

Pol 1: American National Government

TA: Carlos Algara

calgara@ucdavis.edu

Pol 1 -A03 Monday: 2:10 - 3pm, Pol 1 -A04 Monday: 3:10 - 4pm Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00 - 4:00pm, Kerr Hall 663

General Policies

Office Hours: Please contact me if you need help throughout the quarter or need to make an appointment outside of office hours. I cannot stress this enough, I am *more* than willing to meet outside of my office hours if you need help with the course material.

Email Policy: Never hesitate to ask me a question or contact me via email. Please allow 24-48 hours for a response, not including weekends.

Discussions: As a discussion section, there is an expectation that everyone participates regarding the topic of discussion. It is of critical importance to your grade in this section to participate. This goes without saying, be respectful and open to differing view points, ideas, and opinions. One of the main objectives of university is to become a better rounded individual and it is critically important to come into discussion with an open mind.

Section Grade

Your participation and performance in the discussion section will account for 10% of your final grade for the course. The grading criteria is presented below:

5% Discussion Exercises

10% Final Essay

15% Total Discussion Section Grade

Section Attendance

General Policy: While I will not be checking for attendance during every meeting, it is of critical importance you attend the discussion section. Six discussion exercises, geared towards providing feedback for your final essay, will be given during the meeting time. The goal of these exercises is to get you to think about your thesis for the final writing assignment and provide exposure to the critical steps needed to craft an argumentative essay at the collegiate level.

Absences: Attendance & participation in the weekly discussion section is mandatory. However, I am sensitive to the fact that many bigger life emergencies can happen throughout the course of the quarter. I cannot stress this enough, please don't hesitate to talk to me in that event or if you are going to have a compelling, unanticipated, non-academic absence.

Assignments

Final Essay: The only substantive and graded assignment for this discussion section is the final essay. This essay should be approximately 4-6 double-spaced pages, with standard font and one-inch page margins. As will be made clear throughout the quarter, a successful paper will feature a coherent thesis (i.e. argument), with subsequent paragraphs presented in an organized fashion that helps articulate your argument. The essay prompt, presented below, is designed for you to apply the fundamental argument presented in the course to one of the institutional dynamics present in our national government.

James Madison argued in Federalist # 51 that to prevent one branch of government form overpowering any other branch “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.” Choose an area covered during this course (e.g., congressional-presidential relations, House-Senate relations, the relationship between the courts and the elected branches, the bureaucracy & elected branches, etc.) and evaluate the extent to which Madison’s vision has been realized.

Section Readings

Please come prepared to discuss the current week’s readings for the discussion section. The expectation of the course, like any other, is that you do the readings before coming to lecture and the discussion section. It is fairly obvious when one does not attempt the readings, so please come prepared. It is critical for half of your discussion section grade to participate and that is conditional on reading the course material.