GROSSMONT COLLEGE

Official Course Outline

# POLITICAL SCIENCE 140 – INTRODUCTION TO CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICS

1. Course Number Course Title Semester Units Semester Hours

POSC 140 Introduction to California 3 3 hours lecture: 48-54 hours

Governments and Politics 96-108 outside-of-class hours

144-162 total hours

2. Course Prerequisites

None.

Corequisite

None.

Recommended Preparation

A “C” grade or higher or “Pass” in Political Science 121 or equivalent.

3. Catalog Description

This course examines the structure and functions of California state and local governments and politics. Attention will be given to the evolution of the principal features, organization, and operation of state and local governments within the framework of U.S. federalism from the time of the nation’s founding. Emphasis is placed on the role of significant events, major ethnic groups and major social groups in the development of the political structures and processes of California state and local governments and contemporary political issues.

4. Course Objectives

Students will:

a. Analyze the evolution of the relationship of the states and the U.S. in its entirety, with a special emphasis on U.S. California relations, including the relationship of regions within the U.S.

b. Examine the origins and development of the state of California and how this development reflects the continuity of the American experience and how that experience was derived from other political cultures and shaped by California’s geography, economics, and social movements.

c. Compare and contrast California’s Constitutions with the U.S. Constitution, including the influence of the political philosophies of the framers of the U.S. Constitution as well as the rights and obligations of citizens under the U.S. and California Constitutions.

d. Compare and contrast the California governmental system with other subnational governments in the United States, and with regional and local governments in other selected nations including the relationships of these governments with external regions and powers.

e. Evaluate contemporary public policy issues facing state and local governments.

5. Instructional Facilities

a. Standard classroom

b. Maps (U.S. and California topographical and political).

c. Audiovisual equipment – television, video clips, overhead projector, projection screen, digital processing presenter, computer with data projector monitor and internet access.

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6. Special Materials Required of Student

None.

7. Course Content

Comprised of units to give students perspectives on state and local politics, especially including:

a. The evolution and problems of the U.S. federal system and California’s relationship within this system.

b. California’s Constitution and its state and local government structures, functions, and policymaking processes.

c. A comparison of these structures and processes with other state and local governments.

d. Contemporary policy problems facing California and other states and localities.

e. California’s external relations, including with its neighbor, Mexico.

8. Method of Instruction

a. Class discussions.

b. Lecture.

c. Multimedia presentations.

9. Methods of Evaluating Student Performance

a. Examinations, including a final exam: objective and essay questions.

b. Written and oral projects on topics such as California’s political geography, the initiative process, or California’s budgetary process.

10. Outside Class Assignments

a. Textbook reading.

b. Homework.

c. Conduct research in preparation for the written and oral projects on topics such as California’s political geography, the initiative process, or California’s budgetary process.

11. Texts

a. Required Text(s):

(1) Lawrence, David G. *California: The Politics of Diversity*. Stamford, CT: Wadsworth, 2012.

(2) Magleby, David B., et al. State and Local *Politics*. Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice Hall, 2011.

(3) Cahn, Matthew A., H. Eric Schockman, and David M. Shafie. *Rethinking California: Politics and Policy in the Golden State*. Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice Hall, 2009.

b. Supplementary texts and workbooks:

(1) Stinebrickner, Bruce editor. *Annual Editions: State and Local Government*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2011.

Addendum: Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, our students will be able to do the following:

* 1. Evaluate the origins and development of the state of California and its Constitutions and their effect on the structure and functions of California state and local governments.
  2. Rate the importance of contemporary public policy issues facing state and local governments and calculate the effectiveness of various policies at solving those issues.
  3. Analyze the evolution and political processes of the U.S federal system and Constitution and devise strategies for conflict resolution among federal, state, and local governments.

Date approved by the Governing Board: May 21, 2013