

Welcome to POLSC 12 – SPRING 2021

Course Name: State & Local Politics

Section #: V0452

Instructor: Prof. Gary Sokolow

Contact Information: gary-sokolow@redwoods.edu (until 1/16/21)

Information from your instructor: Welcome to what should be an interesting semester. We only get a presidential election once every four years so let's make the most of it. There is much to discuss, especially as states are taking the lead on management of the pandemic. It has radically changed life as we know it (for the time being, anyway).

Course Delivery: This course is delivered and taught 100% online; there are no classroom meetings.

Course Description: An introduction to state and local politics and government with some emphasis on California. Specific topics include governors, state legislatures, state courts, local governments, current issues in state and local politics, California political history, and the California Constitution.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- 1: Explain the relationship between the national and state/local governments (federalism).
- 2: Describe the functions of the three branches of state government and their interaction with one another.
- 3: Analyze contemporary issues facing state and local governments.
- 4: Describe the functions of local units of government (e.g. cities, counties, special districts) and their relationship to state governments.
- 5: Chart the historical role of individual citizens, interest groups, the mass media, and political parties in the formation and operation of state and local governments.

Student Commitment: This online class will require at least as much time as you dedicate to a traditional class.

Computer Skills: Provide students with a list of computer/tech skills they need to be successful in your class. Online courses require computer skills. Before beginning, make sure you can:

- navigate the course Learning Management System (Canvas),
- receive and respond to your CR email,
- upload and download files using Canvas, and
- use a word processor (such as Microsoft Word).

If you need help with any of these things, please let me know and we'll hook you up with assistance!

Technology Requirements: You should plan on having regular, preferably daily, internet access.

Proctored Exams: There are no proctored exams for this course.

Textbooks:

1. *Governing States & Localities – Seventh Edition*, Kevin Smith & Alan Greenblatt; Sage/CQ Press (2019); ISBN: 978-1544325422

2. *California Politics- A Primer – Fifth Edition*, Renee Van Vechten; Sage/CQ Press (2019) ISBN: 978-1-5063-8037-7

Other Materials: As needed, handouts (additional course materials) will be posted to our Canvas course page.

Course Availability: This course will be available on Canvas when the course is opened students on January 14, 2021.

Student Resources: There are instructions on how to log in to Canvas, the basics of using Canvas, and additional support for taking an online course at College of the Redwoods on the [CR-Online](#) web page.

Confirm your presence in the online classroom: *Log in to our class in Canvas and post to the “Student Introductions” discussion forum no later than **11:59pm on Monday, January 25, 2021** to confirm your presence in the online classroom. Doing so will confirm your enrollment in the course and will ensure you aren’t dropped as a “no show.” If you have any issues with this at all, send me an email and let me know, so we can work something out.*

ON-LINE CLASS SECTION V0452

Professor Gary A. Sokolow
Office: AJ 106
Office Hours: By Appointment
Telephones: 444-8630 (home/fax)
E-mail: Via Canvas Webpage

COURSE HOME PAGEredwoods.instructure.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to state and local politics and government with some emphasis on California. Specific topics include governors, state legislatures, state courts, local governments, current issues in state and local politics, California political history, and the California Constitution.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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- 4: Describe the functions of local units of government (e.g. cities, counties, special districts) and their relationship to state governments.
- 5: Chart the historical role of individual citizens, interest groups, the mass media, and political parties in the formation and operation of state and local governments.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Participation is important because there will be materiel and discussions in the class, which will not come from the textbook. There is more to the course than merely reading the textbook. It is expected that you will spend at least six hours per week on this course, reading assignments, watching videos, etc.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/WEBSITE:

- *Governing States and Localities, Seventh Edition*; Smith & Greenblatt, Sage/CQ Press (2019) ISBN: 978-1544325422
- *California Politics- A Primer – Fifth Edition*, Van Vechten; Sage/CQ Press (2019); ISBN: 978-1506380377
- *GOVERNING* On-Line Magazine (Free--Linked to our Canvas webpage)

CLASS GRADES AND EXAMS:** The course grade will be composed of the following:

- Two Exams: 75%
- Weekly Discussion Questions: 25%

The exams, which are to be completed outside of class, may require a limited amount of research. The proper use of standard English, which includes grammar, spelling, and punctuation is part of the grade of all written work.

Additionally, you will have weekly short essays (also completed “outside of class”) to write via the discussion boards. It is expected that you offer a short response/critique to the essays of two of your classmates. However, there will be no weekly questions for the two weeks the exams are posted.

A grade of “F” on any one exam **or the weekly questions category may result in an “F” grade for the entire course.

Instructor-Initiated Class Withdrawal Policy: -- “Excessive Absences” – defined as missing *more than two weeks of work on our Canvas page*. In other words, if you do not sign in to Canvas and complete assignments for more than two weeks at a time, I may withdraw you from the class.

COURSE GRADING SCALE:

A	=	>95% - 100%
A-	=	>90% - 95%
B+	=	>85% - 90%
B	=	>82% - 85%
B-	=	>80% - 82%
C+	=	>75% - 80%
C	=	>70% - 75%
D	=	61% - 70%
F	=	<61%

The “incomplete” grade status will not be assigned except under extraordinary circumstances.

CLASS SCHEDULE – ASSIGNED READINGS:

Every Monday, I will post on our Canvas course page, all upcoming reading/video assignments and assessments (tests or weekly discussion questions). Most of the reading assignments will come from your textbooks and the *Governing* website. Occasionally, class handouts may be posted on-line and are to be read or watched as part of the work for this course.

Code of Conduct

Preface:

The purpose of this code is to ensure that both the instructor and students are mindful of the rights and responsibilities of each other. Additionally, adherence to this code will help ensure that the class experience is both meaningful and interesting to all concerned.

Instructor Expectations:

- **Personal Responsibility** - I expect that all of you will be spending an average of at least six to eight hours per week on this course. That time should be spent reading the assignments, watching the weekly course video, and completing all assignments. I expect that you will complete all graded assignments on time. An additional aspect of personal responsibility for your own education includes asking for help if there is something you do not understand. Waiting until the time an assignment is due is usually too late. So, if you do not understand something we are covering in the course, ***ask!***
- **Plagiarism** – Plagiarism is defined as claiming any work of another person as your own without attribution to the true author. It also includes taking a substantial portion (approximately 25% or more) of your assignment from other sources, whether or not credit is given to those sources. This includes the work of fellow students. ***If a student is found to have plagiarized the work of others, the penalty which the instructor may impose ranges from a failing grade for the particular assignment to a failing grade for the entire course.***
- **Netiquette** - In participating in an on-line format, it is expected that all students treat each other with respect. This includes no personal attacks on any other class member or the instructor. I expect that you may disagree with the views of your classmates or me from time to time, but such disagreements must be expressed in a respectful manner. It is good to remember that we all bring to the class a broad array of life experiences and much of it is valuable. Open inquiry demands no less.

Student Expectations:

- **Punctuality** – Students have every right to expect that the instructor will offer timely feedback to any graded assignments. The instructor will respond to phone calls and E-mails within 48 hours, sooner if possible.
- **Civility** – Students have a right for the instructor to treat them with respect both in and out of our virtual classroom and to ensure that all students have an opportunity to express their opinions on relevant matters.
- **Virtual Classroom environment** – The instructor will make every attempt to make the virtual classroom experience useful, comfortable, and interesting.