

Welcome to Political Science 202:

American Government and Politics

Fall 2017

CRN 71650 and 73397

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

*****While this is a fully online course, there are some hard dates for which you will need to be available. Every aspect of the course will be online 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 will have to complete them. You will typically 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 quiz/exam you will have thirty minutes to an 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. There are NO exceptions to this. If you won't be able to meet those terms, do not sign up for this class. The target dates for the exams are as follows (all opening on a Wednesday morning and**

closing on a Friday morning: Sept 20, Oct 4, Oct 18, Nov 8, Nov 29, Dec 20.

I will send out some basic information a few days before the semester begins about logging in and starting the class. It will go to your Cuesta email account so be looking for it there.

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 closely match that of my traditional, face-to-face classes. The lectures will become available to you on a regular basis, one section at a time. Depending on the particular section of the course, you will be able to access between one to three week's worth of new information at a time. Previously covered material, of course, will always be available to you. But for your benefit, as well as mine, I want to keep things moving at a manageable pace and keep everyone in the class at approximately the same point. So, within each section of material you will be able to set your own pace to a great extent but the timing of moving from section to section will be set by me. In particular, those boundaries set by me are simply set by the hard dates for the exams listed above. You will need to complete all necessary material by those dates in order to perform adequately in the course.

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 under-perform. 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 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 30-40% 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 of the same readings in the books but you'll also have to read all of the "lectures" as well. And since for many of us our entire academic careers have been more 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 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). We will be using Canvas for this class. Here is a link that might be of assistance:

- http://academic.cuesta.edu/training/training_materials/Moodle_for_students_QR.pdf

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 about a year 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: http://bookstore.cuesta.org/buy_courselisting.asp?

Starting the class:

The class will become available to you in Canvas on the first day of the semester (in this case, Monday, Aug 21th). I will typically send out a reminder along with some basic information sometime over the weekend immediately prior to the beginning of the semester. You will receive that email at the Cuesta email account (the gmail account established with your enrollment at Cuesta).

Technical support:

If you are having trouble signing in or this course isn't showing up, contact: support@my.cuesta.edu Include a brief description of the problem, your name, login ID (not your password) and the course CRN#.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completing the course successfully you will be able to: describe the structure and function of US and California governmental institutions and political processes, generalize about the distribution of power in American politics, appraise democratic processes and participation, explain how individuals and groups pursue advantages in the system, objectively and critically analyze contemporary political issues and policies, explain the historical context of contemporary political issues

and policies, demonstrate empirically based political judgment, value informed democratic citizenship.

Some key dates for Fall 2016:

Last day to add: September 3

Last day to drop without a W: September 3

Last day to drop with a W: November 12

Other:

You can find information about how the waitlist works here:

<http://academic.cuesta.edu/admreg/waitlist.htm>

You can find information about semester dates, adding, dropping, etc., here:

<http://academic.cuesta.edu/admreg/infodate.htm>

If you have a disability and might need accommodations (support services) in this class, please contact Disabled Student Program & Services in Building 3300 as soon as possible to ensure that you receive the accommodations in a timely manner: <http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/dsps/>

Cuesta's academic dishonesty policy and computer use policy:

http://academic.cuesta.edu/president/2008BP/BP5000/AP%205500_Standards%20of%20Conduct.pdf

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