

BUTTE COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

POS 12 - California State and Local Government

3 Unit(s)

Prerequisite(s): NONE

Recommended Prep: Reading Level V; English Level IV

Transfer Status: CSU

51 hours Lecture

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. POS 12 partially satisfies U.S. History, Constitution and American Ideas requirement at the CSU.

II. OBJECTIVES

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

- A. recall California political history from the early Native Americans to the present, including its ethnic and religious diversity.
- B. identify and explain the basic provisions of the California Constitution, including the organization and working of the California legislative, executive and judicial branches; the organization and working of county and municipal governments and their relationship to state government; electoral organization at the state and county levels, including initiatives, referendums and recalls.
- C. explain the basic functions, organization and workings of the federal legislative, executive and judicial branches the philosophies of the framers of the United States Constitution and the basic principles of American Democracy; federalism and the historical evolution of government and politics in California within the federal Constitutional framework.
- D. identify provisions and processes for cooperation and resolution of conflict between local, state and federal levels of government.
- E. describe and analyze the organization of political parties and interest groups at the state and local levels.
- F. examine the importance of voting and other obligations of citizenship basic civil rights under the California and U.S. Constitution and an introduction to law.
- G. apply abilities to critically analyze and evaluate contemporary political issues and processes.
- H. compare different skills to enable effective participation in the political process.

III. COURSE CONTENT

A. Unit Titles/Suggested Time Schedule

Lecture	
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. Introduction to Political Science and Political Analysis	2.00
2. Research techniques and critical analysis	2.00
3. Philosophies of the Founding Fathers and the Federal Constitution	4.00
4. Federal Government, Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches	5.00
5. Federalism (Federal - State Relations)	3.00

6. California's Political History	3.00
7. Constitution of California (A Progressive Era Constitution)	3.00
8. County and Municipal Government	3.00
9. Legislative Branch (State)	3.00
10. Executive Branch and administration (State)	3.00
11. Judicial Branch and process (State and County)	3.00
12. Civil Rights, the Law, jury service and the penal system in California	3.00
13. History and politics of diversity	3.00
14. Politics: communities, public opinion, interest groups and pluralism	6.00
15. Voting, electoral rules and political campaigns (State and Local)	5.00
Total Hours	51.00

IV. **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

- A. Lecture
- B. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- C. Discussion

V. **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

- A. Class participation
- B. Tests: Multiple-choice, short answer and essay
- C. Term Project / Research Assignment

VI. **EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS**

- A. Reading Assignments
 1. Read the article that was passed out in class the other day dealing with 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 our 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.
- B. 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. Be able to focus on laws that allow for extensions to budget deadlines.
 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.
- C. Out-of-Class Assignments
 1. Take a tour of the State Capitol building. Report on various events taking place there. If there are demonstrations find out what the issues are and what the demonstrators feel they can gain by their actions at the capitol.
 2. 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).

VII. **RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION**

Textbooks:

- A. Lawrence. California: Politics of Diversity. 6th Edition. Cengage, 2010.

- B. Giventer, Lawrence. Governing California. 2nd Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2007.
- C. Field, Mona. California Government and Politics Today. 12th Edition. Longman, 2009.

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