# **Political Science 110**

# **American Government**

## **Course Information**

* Political Science 110 – American Government
* Spring 2021
* Online – Asynchronous

## **Instructor Information**

**Instructor name:** [Nicola Walters](https://politics.humboldt.edu/people/nicola-walters)

**Email:**through Canvas (look for the envelope icon)

**Phone:**505-577-3528

**Office Hours: By appointment or via Canvas at set times. I’ll post these throughout the semester.**

**How and when to contact instructor:**Email is the fastest way to reach me. Please send me emails through Canvas only. This is located on the left-hand side of your browser under the paper icon labeled “Inbox.” Please feel free to contact me at any time.

## **HSU Course Description**

**Political values, institutions, and patterns of influence in law and governance, including relations among the nation, tribes, and the state of California. Meets requirement in “US Constitution and California state and local government” established by the legislature.**

## **Required Textbook/Course Materials**

**Required Textbooks:**

1. American Government 2e – Open Stax resource through Canvas
2. Democracy for The Few (9th Edition) – available through Canvas

**Other Required Materials:**Supplemental readings will be presented throughout the course on Canvas.

**Recommended Materials:**Regular computer access to produce typed assignments and regular internet access to participate in discussions, complete assignments, and check for class announcements and updates.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Explain the history and philosophy of the Constitution, politics, and government in the United States.
2. Identify the major provisions of the California and US Constitution.
3. Compare the three branches of California and US Government, and related political institutions.
4. Outline the relationship between the states and national government (ie. federalism).
5. Analyze contemporary issues facing California and the US system of government.

## **Technology**

**Necessary Computer Skills**

Online courses require adequate computer skills. You should be able to navigate the course websites, open and download files, use a word processor with either Microsoft word (.docx) or be able to convert files to portable document format (.pdf), and submit files to the class website. It is your responsibility to meet the technological demands of the course. You may be required to record video on a phone or computer and submit video files to Canvas.

**Technology Requirements (computer, other hardware, and software)**

Computer – A reasonably current computer is needed for this class. A mobile device with the Canvas App can be used for some functions, but you should not rely on a mobile device to complete all of the course requirements. A computer is required to successfully complete this course.

Hardware – Webcam or other device that creates videos – In order to participate in some of the course activities or assessments you may need a device that creates videos.

Internet Access - A reliable, high-speed broadband connection is needed for this course.

**Software**

Canvas – This course uses an online Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas, which is provided by the college. To get to the class you will need to log in to: canvas.humboldt.edu or MyHumboldt and follow the links to Canvas.

Canvas App - If you have a smart phone or a tablet there is a free Canvas app through the Apple store or an app available at this link for Android devices. However, DO NOT rely on a mobile device and the Canvas App to complete all of the course requirements. https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.instructure.candroid&hl=en.

Microsoft Word compatible software – In this course you will need to open and/or create Microsoft Word compatible documents. All students have access to a free Microsoft 360 account There are also other free software options available such as Google Docs (see https://www.google.com/docs/about/) or LibreOffice (see https://www.libreoffice.org/) and many more. If you use Pages for Mac, you will need to export your files to Word or PDF formats.

Adobe Acrobat Reader – Adobe Acrobat Reader – A free Adobe Acrobat PDF Reader is available which will allow you to open and read PDF files

**Need Help?**

If you are experiencing computer glitches or problems with the Canvas site, either contact me at using my phone number\* listed above or email me directly and/or the Humboldt State University help desk in **Lib 208**– [**https://its.humboldt.edu/**Links to an external site.](https://its.humboldt.edu/) or call them at **(707) 826-4357**. A live person will respond for help during regular business hours, Monday-Friday. Before contacting me however, I suggest you first try to solve the problem with the help of the guides posted in our course Canvas folder or the help menus. Please note that once you log in to Canvas, there is a fairly extensive on-line help menu keyed to each feature (tool) of our website.

\* The best way to reach me is usually via email through the Messages tool of our Canvas course webpage. By emailing me through our Canvas website, rather than sending me a direct email via the main HSU website (nicola.walters@humboldt.edu), I can better keep track of all of your email messages. If the matter is too urgent or complicated to be handled via email, then by all means call me directly.

## **Course Overview**

Welcome to American Government, PSCI 110. The goal of this course is to give students a relevant understanding of how our complex government operates by describing the basic ideas, structure, and influences on our government and how politics work. This course addresses both philosophical roots and the contemporary operation of American national, state, and local governments. We also explore factors that influence our government: elections, political parties, the media, public opinion, and special interest groups. Students become familiar with policies, domestic and foreign. This course analyzes what is “American politics.” We discuss news events and connect them with the foundations, institutions, and political systems of our government.

## **Course Requirements**

1. American Government is a participatory subject. It is learned not only by reading and writing, but also through discussion and debate. Therefore, the quality of your participation matters. Other students have shared from previous years that it helps to jump in a get involved. Speak up and you will hear from others who might feel and think like you. Learn from those who you disagree with. It makes class go by faster and we have a lot more fun.
2. Students are expected to complete each assignment by the scheduled date. If for some reason you need to reschedule a test or assignment, please let me know as soon as possible.
3. You will need to carefully read textbook chapters, participate in online activities and quizzes, complete weekly discussion assignments, and submit class projects. Conscientiousness, attention to details, and reading and writing skills are critical for success.
4. Presenting the words or ideas of someone else as though they are your own is plagiarism. It is the most serious academic offense. You must always provide citations (including page number or specific URL) for direct references to information provided by others, whether or not it is a quotation. Copying distinctive phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from the work of another (whether a classmate, newspaper, book, or website) is never acceptable unless it is a direct and accurate cited quotation.  Copying – or cutting and pasting – someone else’s writing into your paper and then changing a few words is plagiarism, even if you cite it! You should never “write” an assignment by cutting and pasting information into your document from any other sources, even if you revise it with your own words later.  Plagiarism in any form can result in failure of this course and disciplinary action by the university.  If you are unsure about this matter, please talk to me in advance. HSU’s [Academic Honesty Policy](http://www2.humboldt.edu/studentrights/academic-honesty) is here.
5. **Plan your travel and personal events around your schoolwork, not vice versa.**If you have an emergency, please notify me immediately if this affects your coursework.
6. This class provides a unique opportunity to discuss politics in an online classroom. Because of the subject matter, we will be discussing perspectives, beliefs, and values, entwined in the subject of American politics. I ask that we honor the rights of each other to explore these challenging concepts in a safe, thoughtful, respectful, and courteous environment. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior (as determined by myself and in alignment with the Student Handbook) will result in consequences/my request for you to leave the classroom. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from our classroom community or if you have a specific need, please speak with me early in the semester so that we can work together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community. Note: Students with appropriate paperwork from DSPS should notify the instructor of accommodations they may require. Please do so as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

## **Expectations of the Student**

* **Log into the course daily. Participate.**
* Expect to spend about 4-5 hours per week working on this course.
* Prepare to the best of your ability for every aspect of this course.
* Take the opportunity to learn how to write your own thoughts; don't plagiarize. Be sure to give credit where credit is due and cite your sources or use footnotes or endnotes.
* Learning through collaboration (defined as working with or learning from another) is an effective tool used in this class and in your future employment. When I expect you to collaborate, I'll make it very clear in the assignment instructions. All other work in this class is to be done independently.
* If you haven't already, read the Student Handbook to make sure you understand the importance of your academic integrity.
* If we all live up to our academic responsibilities, this course will be meaningful for all who participate. Please feel free to discuss these points with me at any time during the course this semester.

## **Expectations of the Instructor**

I will be available to answer questions or issues that may arise for you during this course. **Expect a 48-hour turnaround time for responses to emails. I am less likely to respond to emails on the weekends; expect responses Monday morning.**

I also am also committed to student privacy rights, including the legal rights of students that prevent information from being disclosed to anyone (including parents/guardians) without the student’s prior written consent.

## **Assignments and Grading**

**1. Participation – Discussions on Canvas – 30 pts. each.**(20 points for the primary post and 5 points for each reply post.) Be prepared to contribute to periodic class discussions on Canvas. Please submit your response and respond to other classmates for full credit.

Primary Post – Your primary post is your response to the question or scenario provided. This post must:

* + - React analytically, not a summary or just a personal example
		- Relate and apply topic to your own personal experience
		- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and complete sentences
		- Be posted before the deadline
		- Meet the 250-word minimum length

Two Reply Posts -- To receive full points, reply posts will:

* + - React thoughtfully to the content of two classmate’s primary posts.
		- Focus your reply on your classmate’s post, not on your personal experiences
		- Meet the 150-word minimum length
		- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and complete sentences

\*\* Note on discussion posts: Please respond early to the discussion question. Those who post late often do not receive helpful feedback/responses from classmates.

**2. Weekly News Article Analysis – 20 pts**. **Each.** In addition to your required reading each week, you will be responsible for finding a news article and writing a short analysis. These are 20 points each. Each week you will summarize an article pertaining to American politics and how it influences the current debate on that subject. **Applying the concepts from the readings will strengthen your analysis.**You can use information from past article summaries if you want to focus on one topic throughout the semester. Each week you will have to use a different media source for the articles. Some weeks it will be your choice and other weeks will be set. My goal for these assignments is encourage you to critically engage different news sources – determining credibility, bias, and potential effects.

To receive full credit:

* + - The news article must focus on local, state, national, or international political issues. Please include a link to your selected article with your analysis.
		- Your paper must quickly summarize the article, connect the article to the larger picture/debate, and identify any bias in the article.
		- It must be turned in on time or will receive a late grade.
		- Each analysis should be about 1 page (or 250-300 words), double spaced, Times New Roman font, 12-point font.
		- (See additional details under each assignment on Canvas.)

**3. Quizzes – 20 pts.** The Canvas quizzes will relate to the readings. They will include multiple choice questions and short answer questions corresponding to each week. These are intended to help you key in on important information and learn the material.

**4. Assignments – 20 pts. each.**Specific instructions for each assignment will be included on Canvas.

**5**. **American Government Project** **– 100 pts.** This project will require that you engage a political topic and develop a project to be presented to the class. More details will be included when assigned.

**5. Reflection Activity – 40 pts.**The reflection activity will be in conjunction with a video. You will be asked to think back over the semester and engage some of the key concepts or ideas we explored. The activity will require short responses and will be turned in during our final class.

**Grades Breakdown**

**Discussion Participation** = 210 points

**Weekly News Analyses** = 180 points

**Quizzes =**100 points

**Online Assignments =**60 points

**American Government Project** **=** 100 points

**Reflection Activity** = 40 points

**Total Semester Points = 690 points**

#### **Late Work**

Late discussions will not be accepted.

Late news analyses:

20% reduction following the deadline, through the following Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

50% reduction after the following Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

Late online assignments will not be accepted (these are supplemental assignments, not news analyses).

Quizzes

50% reduction after the deadline.

Late projects/assessments will not be accepted without prior approval.

Late reflection activities will not be accepted without prior approval.

#### **Staying on Track**

You will be able to track your grade throughout the course using the "Grades" link in the left side navigation menu on each course page. If you have any questions about your grade, contact me immediately.

A letter grade will be determined by total accumulated points (900 possible points) as follows:

* A = (94-100%); A- = (90-93%)
* B+ = (87-89%); B = (83-86%); B- = (80-82%)
* C+ = (77-79%); C = (73-76%); C- = (70-72%)
* D+ = (67-69%); D = (60-66%)
* F= (≤ 59%)

Last day to add/drop is February 8th, 2021.

#### **Incomplete Grades**

Incomplete grades will only be assigned due to extraordinary circumstances.

# **Course Schedule**

Refer to the Course Schedule for due dates for each assignment, as well as the Assignment Details for more information on these assignments. Each student is responsible for completing all assignments and activities as specified by the instructor. See the Assignment Details for specific information about each assignment, including how it will be evaluated. All assignments should be completed to pass the course. Assignments will be submitted online. If you have problems submitting your assignments, contact Canvas 24/7 Support (help button in Canvas) or the Humboldt State Help Desk (help@humboldt.edu or 707-826-4357) immediately by phone or email to resolve the problem.

**\*Due dates and assignments may be subject to change.**

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| Week | COURSE SCHEDULE |
| 1 | January 24 | **Section 1:****The Spirit of American Politics** | Learning Unit 1: Unpacking American Politics**Complete Module 1****By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post*(Student Introduction)***By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts |
| 2 | January 31 |  | Learning Unit 2: Ideas that Shape America**Complete Module 2****By Wed.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): NYTimes News Analysis Due |
| 3 | February 7 |  | Learning Unit 3: Constitution and Federalism **Complete Module 3****By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Quiz Due**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Washington Post News Analysis Due |
| 4 | February 14 |  | Learning Unit 4: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**Complete Module 4****By Wed.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): CNN News Analysis Due |
| 5 | February 21 | **Section 2:** **By the People, For the People** | Learning Unit 5: Political Behavior**Complete Module 5****By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Quiz Due**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Bloomberg News Analysis Due |
|  | February 28 |  | **Spring Break** |
| 6 | March 7 |  | Learning Unit 6: Political Participation**Complete Module 6****By Wed.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Al Jazeera News Analysis Due |
| 7 | March 14 |  | Learning Unit 7: Mass Media**Complete Module 7****By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Fox News Analysis Due**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Quiz Due\*\* American Government Project Assigned \*\* |
| 8 | March 21 |  | Learning Unit 8: The Environment is Political**Complete Module 8****By Wed.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts |
| 9 | March 28 | **Section 3:** **Engaging Structures** | Learning Unit 9: Campaigns and Elections**Complete Module 9****By Sun. (11:59 p.m.):** *Your Choice* News Analysis Due**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Quiz Due |
| 10 | April 4 |  | Learning Unit 10: Political Parties**Complete Module 10** **By Wed.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts |
| 11 | April 11 |  | **Complete Module 11:** California Politics**By Sun. (11:59 p.m.):** Online Assignment |
| 12 | April 18 |  | **Complete Module 12:** Local Politics**By Thursday.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts**By Sun. (11:59 p.m.):** Local News Source News Analysis Due**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Online Assignment Due |
| 13 | April 25 | Tribes | **Complete Module 13:** Tribes**By Wed.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts**By Sun. (11:59 p.m.):** *Article about a California Tribe/By a Tribal Newspaper* News Analysis Due**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Quiz Due |
| 14 | May 2 | **Section 4:** **Reform, Transformation, Resolution** | **Complete Module 14** **By Wed.** (11:59 p.m.): Primary Post**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Two reply posts**By Sun.** (11:59 p.m.): Online Assignment Due  |
| 15 | May 9 |  | **Complete Module 15** |
|  | Finals |  | **By Fri. (11:59 p.m.):** Reflection Activity Due |

**Additional Resources**

## **Technical Assistance**

It is crucial to seek help when you can’t access Canvas or you have difficulty with your computer settings or browser:

* For **technical assistance** contact HSU’s Help Desk at 707.826.HELP (4357) or send an email to help@humboldt.edu
* For **Canvas support**, please use the Help button located on the bottom left of your course.
* Please see the Canvas Student Guides to learn more about specific Canvas functions.

**Special notes: Browsers and Mobile Devices**

1. The Canvas app: Available for iOS or Android: [**Canvas Mobile Guides**.](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-4048)
2. Firefox or Chrome are recommended browsers for accessing Canvas. If you have problems opening some content, first try another browser. If you are using a mobile device, try accessing the content on a computer.
3. If Flash-based content is used in this course, it won't display on Mobile devices, especially iOS devices.
4. External URLs: To open certain URLs (http vs. https) you may be prompted to click on the shield icon in your browser to “allow” access to the unsecure content. Simply click on the shield and click the “allow” button when asked.
5. Please note that some content may be blocked if you are using a campus computer, as HSU computer labs do not allow opening certain types of unsecure content.

## **University Policies**

### **Late Work**

There will be no make-up exams or assignments available. If you miss an exam, or homework/posting due date, a grade of “0” will be recorded without exception. **Plan your travel and personal events around your schoolwork, not vice versa.** If you have an emergency, please notify me immediately if this affects your coursework or attendance.

### **Emergency Procedures**

* Review the evacuation plan and emergency procedures for the classroom
* During an emergency, information can be found on campus conditions at 707-826-INFO or the [**HSU Emergency website**](http://www.humboldt.edu/humboldt/emergency).

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty. For more information, visit: [**Academic Honesty Policy**](http://www.humboldt.edu/studentrights/academic_honesty.php) or [**HSU Catalog**](http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/catalog/)

### **Students with Disabilities**

Persons who wish to request disability-related accommodations should contact me immediately so I can assist you in a timely manner. If you have not yet done so, please request services with the Student Disability Resource Center in the Learning Commons, Lower Library, 826-4678 (voice) or 826-5392 (TDD). Some accommodations may take up to several weeks to arrange. [**Student Disability Resource Center.**](http://www.humboldt.edu/disability/)

### **HSU Policy and Procedures for Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities Statement**

[**Executive Memorandum EM P02-01**](http://www.humboldt.edu/policy/PEMP02-01Humboldt-State-University-Policy-and-Procedures-Accommodating-Individuals-Disabilities) **states:**

*It is the policy of Humboldt State University to provide equal access and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities to participate in any program, service, or opportunity by the campus, including access to the content and services of the World Wide Web pages authored by the University. Request for accommodation in pursuit of student's academic programs should be made to the* [***Student Disability Resource Center***](http://www2.humboldt.edu/disability/welcome)*.*

Our campus learning management system is Canvas. Here is a link to the [**Accessibility within Canvas statement.** (Links to an external site.)](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2061)

*This course was built with accessibility in mind. However, if you discover something in the course that is not as accessible as it could be, please alert your instructor as soon as possible.*

### **Add/Drop Policy**

It is essential that you stay on track in a course so you don’t fall behind. Students are responsible for knowing the University policy, procedures, and schedule for dropping or adding classes.

### **Attendance and Disruptive Behavior**

Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding attendance and disruptive behavior: [**Class Attendance and Disruptive Behavior**](https://www2.humboldt.edu/studentrights/attendance-behavior).

### **Email Policy**

All HSU students are responsible for checking their HSU email account for official communications. While students may elect to redirect messages sent to their official HSU email address to another address, those who redirect their email to another address do so at their own risk. [**HSU Email Policy**](https://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/students/regulations/EmailPolicy.html).

## **Student Support Services**

### ***Resources and Options for the HSU Student Community***

Find a full list of services for HSU students here:

[**http://www2.humboldt.edu/studentaffairs/student-resources**](http://www2.humboldt.edu/studentaffairs/student-resources)

### **Learning Center**

The HSU Learning Center has a wide range of academic support services. [**HSU Learning Center**](http://www.humboldt.edu/learning/)

### **Writing Studio**

The Writing Center offers free peer assistance with writing assignments and standardized writing examination preparation. The Writing Studio's web site can be accessed at [**HSU Writing Studio**](http://www2.humboldt.edu/learning/writing-studio)

### **Improving Study Skills**

Find a variety of resources to improve your study skills. [**HSU RAMP Academic Resources**](http://www2.humboldt.edu/ramp/academic-resources)

### **Tutoring Services**

The Learning Center provides tutorial assistance to students having difficulties in specific

Courses. The Tutoring Services web site can be accessed at [**HSU Tutorial Services**](https://www2.humboldt.edu/learning/tutorial-services)

### **Advising**

The Academic and Career Advising Center supports students' pursuit of educational goals. [**HSU Academic & Career Advising Center**](http://www2.humboldt.edu/advise/)

### **Mentoring**

Peer academic support through Retention Through Academic Mentoring Program (RAMP)

### **[HSU RAMP Program](http://www2.humboldt.edu/ramp/home) Registration**

The Office of the Registrar can guide you through all your registration information.

### **[HSU Office of the Registrar](http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/) Counseling**

The Counseling & Psychological Services Center supports the wellbeing of HSU students.

### **[HSU Counseling & Psychological Services](http://www2.humboldt.edu/counseling/)**

Humboldt State University, 2019