**Diablo Valley College**

**Political Science 121 / Introduction to United States Government**

**Summer 15 TTH 5:30pm-9:45pm W218**

Instructor: Kerri Ryer

Office: W218

Office Hours: T TH 5pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is a survey of the American political framework and processes. The course covers the Constitutional structure and functions of the legislative, executive and judicial branches at national, state and local levels. Using a Madisonian framework, this course will examine the challenges of democratic theory in practice. With an emphasis on pluralism, students will place themselves within current political debates. Viewed in the context of political parties, interest groups, and citizenship, students will engage with questions about power and justice. Emphasis will be placed on the impact of federal, state and local government in California.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Describe the basic structures and procedures of United States government.
2. Analyze the role of culture, diversity and ideology in shaping public opinion and policy in the United States and California.
3. Contrast several analytical models of United States politics.
4. Locate themselves with some discernment and judgment among the assertions and choices in United States public life.
5. Fashion a political outlook that does some justice to the complexity of the world and to the contributions of other thinkers.
6. Recognize the origin of political conflict in their own values and expectations.
7. Describe the relative impact of federal, state and local governments on the inhabitants of California.
8. Explain the civil liberties and civil rights of individuals as articulated in the U.S. Constitution and federal court decisions.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. *American Politics Today*, 4th essentials edition. By: Bianco & Canon. ISBN: 987-0-393-93702-2
2. *Governing California in the 21st Century,* 5th ed. By: Anagnoson, Bonetto et al. ISBN: 978-0393938395
3. The instructor will also provide other assigned readings and media online.

(*APT* and *GC* are bundled in the bookstore at a lower rate than buying them new individually.)

TEACHING: This course will consist of both in person and online lectures and discussions. Students are required to read the assigned readings and view all media prior to the class date they are assigned. Students will be required to actively engage in the teaching and learning process through group and peer teaching exercises.

EVALUATION

Your performance will be evaluated by your participation in class discussion and collaborative projects, a midterm exam, weekly quizzes and a final. Reading quizzes need to be completed online before the class session begins. Unexcused absences will significantly lower your grade. Only documented medical absences will be excused, though reasonable accommodations will be made in extenuating circumstances. Instructor reserves the right to drop anyone with more than two unexcused absences, but is not responsible for dropping absent students.

Your final grade will be based upon the following rubric:

Class participation 10%

Collaborative projects 15%

Reading quizzes & reflections 15%

Midterm exam 30%

Final exam 30%

Total 100%

Final grades will be assigned using the following evaluative grades and symbols:

A—Excellent

B—Good

C—Satisfactory

D—Passing, less than satisfactory

F—Failing

CODE OF CONDUCT: All students are required to adhere to the college code of conduct and academic honesty policies. They can be found here:

http://www3.dvc.edu/org/info/policies/code-of-conduct.htm

http://www3.dvc.edu/org/info/policies/academic-dishonesty-links.htm

http://www.dvc.edu/org/info/policies/pdfs/ADRF.pdf

DISABILITY:

Students who require alternative formats for course materials or adaptive equipment because of a specific disability can request them through the Disability Support Services office. The High Tech Center in LC-107 (Pleasant Hill) is an adaptive technology computer lab available to students with disabilities and is open Monday-Thursday from 9am-5pm, and Fridays from 9am-1pm. Their phone number is 925-685-1230 ext. 2553 for more information.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

I will drop anyone who does not show up to the first week of the course. After that, it is the student’s responsibility to drop the course if they wish to withdraw. Do not expect that I will initiate the withdrawal procedures for you after the first week of classes, I will not. Please see the important dates below.

IMPORTANT SUMMER SESSION DATES AND DEADLINES:

June 16 Last date to add

June 17 Last date to drop with no “W”

June 18 Last date to drop with refund & (Census Date)

June 25 Last date to request P/NP

July 14 Last date to drop with W

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

\*Schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Week 1

*Introduction to Political Science and Understanding Foundations of American Politics*

Course objectives: 1, 5, 6, 8.

June 16: Basic introduction to the study of politics, theory and practice. Some key principles of Democratic government. Freedom, Order or Equality? Constitutional Government and the founding.

READINGS: B&C Chapters 1 & 2

June 18: Federalism, Civil liberties, and Civil Rights

READINGS: B&C Chapters 3, 4, 5

Week 2

*Political interests*

Course objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6.

June 23: Public opinion, political socialization and the media.

READING: B&C Chapter 6

June 25: Political parties and interest groups.

READING: B&C Chapters 7 & 9.

Week 3

*To the Voting Booth!*

Course objectives: 1, 3, 4.

June 30: Elections and Representation.

READINGS: B&C Chapter 8

July 2: **MIDTERM** \*Bring a blue book

Week 4

*Institutions of American Government*

Course objectives: 1, 8.

July 7: Congress and the Presidency

READINGS: B&C Chapters 10 & 11

July 9:The Bureaucracy & The Courts

READINGS: B&C Chapters 12 & 13

Week 5

*Public Policy in the American Political System*

Course objectives: 1, 2, 5, 6.

July 14: Economic and social policy

READINGS: B&C Chapter 14

July 16: Foreign policy

READINGS: B&C Chapter 15

Week 6

*Governing California*

Course objectives: 2, 4, 7.

July 21: California government, politics and policy.

READINGS: A&B Chapters 1, 2, 4, 10.

July 23: **FINAL EXAM** \*Bring a blue book