

POLITICAL SCIENCE 102 (ITEM #5610)  
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
SPRING QUARTER 2008

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The course is designed to familiarize the students with the basic elements of the American system. The primary objective of the course is to provide the student with an understanding of American Government and Politics. The course focus will be:

1. To gain an understanding of the American government as a system; a series of interrelated components (Congress, Presidency, Courts, Elections, etc.) interacting to provide certain results.
2. To learn about the concept of democracy.
3. To be able to integrate this knowledge for a personal understanding of how the political process works.

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Aslam Khan  
Office: D-200C  
Office Hours: Tues & Thur 11:30 to 12:30. Also available online.  
and by appt only  
Telephone: 425-564-2338  
Email: [akhan@bcc.ctc.edu](mailto:akhan@bcc.ctc.edu)

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Thomas E. Patterson, We the People: concise edition to American Politics 7th Edition 2008 (MGraw Hill)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Students must complete all reading assignments, participate in class discussion, submit written assignments and take all examinations as scheduled. Moreover, the students are expected to attend classes on a regular basis. This course requires access to VISTA and basic Internet proficiency. On campus sessions meet on the day listed. The balance of instruction occurs online as directed by the instructor.

**TESTS:**

There will be 5 tests in the quarter. In addition to the tests, there will be online assessment quizzes. These will be accounted for in the entire grade. The online assessments will be found under the **Assessment** heading. These will be assigned on a weekly basis.

**DISCUSSIONS:**

Students will post discussions in the discussion folder on a regular basis. The topic for the discussion will be posted by the instructor.

**OBJECTIVES:**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Evaluate the basic nature of Constitutional government in America.

2. Understand concepts such as separation of power and checks and balances as outlined in the constitution.
3. Recall and define problems of individual rights, popular representation and responsible leadership.
4. Identify roles of the Executive department, the Congress, and the Judicial branch.
5. Have an understanding of the public policy making process in the U.S.
6. Have the skills and knowledge necessary for analyzing American politics according to the ideals of American democracy.

### **GRADES:**

Grades will be determined by class average for each exam taken in the class. Sixty percent of the grade will be based on in-class examinations. The other forty percent of the grade will be based on the material assigned on the VISTA on a weekly basis. The breakdown of the grading (Vista) will be explained in the class.

The grading structure will be based as follows:

<b>A</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>C-</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>D+</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>F</b>

### **RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:**

This course involves the discussion of controversial political issues. Remember that reasonable people often disagree. The challenge and requirement of this course is to maintain civil discourse. We will achieve this by following three basic rules:

1. Use polite and civil behavior
  - Maintain calm level and tone of speech.
  - Allow others to finish their statements uninterrupted.
  - Respect others and respect yourself by focusing on evidence rather than emotion.
2. Use clearly defined terms (providing your own definitions if necessary).
3. Strictly avoid inflammatory, derogatory and insulting words, phrases and labels.

### **READINGS:**

## **PART I      CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES**

Chapter 1.      American Political Culture: Seeking the Perfect Union

Chapter 2.      Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty and Self Government

Chapter 3. Federalism: Forging a Nation

**EXAM 1** April 10, 2008

**PART II** Rights and Liberties

Chapter 4 Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights

Chapter 5. Equal Rights: Struggling toward Fairness

**EXAM 2** April 29, 2008

**PART III THE POLITICAL PROCESS**

Chapter 6 Public Opinion and Political Socialization: Shaping the People's Voice

Chapter 8 Political Parties, Candidates and Campaigns: Defining the Voters' Choice

Chapter 10. The News Media: Communicating Political Images

**EXAM 3** May 13, 2008

**PART IV POLICY-MAKING INSTITUTIONS**

Chapter 11. Congress: Balancing National Goals and Local Interests

Chapter 12 The Presidency: Leading the Nation

Chapter 14 The Federal Judicial System: Applying the Law

**EXAM 4** May 27, 2008

**PART V THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL POLICY**

Chapter 15 Economic And Environmental Policy: Contributing to Prosperity

Chapter 17 Foreign And Defense Policy: Protecting the American Way

**EXAM 5** June 10, 2008

Final meeting will be announced in class.