POSC 173
GOVERNMENT & POLITICS OF CALIFORNIA
Summer 2011, Session II

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 2-3:30 p.m. and by appointment

TA: Carrie Skulley
Department of Political Science
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 9:30-11:00 a.m. and by appointment

Required Reading
Most readings for the course will be available via links provided through course site at ilearn.ucr.edu. Some readings will be available ON RESERVE at Rivera Library.

Course Requirements
Class attendance and participation 10%
Section 10%
Midterm exam 20%
Term paper proposal 5%
Term paper 25%
Final examination 30%

Course Description
This is an examination of the political process of California with particular attention paid to both electoral and legislative politics and the contribution they make to the issue of democratic governance under conditions of social diversity.

My primary objective for you is that you will leave the class with a greater knowledge and understanding of the workings of California government, and a sufficient background to begin your own interaction with it – as an activist, public servant, journalist, or voter.

My office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. Please do not hesitate to come by during these scheduled times or contact me to schedule an appointment.

Notes
Students with permanent and temporary disabilities should contact me to discuss arrangements, as well as contact Services for Students with Disabilities to request services.

All late papers will be graded, but with a 1/3 letter-grade reduction with each day it is late. Any paper that is turned in will receive partial credit.

Any student who plagiarizes, cheats, or fabricates data will receive no credit for the spoiled assignment. All cases will be referred to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Programs office.
Class Attendance and Participation
You are required to attend class and all of each class meeting. I will call role every day and note your arrival and departure times if you join us late or leave early. You may miss all or part of two class meetings (the equivalent of entire week of classes) without penalty. Beyond that, you will be penalized one percent of your course grade for each class or portion missed. This is not negotiable; use your two excused absences wisely.

Section
You will also participate in a section meeting each week with Ms. Skulley. She will develop a curriculum that complements the lectures and readings for the class and evaluate your participation and performance in those section meetings.

Term Paper and Proposal
You will write an 8-10 page paper on an issue California confronts, either exploring the contours of the problem and how media discusses it or a potential solution. The paper will be due on the last day of class, by 5 p.m. August 25. I will offer a more guidance on this as the session progresses, but you will have two main options:
- Compare media coverage of an issue, contrasting how the issue is discussed by mainstream newspapers (e.g., Los Angeles Times) versus how it is discussed by bloggers and other on-line sources of information. A particularly strong paper would contrast partisan and mainstream news sources.
- Propose a solution to a problem facing California today. This will require you to identify a problem (and defend that it is a problem using evidence) and indicate that the solution proposed directly addresses the problem identified.

In order to help you take full advantage of this paper and to get a substantial head start, I would like each of you to propose your topic in a 2-page memorandum due Thursday, August 4, in class. This memorandum will explain which of these directions you would like to take, offer preliminary insights, and list several sources you intend to incorporate. Based on your proposal, Ms. Skulley and I can make suggestions aimed at helping you with the literature review.

Examinations
You will also complete two examinations. The mid-term exam is scheduled for Wednesday, August 10, in class. If you are unable to take the mid-term exam at the scheduled time, you may schedule an alternate time by contacting me prior to the scheduled exam time and providing appropriate original-copies documentation (medical, military, etc.) for your inability to take the exam at the scheduled time. Scheduling a makeup exam is your responsibility. I will consider extreme medical emergencies, again with complete original documentation.

The final exam will have a similar but longer format. It will be cumulative. It is scheduled for Friday, August 26, 1-3 p.m.
**Course Schedule**

**Setting the stage**

July 25 (M)  Course introduction and a discussion of academic integrity

July 26 (Tu)  California political history; U.S. context

July 27 (W)  Grim diagnosis for California


**California people politics**

July 28 (Th)  Public attention to and opinions about California government


Aug. 1 (M)  Partisanship in California


Aug. 2 (Tu)  Civic engagement

Aug. 3 (W)  Immigration

Aug. 4 (Th)  Immigration as a political issue in California

http://www.bepress.com/cjpp/vol2/iss1/2; http://ilearn.ucr.edu

California institutions

Aug. 8 (M)  The California Legislature

Aug. 9 (Tu)  Term limits and mid-term review

Aug. 10 (W)  Midterm exam, in class
Note: Midterm will cover all material July 25-August 9

Aug. 11 (Th)  The California Governor and Executive branch

ADDITIONAL READING TBA

Aug. 15 (M)  The California Judicial branch

ADDITIONAL READING TBA

Aug. 16 (Tu)  Direct democracy in California
Aug. 17 (W) Proposition 13 and California tax policy


Aug. 18 (Th) An institutional assessment of California

Policy issues facing the state

Aug. 22 (M) Higher education

Optional

Aug. 23 (Tu) K-12


Aug. 24 (W) Water

Aug. 25 (Th) Transportation and air pollution

Aug. 26 (F) Final exam, 1 – 3 p.m.