

NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

PROGRAM AREA _____

1. Catalog Description of the Course:

POLS 150: AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (3)

Three hours of lecture per week

Examines the major American national and state political institutions and processes, including the presidency, congress, the federal court system, political parties, and the electoral system, and major institutions of state government. This course emphasizes how these institutions and processes function within changing American Constitutional principles of the role of law, federalism, shared power, and individual and civil rights. Satisfies the Title V requirement in national and state government.

2. Mode of Instruction.

	Units	Hours per Unit	Benchmark Enrollment
Lecture	3	_____	35
Seminar	_____	_____	_____
Laboratory	_____	_____	_____
Activity	_____	_____	_____

3. Justification and Learning Objectives for the Course.

Satisfies Title V requirement

Students completing this course will be able to:

- a. discuss and evaluate the institutional structure and operations of the major national and state political institutions;
- b. analyze the strengths and weakness of American political processes, both in terms of their effectiveness in responding to public policy needs and to retain constitutional protections;
- c. analyze the American political system in terms of its adherence to democratic principles of access to government, protection of minority group rights, respect for the rule of law, and limited government.
- d. locate current political issues in the context of wider debates about democratic life in the United States and the capacity of political institutions;
- e. demonstrate an understand historically how American institutions have responded to demands for access and participation by racial, ethnic, and other minorities.

This course is not designed to satisfy the University Writing or Language requirement.

4. Is this a General Education Course **NO**

5. Course Content in Outline Form.

- a) Framework of American National and State Government

Constitutional assignments of national and state power. Evolution of national power: the era of constitutional foundation, the era of Civil War and Reconstruction, 1 geographical expansion and political reform; ethnic diversity and immigration; Depression and War II expansion of the national government; and the US in today's global environment.

- b) Major National Institutions: Congress, the Presidency and the Federal Court System.

Constitutional foundations of congressional and presidential power; evolution of the presidential office and the structure of the House and Senate; expansion of the federal courts system; watching for abuse of power.

- c) Processes of Popular Participation: The electoral system, political parties, and interest groups.

The law and national and state elections; guaranteeing access to the ballot; evolution of the political party system; money and politics and democratic reform in a corporate environment;

- d) State Government: State political institutions, including the governor's office, state legislature, state courts, state boards and commissions.

Similarity and uniqueness among the states; policy making at the state and local level; budgeting; how effective are state governments? Operation of California's political structure.

- a) Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The continuing challenge of recognizing collective rights; the 14th Amendment and its evolution under Court interpretation; the nationalization of the Bill of Rights; recognizing new rights in the Twentieth Century.

6. References.

Christopher Wolfe, How to Read the Constitution: Originalism, Constitutional Interpretation and Judicial Power. (Rowman and Littlefield, 1996)

Raoul Berger, Congress versus the Supreme Court. (Harvard University Press, 1969)

Jesse Choper, Judicial Review and the National Political Process. (University of Chicago Press, 1980)

Leonard Levy, Judicial Review and the Supreme Court. (Harper and Row, 1978)

The Congressional Quarterly Guide to Congress, Fifth Edition, (CQ Press, 1998)

Louis Fisher, Constitutional Conflicts between Congress and the President. (Oxford University Press, 1997)

David Mayhew, Divided We Govern. (Yale University Press, 1991)

Benjamin Barber, Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics in a New Age. (University of California Press, 1984)

Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power. (Norton Press, 1985)

Bruce Ackerman, We the People. (Harvard University Press, 1991)

B. Guy Peters, American Public Policy: Prospects and Promise. Fifth Edition. (Prentice Hall, 2001)

John Ely, War and Responsibility: Constitutional Lessons of Vietnam and Its Aftermath. (Princeton University Press, 1993)

7. List Faculty Qualified to Teach This Course.

Faculty

8. Frequency.

- a. Projected semesters to be offered: Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer _____

9. New Resources Required.

No new computer or space allocations area need for this course.

Proposer of Course

Date