

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

Political Science 140 – Introduction to California Governments and Politics

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

Examination of the structure and functions of California state and local governments and politics. Attention will be given to the evolution of the principal features, organization, and operation of state and local governments within the framework of U.S. federalism from the time of the nation's founding. Emphasis is on the role of significant events, major ethnic groups, and major social groups in the development of the political structures and processes of California state and local governments and contemporary political issues.

Prerequisite

None

Course Content

Comprised of units to give students perspectives on state and local politics, especially including:

- 1) The evolution and problems of the U.S. federal system and California's relationship within this system
- 2) California's Constitution and its state and local government structures, functions, and policymaking processes
- 3) A comparison of these structures and processes with other state and local governments
- 4) Contemporary policy problems facing California and other states and localities
- 5) California's external relations including with its neighbor, Mexico

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Describe and analyze the evolution of the relationship of the states and the U.S. in its entirety, with a special emphasis on U.S. California relations, including the relationship of regions within the U.S.
- 2) Detail the origins and development of the state of California and how this development reflects the continuity of the American experience and how that experience was derived from other political cultures and shaped by California's geography, economics, and social movements.
- 3) Compare and contrast California's Constitution with the U.S. Constitution, including the influence of the political philosophies of the framers of the U.S. Constitution as well as the rights and obligations of citizens under the U.S. and California Constitution.
- 4) Compare and contrast the California governmental system with other sub-national governments in the United States, and with regional and local governments in other selected nations including the relationships of these governments with external regions and powers.
- 5) Describe and evaluate the contemporary public policy issues facing state and local governments.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Participation in class conversations, role playing, simulations, or debates about students' engagement with course content and course assessments.
- 2) Formative and summative writing prompts, quizzes, or exams that prepare students to confidently

engage in course content.

- 3) Written assignments, such as students' reflections on course content.
- 4) Analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles.
- 5) Research papers or projects that are scaffolded over the course, so students have time to engage with challenging course content.
- 6) Oral presentations to give students the opportunity to practice their communication skills and share their research papers or projects with peers.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

- 1) Smart classroom
- 2) Preferred: Technology Enabled Active Learning classroom
- 3) U.S. and California topographical and political maps

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lecture
- 2) Small and large group discussions
- 3) Individual and group projects
- 4) Individual, small, and large-scale simulations
- 5) Guest speakers
- 6) Learning management systems for:
 - a. Individual and group assignments
 - b. Class discussions
 - c. Formative and summative quizzes
 - d. Individual reflections

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Individual and group assignments can include:
 - a. Analysis and interpretation of chapters in assigned text
 - b. Analysis of current events
 - c. Analysis of diversity, equity, and inclusion and its relation to course content
 - d. Analysis of peer-review journal articles
 - e. Public policy-related project

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative example): Van Vechten, Renee B. 2023. California Politics: A Primer. 7th edition. CQ Press.
- 2) Supplemental: None

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify the principles, governmental structures, and civil societal elements of California government and politics.
- 2) Summarize the historical roots and contemporary evolution of California government and politics.
- 3) Apply normative and positive approaches to the study of California government and politics.
- 4) Analyze existing applications of political science to topics such as California civil liberties, civil rights, governmental structure, and civil society.
- 5) Evaluate the similarities, differences, and relationships between the State Senate, State Assembly, Governor, the Bureaucracy, the Judiciary, the Media, and the Public.