution	4.00
Federal Government, Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches	5.00
Federalism (Federal - State Relations)	3.00
California's Political History	3.00
Constitution of California (A Progressive Era Constitution)	3.00
County and Municipal Government	3.00
Legislative Branch (State)	3.00
Executive Branch and Administration (State)	3.00
Judicial Branch and Process (State and County)	3.00
Civil Rights, the Law, Jury Service and the Penal System in California	3.00
History and Politics of Diversity	3.00
Politics: Communities, Public Opinion, Interest Groups and Pluralism	6.00
Voting, Electoral Rules and Political Campaigns (State and Local)	5.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

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

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Research Projects
- C. Oral Presentation
- D. Homework
- E. Class participation
- F. Essays and research papers
- G. Participation in local or campus events like Town Hall Meeting or the Fireside Debate and Forum; participation in local government meetings to fulfill Civic Engagement SLO

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the assigned article on the topic of the California State Legislature. Note which party dominated the state legislature at the time of the articles publication. Speculate as to how this imbalance might impact the passing of a state budget.
2. Read the article discussing the California State Legislature and how it contrasts with our federal legislature in terms of passing new laws. Also, be ready to discuss how "Propositions" allow for new laws and regulations.

Writing Assignments

1. Write a three page position paper on why it is so difficult to pass an annual budget in the state of California.
2. Write a short essay focusing on local special interest groups (e.g. PTA, Owners Associations etc.) and how local city councils deal with these entities. In your essay, describe how such associations sometimes are in conflict with municipal laws.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Attend a local PTA meeting and summarize the discussions and report to class. If there is a contentious issue dividing parents from the School Board, describe the problem in detail (e.g. PTA wanting more money allocated to field trips, or something similar).
2. Attend the breakout session on the California Drought at the CSU, Chico Town Hall Meeting. Prepare an "Action Plan" describing what the policy makers describe as the challenges, and how you might work to overcome them at that local and state levels.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Lawrence, D., & Cummins, J. (2019). California: Politics of Diversity. *Rowman & Littlefield*, 10th. 978-1-5381-2929-6.

League of Women Voters. (2015). Guide to California Government. *League of Women Voters*, 2nd. 978-0963246523.

Reti, Steven. (2019). Introduction to California Government and Politics. *College of the Canyons, Open Source via Google Docs and CA CCC Chancellor's Office*. ccb4.0.

Other Learning Materials

A California based newspaper is also recommended for this class; however, access to a current full subscription is currently not available on campus.

Citizenville: How to Take the Town Square Digital and Reinvent Government by Gavin Newsom and Lisa Dickey. 2014. Penguin Books. This is recommended as a supplement to one of the above texts.

Minimum Qualifications

Political Science (Masters Required)

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