

# **Welcome to Political Science 202:**

## **American Government and Politics**

**Spring 2019**

**CRN 31275 and 32989**

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**Welcome to the course and welcome to distance education at Cuesta College. I am Victor Krulikowski and I will be your instructor for this distance ed course. On this page, you will find some important information that you will need to take, and succeed in, this class.**

**\*\*\*This is a fully online course. Every aspect of the course will be online (Canvas) and there will be no required in-person meetings at all. However, for the quizzes and exams there will be specific dates on which you have to take the exam. You will have a 48 hour window during which you will have to take the exam. During that period you will need to log in and access the exam. Once you start the exam you will have about one hour to complete it, but you can start anytime within that two day window. So, you will need to be absolutely certain you will be available during those windows of time to take the quizzes and exams. There are NO exceptions to this. If you won't be able to meet those terms, do not sign up for this class. All of the exams run from 8am on a Wednesday to 8am on Friday. The dates for the exams are Feb 20-22, Mar 6-8, Mar 20-22, Apr 10-12, May 1-3, May 22-24.**

**The semester begins Tuesday, Jan 22 and the class will become available to you at that time. I will send out some basic information a few days before the session begins. It will go to your Cuesta email account so be looking for it there.**

**\*\*\*You must “attend” class the first week meaning that you must log in to the course at the latest by 8pm, Friday January 25. Failure to do so means you will be dropped from the class.**

### **The nature of the course:**

As mentioned above, this course is 100% on-line. Virtually all communication and course material will be by electronic means. The pacing of the course will somewhat match that of my traditional, face-to-face classes. I'll post about two weeks' worth of material at a time. Within that two week period you'll have the flexibility to work through the material at whatever time and pace you desire. The only exceptions to that will be the hard dates for assignments like the exams and a few homework assignments. You will need to complete all necessary material by those dates in order to perform adequately in the course. Three exams and three quizzes will make up the majority of your grade for the semester.

A word of caution: there are really two main challenges to taking a class online. The first relates to scheduling and discipline. Because of the much more open “schedule” of online classes, it is easy to let things slide and fall behind. It is much easier to not log in for two weeks of an online class than to blow off two weeks in a traditional face-to-face class. It is easy to talk yourself into thinking you're busy this week but you'll make up all the work next week. Guess what? You'll be busy next week too. And this class will not stop or pause to wait for you to catch up. And when you get to the point where you are trying to make up four weeks of class in one week, you will either give up or significantly underperform. I'd give you testimonials from students to whom this happened but they never make it to the

end of the class for me to be able to ask them about it. So, set a schedule for yourself. Set some time aside each week dedicated to this class and work hard to keep it. You are all reading this and saying that won't be you but I can tell you that a good 20-30% of you will not make it to the end of the semester and this is the main reason why.

The second challenge is the reading. The amount of reading for this course is approximately double that of a face-to-face version. You'll do all the same readings in the books but you'll also have to read all of the "lectures" as well. For many of us our entire academic careers have been focused on learning by listening. Moving to a format where it is virtually 100% reading can be a challenge. This is also why it can be such a challenge to catch up if you fall behind in this class. Just be ready for that, plan accordingly, and stick to your schedule to make sure you aren't falling behind. In general, you should expect to spend as much time on this class as you would for any other class you are taking at Cuesta. You may not need to attend three hours of in-person lecture each week but you will need that time for reading the lectures.

## **Technical Requirements:**

I realize this is stating the obvious, but you must have an email account and access to the World Wide Web. There is a very useful page of information about distance education at Cuesta. You can find it [here](#) . In particular, you will want to view the FAQ page which provides some assistance with the technical side of distance ed (for ex. suggested minimum system requirements, how to get technical assistance, etc). This course will be taught using the Canvas platform.

## **Textbooks:**

In addition to the information provided online, there are two textbooks required for the course. They are: By the People: Debating American Government (Brief Third Edition) by James A. Morone and Rogan Kersh and Walter Stone's Republic at Risk. These are available at both the San Luis campus bookstore and the North County Campus (Paso) bookstore. The By the People text has been in use for a couple of years so it may be possible to find used copies of that text at our bookstores and/or other stores and online sites. Even new it is pretty reasonably

priced compared to many textbooks and you might be able to find good deals on it. The Stone text is very inexpensive at our bookstore so only buy one elsewhere if you can get it really, really cheap. Do not pay a lot of money for the Stone text. Some sellers seem to think older versions are collector's items and charge a lot for them taking advantage of the relatively high cost of textbooks these days. Don't fall for it.

For your general information, you can always find information for textbooks for all of your classes as soon as registration opens. When you open the class finder page, there is a box in the middle at the top that has a link that says, "Find textbooks for your classes here!" Knowing this will give you maximum lead time to locate books and try to get the best price.

Here is a direct [link](#), but don't forget the directions above so you can find it at any time.

## **Logging on the the course:**

As with all Cuesta classes, we will be using Canvas for this class. Directions for that are shown below. If there is a change, I will let you know. Please be aware that you will not be able to log in to the course until the first day of the semester. Once the semester begins you will be able to log in using the following instructions:

1. There are multiple places to access Canvas. One of the easiest is a link at the top left of the Cuesta College homepage. You can also access it from within myCuesta. You can also access it by going directly to [cuesta.instructure.com](http://cuesta.instructure.com)

2. To log in, use the same credentials you use to access myCuesta. The same username and password..

## **Support**

If you are having trouble signing in or this course isn't showing up, contact: [support@my.cuesta.edu](mailto:support@my.cuesta.edu)

Include a brief description of the problem, your name, login ID (not your password) and the course CRN#.

**Other:**

[You can find information about how the waitlist works here.](#)

[You can find information about semester dates, adding, dropping, etc., here.](#)

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