LOS ANGELES MISSION COLLEGE

Political Science 1 – US Government
Spring 2014 – Syllabus – Section #3279

Instructor: John Paul Tabakian, Ed.D.
Class: Section #3279 – 09/1/2014 to 12/21/2014 – Mondays – 3:30pm to 6:40pm – INST 1003
Office Hours: Mondays 6:50pm to 7:50pm – INST-Faculty Office
Office Phone: (310) 421-8532
E-mail: mission@tabakian.com ***(the most reliable way to reach me is by e-mail)***
URL: www.tabakian.com ***(use the site to download lost class handouts)***

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the principles, structure, and problems of American government. Students will cover the Constitution of the United States of America, the Constitution of the State of California, political philosophies, political institutions, amendments and interpretations, the rights and obligations of citizens and Federal/State, State/Local, and contemporary State/Local/Federal government relationships.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will have attained the following outcomes following completion of this course:

1. Define the powers, roles, functions, and limitations of the duties of federal, state, and local governments.
2. Analyze current American domestic and foreign policies and be able to put them into a historical perspective.
3. Differentiate initiatives, referendums, and recalls in California Constitution and laws.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will have attained the following objectives following completion of this course:

1. Acquire a strong understanding of how the American Political System developed and why elites serve as important participants in every society.
2. Come to appreciate the policy formation and legislative process.
3. Understand how interest group participation influences domestic and foreign policy.

POLICY ON "Ws"

Date to drop **without** a "W" by Internet only is Sunday, September 14, 2014!
Date to drop **with** a "W" by Internet only is Sunday, November 23, 2014!

TEXTBOOKS

The following textbook is **required**. Assigned readings will complement lecture.

"American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials – 2013-2014 Edition, 17th Edition with California Politics by Bardes, Shelley, Schmidt, Gerston, and Christensen.

Students are advised that all course materials are made available as adobe acrobat files (pdfs). A free reader program can be found on adobe's product site at adobe.com.

ARTICLES

Students are responsible for reviewing instructor assigned articles.

ASSIGNMENTS

Two essay assignments, **two** in class quizzes, **one** research paper, **AND ONE FINAL EXAM** will serve as the assignments. Students are given 60 minutes to complete their quizzes and two hours to complete the final exam. There will be no makeup quizzes. **STUDENTS MUST BRING THEIR OWN SCANTRON AND #2 PENCIL FOR ALL IN CLASS QUIZZES AND THE FINAL EXAM!**

FINAL EXAMINATION

OUR EXAM IS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 15, 2014 FROM 8:00PM TO 10:00PM. The final exam is a combination of essay and multiple-choice questions. **STUDENTS MUST BRING THEIR OWN SCANTRON AND #2 PENCIL.**

ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend class. Participation is mandatory. The instructor reserves the right to drop any student who misses two classes. Be sure to contact your instructor if you are going to be absent.

DROPPING POLICY

Keep in mind that it is the responsibility of students to formally drop classes **AND** confirm their enrollment. Your instructor is not responsible for dropping anyone.

CHEATING

Unauthorized material used during an examination (including electronic devices), changing answers after work has been graded, taking an exam for another student, forging or altering attendance sheets or other documents in the course, looking at another student's paper/scantron/essay/computer or exam with or without their approval is considered cheating. Any student caught cheating will receive a zero for the assignment/exam and referred to the Department chair and/or Student Services for further disciplinary action.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using ideas, words, or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own, without giving proper credit to the original sources. This includes definitions found online on Wikipedia, materials from blogs, twitter, or other similar electronic resources. The following examples are intended to be representative, but not all inclusive:

- failing to give credit by proper citations for others ideas and concepts, data and information, statements and phrases, and/or interpretations and conclusions.
- failing to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, **whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or a part thereof**
- Paraphrasing the expressions or thought by others without appropriate quotation marks or attribution
- Representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as essays, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawings, sculptures or similar works as one's own.

First offense, you will receive a zero for the assignment in question. Any further offenses may result in expulsion from the class, as determined by the disciplinary action from the Office of Student Services.

RECORDING DEVICES

In the classroom – Section 78907 of the California Education Code prohibits the use of any electronic audio or video recording devices, without prior consent of the instructor. (including cell phones, laptops, MP3 players, and more).

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are a student with a disability and require accommodations, please send me a private email. The sooner I am aware of your eligibility for accommodations, the quicker I will be able to assist the DSP&S Office in providing them. For students requiring accommodations, the DSP&S Office at Mission College provides special assistance in areas like: registering for courses, specialized tutoring, note-taking, mobility assistance, special instruction, testing assistance, special equipment, special materials, instructor liaisons, community referrals and job placement. If you have not done so already, you may also wish to contact the DSP&S Office in Instructional Building 1018 (phone 818/364-7732 TTD 818/364-7861) and bring a letter stating the accommodations that are needed.

"JP" TABAKIAN'S GRADING SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Students need to know how their instructor evaluates their work. The purpose of this handout is to explain your instructor's methodology for grading exams and most importantly essay assignments. Every instructor has a distinct teaching style. Your instructor believes strongly that classroom instruction is a process requiring students to improve throughout the course. No one assignment or exam should determine the ultimate fate of any student. Learning is an ongoing process for both the student and instructor alike. It is rare for any student to grasp all concepts of any discipline instantly. A student, who starts the semester attending all lectures and completes all assigned readings on time, may still score poorly on the first quiz or essay assignment. There is nothing to fear, but fear itself. Reviewing this handout should satisfy any concern you might have pertaining to your instructor's grading philosophy. Grading methodology is broken into the following sections: grading system, quizzes, final exam, and essay assignments (including the take home exam if applicable). ***YOUR FINAL GRADE FOR THE COURSE IS THE AVERAGE OF ALL LETTER GRADES FOR EVERY ASSIGNMENT, QUIZ AND THE FINAL EXAM.***

GRADING SYSTEM

There are three requirements that must be followed by every student. The first is active participation. Failure to participate constitutes nonattendance. Your final grade is the average of all grades for every assignment, quizzes, and the final exam.

Active Participation	**A – F**
Quiz #1	**A – F**
Quiz #2	**A – F**
Take Home Exam	**A – F**
Minor Paper #1	**A – F**
Minor Paper #2	**A – F**
Student Presentation of Research Topic	**A – F**
Research Paper	**A – F**
Final Exam	**A – F**

QUIZZES

There are no makeup quizzes. Your instructor may **AND I STRESS MAY** make an exception if it is warranted. Students should take notes during lecture and while completing their reading assignments. Your instructor believes wholeheartedly that students are better able to retain information if they take notes **during lecture AND while completing assigned readings.** This is true for every class regardless of the subject. Students do not receive credit for taking notes. It takes time for students to become accustomed to taking notes.

This is the quiz grading scale:

- 30 to 25 correctly answered questions = A
- 24 to 19 correctly answered questions = B
- 18 to 13 correctly answered questions = C
- 12 to 07 correctly answered questions = D
- 06 to 01 correctly answered questions = F

FINAL EXAM

The final exam has fifty multiple-choice questions. **There is also an essay portion to the final exam that is worth 10 points. The final exam is worth a maximum of 60 points.**

This is the final exam grading scale:

- 60 to 50 correctly answered questions = A
- 49 to 39 correctly answered questions = B
- 38 to 28 correctly answered questions = C
- 27 to 17 correctly answered questions = D
- 16 to 1 correctly answered questions = F

ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS & TAKE HOME EXAM ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Determining the letter grade requires adding the total number of points per criteria and then dividing that number by four. Your instructor evaluates every paper according to the following criteria:

- Content & Development - 4 points possible
- Organization & Structure - 4 points possible
- Format – including images - 4 points possible
- Theoretical Arguments - 4 points possible
- Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling Students - 4 points possible

Let us assume that a student receives four points per criteria. Adding all points equals twenty. Dividing that number by four equals five, which the grading scale below shows that student receiving an "A" for the assignment. Refer to the next page for the grading rubric.

- 5 points = A
- 4 points = B
- 3 points = C
- 2 points = D
- 1 points = F

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT GRADING RUBRIC

	Needs Improvement **1 point**	**Adequate** **2 points**	**Proficient** **3 points**	**Excelling** **4 points**
Content & Development *supporting materials and ideas*	Content is incomplete. Research is missing. Major points are not clear and/or persuasive.	Content is somewhat accurate or persuasive. Research is inadequate or does not address main points or thesis. Paper presents major points, but support is lacking.	Content is mostly accurate and persuasive. Research is adequate, timely and addresses main points and thesis. Paper presents major points with adequate support.	Content is entirely accurate and persuasive. Research is extensive, timely and addresses main points and thesis. Paper presents major with proper support
Organization & Structure *Organization of paper and paragraphs*	Information in the assignment is disorganized and not logically or effectively structured. Paragraph construction is improper. Sentences do not relate with one another.	Information in the assignment is mostly disorganized and barely logically/effectively structured. Paragraph construction is somewhat proper. Sentences are somewhat related to one another.	Information in the assignment is mostly organized and logically/effectively structured. Most paragraphs are properly constructed. Most paragraphs include an introductory sentence, explanations or details, a concluding sentence/impact and transition.	Information in the assignment is entirely organized and logically/effectively structured. All paragraph construction is properly with evident and smooth transitions throughout. All paragraphs include an introductory sentence, explanations or details, a concluding sentence/impact and transition
Format (includes images) *MLA, APA, Chicago*	Assignment lacks most elements of correct formatting. Assignment is under word length. Student did not attempt to document sources.	Assignment follows some elements of correct formatting. Assignment is barely within word length. Student attempted to document sources, but many are not in MLA/Chicago/APA format.	Assignment follows most elements of proper formatting. Assignment is mostly within word length. Student was somewhat successful with documenting sources in MLA/Chicago/APA format.	Assignment follows all elements of proper formatting. Assignment is either within or surpasses word length. Student documents all sources according to MLA/Chicago/ APA format.
Theoretical Arguments	Student demonstrates no understanding of the field. Student does not balance theoretical arguments. Student demonstrates a strong bias towards either one particular theory or personal opinion. Paper contains no reference of course texts or other relevant literature.	Student demonstrates little understanding of the field. Some effort made to balance theoretical arguments. Student demonstrates some bias towards either one particular theory or personal opinion. Paper contains some reference of course texts or other relevant literature.	Student demonstrates understanding of the field. Student balances various theoretical arguments. Student demonstrates little bias towards one particular theory or personal opinion. Student properly references most points made in the paper requiring citation of course texts or relevant literature.	Student demonstrates a strong understanding of the field. Student balances various theoretical arguments. Student demonstrates no bias towards one particular theory or personal opinion. Student properly references all points made in the paper requiring citation of course texts or relevant literature.
Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	Student shows very little mastery of mechanics. Numerous errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar greatly interfere with meaning. Paper contains large number of slang or personal pronouns.	Student shows average mastery of mechanics. Some errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar interfere with meaning. Paper contains some slang, and or personal pronouns.	Student shows above average mastery of mechanics. Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammatical errors are minor and do not interfere with meaning. Paper contains no slang or personal pronouns.	Student shows excellent mastery of mechanics. Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar are correct. Student uses no slang, or personal pronouns.

Weekly Schedule of Topics & Course Calendar

September 1st: LABOR DAY! NO CLASS!

September 8th: Class will review the fundamentals of our discipline. We will cover elitism, pluralism, rational choice theory, and other relevant theoretical constructs. The class will learn that the United States is not a pure democracy, but rather a democratic republic. The class then will examine degrees of policy changes, conflicts, and the concepts of stability / instability and rampant instability. READ: Chapters 1 & 2 from "American Government And Politics Today."

September 15th: MINOR PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1 IS DUE. Degrees of policy changes, conflict and the concepts of stability / instability, and rampant instability are matters of great concern. Students will begin to examine those classical theorists who had a great influence over the Founding Fathers. The class will learn about the Organic Laws of America. The class will then discuss federalism and the balance of power between our federal and state governments. READ: Chapter 3 from "American Government And Politics Today."

September 22rd: QUIZ #1! BRING A SCANTRON AND NUMBER 2 PENCIL! Our class discusses civil liberties. READ: Chapter 4 from "American Government and Politics Today."

September 29th: The class discusses civil rights. Lecture then shifts to how elites influence public opinion as a tool to maintain power. Discussion then focuses on how members of the mass class can also use propaganda and manipulation to assume positions among the elite class. READ: Chapters 5 & 6 from "American Government and Politics Today."

October 6th: This class covers American federalism and the various responses available to elites when countering mass protests. Interest group conflict is our primary topic of discussion. The discussion then discusses whether political parties are a fundamental aspect of our political system. READ: Chapters 7 & 8 from "American Government and Politics Today."

October 13th: QUIZ #2! BRING A SCANTRON AND NUMBER 2 PENCIL! Lecture argues that the theory of singular government deeply influenced founding fathers Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and even later political leaders like Abraham Lincoln to present leaders of today. John Locke's "Two Treatises on Government" is recognized as being perhaps the first to articulate the basic principles of modern liberalism. Students will discover how greatly Locke and other great philosophers influenced the formation of our government. Lockean thought is the main focus of our class. REVIEW: "Two Treatises On Government."

October 20th: The class will explore different examples of presidential power. Discussion will then shift to the multiple federal agencies that operate in various capacities. Students will discover that federal bureaucracies can create their own regulations in their attempt to follow the intent of Congress. READ: Chapters 11 & 12 from "American Government and Politics Today."

October 27th: The class covers bureaucratic, legislative and judicial elites. READ: Chapter 13 from "American Government and Politics Today."

(Calendar Continues On Next Page)

Weekly Schedule of Topics & Course Calendar (Continued)

November 3rdth: VETERANS DAY! NO CLASS!

November 10th: There are two types of policy: The first is domestic policy. The second is foreign policy. READ: Chapter 14 from "American Government and Politics Today."

November 17th: MINOR PAPER ASSIGNMENT #2 IS DUE! We begin our discussion about the foundation of California politics. We will examine how California's Constitution came into being. The Golden State has experienced its share of slights pertaining to the protection of civil liberties and rights. Our lecture will follow California's past to its present day political hodgepodge of competing interests. READ: The California Section from "American Government and Politics Today."

November 24th: Our discussion about California politics focuses on those pressure groups residing in the "Golden State" and how they attempt to influence public policy. We will also look at how political parties operate in the state and some interesting elections held in the past. Also important is how politics directs California's budget process! READ: The California Section from "American Government and Politics Today."

December 1st: Students are to share their paper topics for their Final Research Paper with the entire class.

December 8th: RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE!

December 15th: FINAL EXAM FROM 8:00PM TO 10:00PM! STUDENTS MUST BRING THEIR OWN SCANTRON AND #2 PENCIL!

Topics and dates are subject to change. Announcements will be made in class. Students are responsible for adjusting the calendar. Online hosting of course materials is done as a courtesy. The instructor makes no guarantees that online access to course materials will always be available.

TOPIC

Rational individuals act on behalf of self-interest. That is one of the basic premises behind rational choice theory. If you were hungry for example you would do whatever it took to gather enough food in order to survive. This would entail buying food or finding some means of employment in order to earn enough money to purchase food. If one could not find a job they may even have to resort to begging or even crime to acquire sustenance. One may even find it necessary to kill another person.

We are taking rational choice or self-interest to another level. Students are asked to define Special Interests as it pertains to common interests possessed by a group of individuals that make up a unit. The "Spheres of Influence" is a good example. What exactly are Special Interests? How do they influence public policy? Is it your opinion that organized Special Interests are detrimental or beneficial? What are the biggest and most powerful Special Interests in California? What does their power consist of and how do they operate? NOTE: Give some thought to this assignment before embarking on your journey. Be sure to reference your readings if you feel stuck.

YOUR TASK FOR THIS PAPER IS TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Define what makes up Special Interests. What types of power do they possess? Which are the most powerful in California? How do they operate in our society? How do these groups attract supporters? Why do some people willingly partner with Special Interests? Do these groups act to further elite or mass goals?
2. Explain how Special Interests may influence public policy in our state. Do these groups also depend on mass public support? Explain how these groups acquire power.
3. Is it your opinion that Special Interests play a beneficial or detrimental role in California? Explain your case by providing examples of various Special Interests that operate in our state. The following are a good example of Special Interests operating in our state: agriculture; media; gambling; refineries; real estate, environmental (conservation); and education.

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED. THE PAPER MUST BE:

1. TYPED!
2. Two to three pages. NOTE: You can type till your heart's content.
3. The paper should have 1-inch margins with a font size of 11 or 12 and be double-spaced.
4. Written well **in your own words**.
5. Papers must be submitted according to the posted due date on the course calendar.

PAPER LAYOUT: It is recommended that your paper be laid out in the following manner:

1. Coversheet: Paper title, name, class, section number, e-mail address and instructor's name.
2. Introduction: Begin your paper with an introduction that tells the reader how your paper is going to be laid out. Never assume the reader already knows about the subject you are writing about. Tell the reader (Dr. T) what you are writing about all while thinking about the following phrase "Here is the path I'm taking you down and here is why!"
3. Body: This is the "guts" of your paper.
4. Conclusion.

ABOUT CITING: The last section of your paper should contain a bibliography of reference materials used for this paper. There are various style formats available for use, including APA, Chicago, etc. Students need only to utilize the suggested style when listing their resource materials.

TOPIC

Embedded within the American persona is a belief that the U.S. was not solely an experiment in republican government, but a nation blessed with superior principles and institutions, which in time would be adopted throughout the world. American policy makers have maintained an idealist ideology in order to formulate foreign, as well as domestic policy, though its foreign policy is based inherently on realist dogma. U.S. foreign policy is thus utilized as an avenue in which to promote American ideals, combining practical capacity for realizing the evils of man, yet continuing to remain devoted to the idealistic notions of the American success story. Can you define the "American Persona"? State from your perspective what it means to be an American. There is no correct way to pursue this assignment. This is a personal statement. Review the readings if you need additional foresight about this subject.

YOUR TASK FOR THIS PAPER IS TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Define what makes it means to be a member of American society. Do Americans maintain a distinct belief system in comparison to foreign nationals? Can someone who is not born here develop a belief system that is distinctly American?
2. How does the American Persona guide this nation's foreign policy?
3. Does the American Persona require any alteration or is does it work for the United States?

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED. THE PAPER MUST BE:

1. TYPED!
2. Three pages (coversheet not included). NOTE: You can type till your heart's content.
3. The paper should have 1-inch margins with a font size of 11 or 12 and be double-spaced.
4. Written well **in your own words**.
5. Papers must be submitted according to the posted due date on the course calendar.

PAPER LAYOUT: It is recommended that your paper be laid out in the following manner:

1. Coversheet: Paper title, name, class, section number, e-mail address and instructor's name.
2. Introduction: Begin your paper with an introduction that tells the reader how your paper is going to be laid out. Never assume the reader already knows about the subject you are writing about. Tell the reader (Dr. T) what you are writing about all while thinking about the following phrase "Here is the path I'm taking you down and here is why!"
3. Body: This is the "guts" of your paper.
4. Conclusion.

ABOUT CITING: The last section of your paper should contain a bibliography of reference materials used for this paper. There are various style formats available for use, including APA, Chicago, etc. Students need only to utilize the suggested style when listing their resource materials.

TOPIC

In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down section 5 of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965. In the courts official opinion, Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for the majority, wrote: "Our country has changed, and while any racial discrimination in voting is too much, Congress must ensure that the legislation it passes to remedy that problem speaks to current conditions," wrote Chief Justice John Roberts in the court's opinion. Students are tasked with answering this one question: "Does racial discrimination still remain a barrier to voting in America?

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED. THE PAPER MUST BE:

1. TYPED!
2. Two to three pages (coversheet not included). NOTE: You can type till your heart's content.
3. The paper should have 1-inch margins with a font size of 11 or 12 and be double-spaced.
4. Written well **in your own words**.
5. Papers must be submitted according to the posted due date on the course calendar.

PAPER LAYOUT: It is recommended that your paper be laid out in the following manner:

1. Coversheet: Paper title, name, class, section number, e-mail address and instructor's name.
2. Introduction: Begin your paper with an introduction that tells the reader how your paper is going to be laid out. Never assume the reader already knows about the subject you are writing about. Tell the reader (Dr. T) what you are writing about all while thinking about the following phrase "Here is the path I'm taking you down and here is why!"
3. Body: This is the "guts" of your paper.
4. Conclusion.

ABOUT CITING: The last section of your paper should contain a bibliography of reference materials used for this paper. There are various style formats available for use, including APA, Chicago, etc. Students need only to utilize the suggested style when listing their resource materials.

TOPIC

Our Founding Fathers considered the protection of minority rights as those few individuals who retained control over society. These individuals were property holders, policy makers or those who possessed positions of power. Many today believe that minority rights are protecting special classes as those who posses certain ethnic traits or other characteristics. As monarchies and despots primarily ruled the world, America's Founding Fathers properly came to reason that their intent to establish a successful republican government would in fact be an anomaly. Of primary concern was to gather the support of man to subscribe to this new "social contract" thereby relinquishing some rights for the betterment of society. These elites sought to establish a new power structure to assure their position as American elites and not subjects to the Crown. Convincing the masses to join in this revolution required careful manipulation of the masses. Students are asked to contemplate the following question: "What were the primary motivating factors for America's Founding Fathers to rebel against England?"

YOUR TASK FOR THIS PAPER IS TO DO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

1. America's Founding Fathers identified themselves as elites requiring protection against majority factions. Were they more concerned about overreaching government power or the mass class? What measures did the Founders engage to manipulate the masses to support the American Revolution and elite control over public policy?
2. One may argue that elites still govern our society. If so then how do today's elites manipulate the masses to maintain legitimacy? Are the measures identical to those undertaken by our Founding Fathers?
3. Identify significant specific instances where the degree of legitimacy bestowed on elite leaders has dipped. What would happen if the majority of citizens lose faith in policy makers? Would the result be the destruction of our system or would nothing change?
4. What is your opinion about protecting minority rights against majority factions? Do the various checks and balances of our system protect "the people" or today's ruling class? Has the system really changed throughout our nation's history?

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED. THE PAPER MUST BE:

1. TYPED!
2. Ten pages. NOTE: You can type till your heart's content.
3. The paper should have 1-inch margins with a font size of 11 or 12 and be double-spaced.
4. Written well **in your own words**.
5. Papers must be submitted according to the posted due date on the course calendar.

PAPER LAYOUT: It is recommended that your paper be laid out in the following manner:

1. Coversheet: Paper title, name, class, section number, e-mail address and instructor's name.
2. Introduction: Begin your paper with an introduction that tells the reader how your paper is going to be laid out. Never assume the reader already knows about the subject you are writing about. Tell the reader (Dr. T) what you are writing about all while thinking about the following phrase "Here is the path I'm taking you down and here is why!"
3. Body: This is the "guts" of your paper.
4. Conclusion: State how the American Political System can be improved.

ABOUT CITING: The last section of your paper should contain a bibliography of reference materials used for this paper. There are various style formats available for use, including APA, Chicago, etc. Students need only to utilize the suggested style when listing their resource materials.