Introduction
This course is a survey of American institutions, including the origin and development of the U.S. political system. We will study the forms, functions, and theory of the government of the United States and of the State of California. Among the topics covered will be: federalism, Congress, the presidency, the judicial system, parties and elections, civil rights and liberties, and California politics. We will also examine selected contemporary issues from a variety of viewpoints. This all sounds a little cold and clinical, which is the way official documents often sound, but keep in mind that you can choose to be involved in much of what we will study. Your participation in democratic government will also be emphasized in this course.

Course Assumptions
We assume that students in this course should have a level of familiarity with the American governmental system appropriate for high school graduates. International students should make special arrangements to get additional readings for background material. We assume that you are able to invest sufficient time to prepare for and execute this class. The reading assignments are not difficult but will require time; you are expected to do the reading according to the schedule. You are also expected to follow the policies and deadlines set forth in this syllabus.

Student Learning Outcomes for PS 1
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the structures, interactions, and functioning of the various levels of government in the United States.
2. Analyze the dynamics of making public policy in the United States.
3. Synthesize knowledge and analysis of political events and concepts to construct a personal political viewpoint.
4. Write critical, analytical essays that link theoretical arguments, empirical evidence and political events.

In addition, the instructor expects successful students to be able to describe the historical and philosophical roots of American government; demonstrate mastery of key concepts and terminology used in American political science; and knowledgeably discuss their options for participation in U.S. government and politics.

Course Format
Our time together will be spent in a variety of ways. Lectures and general class discussion will be complemented by breakout sessions in which small groups discuss problems or topics and then present their ideas to the class. In addition, various articles and handouts will be used to drive in-
class discussions. In designing these activities I take for granted that you have read, understood, and thought about the assigned readings. Exams will ask you to address the topics we have discussed in class as well as the readings.

In addition to lecture, discussion, and small group work, we will also experience several class role-play activities and at least one video.

Textbooks

For coverage of California government and politics during the last two weeks of the semester, go to www.cabrillo.edu/~bhill/califgovt.html.

(Also helpful: follow the news, and get your information from a variety of reputable sources.)

Course Requirements
Your course grade will be based on the following:

Tests—three exams will be given covering roughly equal amounts of material. The exams will include both objective (multiple choice, true/false, or short answer) and essay questions. I expect you to provide college-level, in-class responses to the essay questions. (Many students will benefit from an English composition class that helps them develop in-class essay writing skills; I recommend taking such a class at your earliest opportunity.) You will be allowed to use one page (8.5 X 11, front and back, no photocopies) of notes, but no textbooks or other materials may be used during the tests. More details about tests will be provided in class a few class periods before each test is given.

During exams, please keep your books and bags closed (storing them below your desk or seat) and do not leave the room without permission until you have turned in your test. To do otherwise would leave you open to charges of cheating—that is, taking unfair advantage outside the test conditions set up for all students.

Assignments—three assignments are required, each about three to four pages long. The first page should feature a heading on the upper right side consisting of your name (on one line), the course (PS 1/Mosher, on the second line), the date (on the third line), and the assignment number (on the fourth line). Each page after the first should include your name at the upper right corner by the page number. Failure to follow this format will result in a loss of points.

All assignments should be double-spaced with one-inch margins, using a standard font (such as Times New Roman) no larger than 12 points, printed in black ink. Do not use boldface or italics for an entire paper. Spelling and grammar count; I cannot give you credit for what I do not understand. Papers must be submitted in hard copy and stapled neatly in the upper left-hand corner—no report covers, please. Also, if you base any paper on research to any extent, use MLA guidelines; you can find those handbooks in most library reference sections and guidelines on many college websites. I recommend the Purdue University Online Writing Lab for grammar and MLA reference.

It is your responsibility to know about and avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the conscious or inadvertent failure to identify the contributions of others. It occurs when someone uses any part of another’s work and submits it as his or her own work without crediting the author. Penalties for plagiarism can be a failing assignment grade, a failing course grade, or suspension from the college. If you’re not sure of a particular case, please consult me before the due date.

Information about assignments will be provided in class two or three weeks before each is due. Grades will be based on following directions, relevant and intelligent paper content based on careful thought, effectiveness of written communication, and appropriateness for a college
setting. Please note: students who do not turn in assignments are unlikely to pass the course.

Attendance—your regular, on-time attendance is expected. Roll will be taken at the start of class; people who are late should sign in after class. The instructor will take note of those who leave early, and will consider them late or absent depending on how briefly they are in class. Poor attendance and can hurt your grade. However, you may miss any two hours of class without penalty. Getting information given in class is your responsibility. If you miss class time, ask another student for notes and other information; ask the instructor for handout copies. Absence due to illness does not relieve you of the responsibility of submitting assignments on time.

Participation—your focused and reasonably enthusiastic participation is expected at all times. Effective participation will be rewarded. Merely showing up and sitting quietly may constitute good attendance but it does not constitute good participation. In fact if you just show up and sit quietly, even with perfect attendance, you will only receive a low “C” for class participation—which will make it difficult to get a high grade for the course. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in front of the entire class you may compensate by participating more heavily in the small group discussions and by submitting questions in writing. Also, please keep in mind that the quality of your contributions is more important than quantity. Unsupported opinion—“data-free” analysis—is far less helpful than careful reasoning and use of evidence.

To contribute toward a good attendance/participation grade, a student may submit one 3 X 5 card per class containing a question related to current news stories about American politics or to the assigned reading. Each card should include a question, your name, and the date; they should be handed to the instructor before class begins. The instructor will base a portion of the participation score on this activity. Usually, questions submitted in this way will be fielded at the start of class on Thursdays.

Other ways to gain participation points: concentrate on the topic at hand during small group work, focus on what’s happening in class rather than on distractions, ask questions in class, talk about course topics with the instructor before or after class or during office hours.

PS 1 Course Schedule
Have the reading done before coming to class on the day indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 4/6</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>course intro.; basis of Am. government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 11/13</td>
<td>Ch. 1, Decl. of Independence</td>
<td>the beginnings of American government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 18/20</td>
<td>Ch. 2, U.S. Constitution</td>
<td>constitutional framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 25/27</td>
<td>Ch. 3</td>
<td>federalism; political culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2/4</td>
<td>Ch. 4 and 5</td>
<td>civil liberties and civil rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Test #1 coverage above)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 9/11</td>
<td>Ch. 6 (not covered on test #1)</td>
<td>public opinion, media influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 16/18</td>
<td>Ch. 7</td>
<td>political parties and interest groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 23/25</td>
<td>Ch. 8</td>
<td>elections and campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 30/Nov. 1</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 6/8</td>
<td>Ch. 10</td>
<td>the executive branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Test #2 coverage above)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nov. 13/15  Ch. 12 (skip Ch. 11)  the judiciary
Nov. 20/off Ch. 13  domestic policy formation
Nov. 27/29 Ch. 14  foreign and military policy formation
Dec. 4/6 online resources  start California government
Dec. 11/13 online resources  finish California government
(Test #3 coverage above)

For all official Cabrillo College deadlines, see this semester’s Schedule of Classes.

Test and Assignment Dates
Test #1:   Tues., Oct. 9
Test #2:   Tues., Nov. 13
Test #3   1 p.m. Thurs., Dec. 20 (during finals week)
Assign. #1  Tues., Sept. 25, at class time
Assign. #2  Tues., Oct. 23, “
Assign. #3  Tues., Nov. 27, “

Grading
The value of the assigned work is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 tests @ 175 points each:</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 assignments @ 125 points each:</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance and participation:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total:</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading criteria for tests include: accuracy for factual questions; accuracy, thoughtfulness, and skillful analysis for essay questions. The criteria for assignments appear under “Course Requirements,” above, and on assignment handouts. All written work will be assessed for clarity of communication, factual underpinnings, and thoughtful commentary. Participation points will reward active, enthusiastic, and appropriate participation.

Grades will be assigned on the following scale of points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000-900</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>899-800</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>799-700</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>699-600</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599-0</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom Conduct and Instructor Policies
1. **Courtesy and mutual respect in class is expected:** sleeping, slumping, chatting with neighbors, leaving to take cell phone calls, using rude language, chronic lateness, frequent early departures, violence or abusive behavior, and any other disruption considered serious by the instructor will lead to disciplinary action. **Turn off and put away all electronic devices (such as cell phones, pagers, games, blackberries, laptops unless in use to take class notes, iPods and similar devices, etc.) before entering the classroom.** Also, be respectful of the views of others, even while disagreeing. Act as if the other people in the room matter. If you are not mature enough to participate in this
way, please drop the course.

2. **Disruptions to our classroom activities will not be tolerated.** If a student disrupts, the instructor will issue a verbal warning and make notes on the incident; if that student disrupts again, he or she will be removed for the remainder of the class period and the instructor will file notes with his supervisor and program chair; if that student disrupts again, he or she will be dropped from the class with a W (or, if past the drop date, with an F), the instructor’s superiors will be notified, and a Disruptive Student Behavior Report will be filed with the Dean of Student Services office.

3. **I will follow the procedures outlined in the college catalog** for adds, drops, withdrawals, and incompletes. The paperwork that makes these changes official is your responsibility. If you have any questions about how to complete any of these changes, consult the catalog and if needed the Admissions and Records Office. I’ll do the same.

4. **If you do not attend for four class periods in a row and do not contact me, you can be dropped** (or, if you disappear near the end of the semester, failed). However, under all circumstances, it is the student’s responsibility to officially withdraw from classes.

5. **Few reasons exist for policy exceptions and assignment extensions.** If a severe personal problem emerges (you are in the hospital, or a close relative dies, or someone in your care is seriously ill, or your home is destroyed, or other extreme circumstances), please contact me as soon as possible to discuss options. I may ask for documentation of the problem you describe (for example, a signed letter from your doctor). If the problem is too severe, I will probably advise you to withdraw and resume classes next semester.

6. **Tests must be taken as scheduled** except by prior arrangement; such arrangements are rarely made. Make-up tests will be scheduled at the convenience of the instructor, and may consist of an alternative test format (for example, all essay).

7. **No extra credit work is available unless the instructor announces an opportunity for the whole class.** Also, you may not do assignments over; do them well the first time. (If writing poses a problem for you, I strongly suggest that you make use of free Cabrillo resources and tutoring; I will gladly refer to students to the writing lab on request.)

8. **Late work will be accepted for one (1) class period past the due date only, and will be reduced two letter grades.** Exceptions will be made only by prior arrangement.

9. **Computer and printer problems are entirely your problem and responsibility,** and will not be considered reasonable excuses for late or inadequate work.

10. The following are considered cheating: plagiarism, taking test answers from another student, representing another person’s work as your own (for example, purchased, copied, or ghosted papers), acquiring or looking at tests from an earlier semester, and lying to the instructor about academic matters. The instructor reserves the right to add to this list. Severe penalties, including failure of the course and possibly suspension from Cabrillo College, can result from cheating.

11. **I encourage students with disabilities,** including invisible disabilities such as chronic diseases and learning disabilities, to explain their needs and appropriate accommodations to me during my office hours. Please bring verification of your disability and a recommendation from a Cabrillo counselor or specialist for accommodating your needs.

12. It’s not possible to cover every contingency in a syllabus. **If you have a problem with any aspect of the course, please contact me to discuss the situation.** I will do my utmost to be understanding and fair, but please do not ask me to suspend class policies save for truly exceptional circumstances, and not because of a lack of preparation or diligence on your part.
Tips for Students Who Want to Succeed
Show up, on time, having done the reading, prepared to participate, prepared to ask questions, and ready to interact with other people.

Students who want to do well in this course (and learn a bunch) should also be determined to think hard and well, work to achieve clear and direct writing, pay attention to details (grammar, punctuation, due dates, the reading schedule, the course policies, etc.), stay organized, and keep a sense of humor.

For potential “A” students: follow political news, form a study group with other motivated students, learn from what the instructor tells you in comments on papers and tests.

Check the syllabus FIRST. It will answer many of your questions, and I expect you to keep it and refer to it throughout the course.

Final thought: When in doubt, ask.

A Few Things That Make Me Grumpy or Sad or Even Angry
• lots of excuses
• second and third papers with the same grammar and format mistakes as paper #1
• being asked for information I have already provided in the syllabus or a handout
• those few who miss a test and show up the next period expecting to take the test without prior arrangement, though their classmates went to the trouble of showing up
• conspiracy theories (these are nearly always wrong)
• other manifestations of poor logic and reasoning (for instance, all-or-nothing statements)
• fashionable cynicism about government and politics (cynics rarely improve anything)
• name-calling as a substitute for political analysis; rants; parroting a party line
• opinions not backed up by facts or reasoning (my opinions about plumbing are of little interest since I don’t know anything about plumbing; my views on topics I do know about can be flawed if I don’t think clearly and carefully about them)
• being asked for mercy after a student performs poorly; it’s not about mercy, it’s about learning and demonstrating to the instructor that you’ve done so (musicians and athletes improve and are therefore rewarded because of the hard work of practice; students who work diligently and think carefully will often find that their grades reflect the effort)
• students who are unduly driven by grades; good grades are a good goal, but after college you’ll be surprised at how seldom anyone asks about your GPA; focus on learning, set achievable goals for each class, and the grades will nearly always take care of themselves (as a recovering perfectionist, I wish I’d been told this in college)

My Commitment to You
I will do my best to be prepared for class, to keep class as interesting as possible, to keep my office hours, to respond to email messages, to write helpful comments on your assignments, to grade and return your work as quickly as possible, to submit grades on time, to treat students with respect, to listen, and to help you become a more informed, wise, and involved citizen.