Purpose and Course Format
As described in the CSUB course catalog, “This course reflects on the nature of the discipline of Political Science. A central question the students resolve in this course is: What is a political scientist?” Through course readings/assignments, brief lectures, and most importantly class discussions, students will also be challenged to explore the extent of the continued relevance of the theoretical and practical foundations of the American political system to global, national, and state/local politics, as well as to the individual members of our polity.

Principally, we will use Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (translated by George Lawrence, edited by J.P. Mayer, HarperPerennial Publishers) to guide our discussions. There will also be extensive topical readings posted online through our WebCT coursepage (many of which are listed in the outline below).

Course Expectations and Grading
Your regular attendance, *including* active participation, is critical to our class experience and your grade in this course. To facilitate your thinking and our class discussions each week, every student will write a 2-3 page reflection paper on a major theme of at least two of the course readings (Note: each student is entitled to two delinquent papers without penalty – after that, no excuses will be accepted). In addition, one or two students will be responsible for leading a discussion (expectations to be discussed in class) for at least half of a class period (usually on Wednesdays). Finally, as the catalog also notes, “Students will each design a portfolio that demonstrates a set of competencies for a political scientist “(to be discussed further in class). You will from time to time be required to complete online assignments via our WebCT coursepage (typically on Fridays) to aid your successful completion of the portfolio requirement.
20% Participation
40% Weekly Written Reflections (8 of 10 graded)
20% Presentation
20% Portfolio / Final

General Course Outline
(Note: please see addendum and WebCt Announcements for updated course readings)

Week of Monday March 26 (no class Friday – Cesar Chavez Holiday)
   Course Introduction; AMERICAN POLITICAL VALUES

Week of Monday April 2
   AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM

Week of Monday April 9
   NATIONHOOD / IMMIGRATION

Week of Monday April 16
   FEDERALISM

Week of Monday April 23
   LAW & THE AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM

Week of Monday April 30
   POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS / INTEREST GROUPS

Week of Monday May 7
   CLASS, RACE & ETHNICITY, GENDER

Week of Monday May 14
   RELIGION AND POLITICS

Week of Monday May 21
   VOTING, ELECTIONS, and POLITICAL PARTIES

Week of Monday May 28 (no class Monday – Memorial Day Holiday)
   WAR & FOREIGN POLICY

Week of Monday June 4 (last day of classes)
   COURSE WRAP-UP
**Portfolio Requirement**

Every student who completes the major in Political Science in any one of the three concentrations – American, International Relations, or Pre-Law is required to prepare a portfolio that displays what has been gained from the major in Political Science. The portfolio is a collection of materials gathered from work done in various classes sanctioned by the Political Science Department. This collection addresses each of the competency goals outlined by the Political Science Department, which is detailed on the Department web page and is available in the Department office.

To create a portfolio, each student will have to provide evidence of competency in the following areas: political understanding, theory building, data analysis, formal presentations, research methods, basic computer management, and personal career management. Demonstrating individual competency in these areas will require that each student provide evidence of his/her work and accomplishments from individual classes, internships, and research projects. Portfolios should be seen as “works in progress” during your tenure here, and must be turned in to the responsible faculty member teaching Senior Seminar 490 when you take the Senior Seminar course. No student will be allowed to graduate from Senior Seminar with a portfolio project that receives a “B-“ or less. Questions about the portfolio may be directed to the student’s advisor, or to any Political Science faculty member.

1. **Portfolio Requirement (20%).** There are several basic competencies every political science student should demonstrate by the time they graduate. All of these competencies must be established in class, or through your individual portfolio assignment.

   A) **Concepts and theories in political science**

      a. Demonstration of an understanding of theories and concepts in political science.

   B) **Communicate effectively**

      a. Demonstration of a class presentation, the ability to engage a class with ideas, and/or lead discussion.

   C) **Analytical ability and statistical interpretation**

      a. Interpretation of readings.
      b. Demonstration of a literature review.
      c. Demonstration of methodological astuteness.
D) Independent research project

a. Formulating and carrying out a significant research project.
b. Research design, demonstrating political science analysis.
c. Theory identification.
d. Hypothesis testing (describe hypothesis, variables, and identify methods).
e. Ability to interpret data, graphs, charts, and other information.

E) Utilizing computers and technology

a. Integration of technology into presentation and/or research project.
b. Database skills- Microsoft excel, SPSS, STATA, etc.

F) Acquiring information: library search

a. Demonstrate ability to conduct research/data base search.
b. Demonstrate ability to acquire government information materials and evaluating sources and references.

G) Understanding real world political environments

a. Demonstrate awareness of political questions.
b. Develop an original question.
c. Personal essay: Defining your political world (your view and your role) - a two page essay describing the content and analysis of your political world, your role as citizen, how political science has assisted (or confused your understanding), and where you plan to go from here.

H) Career Planning

a. Develop a two, five, and ten year time table: objectives and strategy (please note: this assignment is meant to get you thinking about the future more than it is to lock you in to a particular profession, skill, or attitude).
b. Write a resume incorporating skills and academic training.
c. Draft cover letter or letter of intent (two examples).