Course Overview: This course is designed to acquaint you with the fundamentals of American and California government and politics. We will examine our government's constitutional foundation and American political institutions including the Presidency, Congress, the Judiciary, interest groups and the media. In addition, we will learn about the policymaking process and how structural, economic and social factors influence political practices. Overall, we will consider if and how these influences bear on the United States' ability to truly be a "representative democracy." In so doing, we will attend to how differences among people based on race, class and gender mediate their relationships to American political institutions and democratic values.

Learning Outcomes: I have several goals for this class. The first is to help you gain an understanding and appreciation of American democracy and its institutions; as such I hope this course enables you to be a wise and astute consumer (and maybe producer) of political information and ideas. In addition, it is my goal that through this course you will see that politics can be interesting, exciting and, perhaps most importantly, relevant. As such, I expect you to keep up with current events and be prepared to discuss these in class sections.

Goals for GE Courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences:
Goal 1: Explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences.
Goal 2: Comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences.
Goal 3: Identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness.
Goal 4: Enhance understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

On Attendance in lectures: Although this is a large class, I incorporate ways for you to participate. Thus, while attendance will not be taken in the large class lectures, it is highly recommended that you not miss classes. Exams cover material that is NOT in the text and you will be responsible for knowing this information. I do not provide class notes; if you miss a lecture you should ask someone in the class for her/his notes. Please note: attendance WILL be taken in your discussion sections. See the "participation" section below for details.

On consideration of others and your professor: Given that laptops, when used for purposes other than note taking, create "zones of distraction," they will not be allowed in this
class. If you have a particular problem related to this policy, please see me during my office hours to explain. In addition, talking during lectures to your neighbors, ringing cell phones and/or other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in this class. You will be asked to leave the room if you do not comply with these rules.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
The following books are available at the SDSU and KB Bookstores:
   Morone, James and Rogan Kersh. *By The People*. Referred to on the syllabus as M & K

IN ADDITION: We will be using Dashboard which is a digital supplement to Morone and Kersh. Your TAs will use the site for assignments and you will have 10 mandatory chapter exams due that will be factored into your final grade. Exam due dates are listed on the syllabus so please pay attention.

ALL students must have access to Dashboard for this class. If you buy a new textbook from the bookstore it come with the code for Dashboard. If you purchase a used book, you may buy an access code from the bookstore for $19.95 or purchase one directly from here: http://register.dashboard.oup.com/ Please note: when registering for Dashboard, you must know your discussion section number as you will enroll in the site specific to that section.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Exams
There will be TWO mid-terms and a final exam given in class. The exams will cover lectures, films and the readings and consist of multiple choice and shorts answers/essays. Please note that anything discussed in lectures, as well as anything mentioned in the texts and/or audio-visual materials are fair game for the exams. Exams must be taken on the scheduled date. No make-up exams will be given without a valid letter documenting an illness or some other emergency.

Attendance and Participation
Participation and preparedness are integral to making this class interesting, provocative and fun. In your discussion sections you will, from time to time, break into smaller groups to, for example, simulate a Congressional committee or debate a court case. Since participation is so important to those sections attendance will be taken. **You will be granted one unexcused absence. After that, 10 points will be deducted from your participation grade for each unexcused absence that follows. If you were absent and believe it should be excused, you MUST discuss it with your TA during the next time you attend discussion section. We will not retroactively grant excused absences at the end of the semester.**

A NOTE ON YOUR PARTICIPATION GRADE: Your participation grade will be assigned by your TA and will be based on BOTH your attendance and your participation in the discussion sections. Perfect attendance, while necessary, will only earn 70 of 100 points for
your participation grade. To get more points, you must interact during the discussion section, and do so in ways that show you have read the material and thought through the course work. If you speak regularly, but on issues unrelated to class, that does not count for participation in this class. Laptops cannot be used in discussion sections unless they are necessary for class-related projects.

Dashboard Chapter Exams
There will be 10 online chapter exams that are administered through Dashboard. Due dates for these short multiple choice tests are listed on the syllabus below. There will be no make-up exams for these online chapter assignments so please plan ahead.

GRADING
Midterm Exam #1 – 15%
Midterm Exam #2 – 25%
Final Exam – 30%
Dashboard Chapter Exams - 15%
Attendance and Participation – 15%

Letter grade equations:
A = 93 or above
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66
F = 62 or below

A NOTE ABOUT CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM
All sources of reference from which students take quotations, theories or concepts or papers must be properly cited. This includes anything that you have cut and pasted from the Internet. Plagiarism (or other forms of cheating) will not be tolerated. Such action will result in your failing the class and referral to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for possible suspension or expulsion. To be clear, if you use any outside sources for ideas, themes, text, analyses etc., you must cite them. In addition, using another student's work upon which to base yours is not allowed. Finally, if you are found to be cheating during an exam (e.g. by using notes or chatting with another student) you will fail the class. All cell phones must be turned off during exams. If you are seen using one, we will assume you are cheating. For more on the University's policy on academic dishonesty please see: http://csrr.sdsu.edu/. See also http://csrr.sdsu.edu/conduct1.html for “standards for student

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is
your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented me with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

BLACKBOARD
You will have 2 Blackboard sites for this class. The “combined sections” one is run by me and will host the syllabus, Powerpoint slides and other postings I chose to share throughout the semester. Each discussion section also has a BB site and is run by your TA. S/he will post your grades on that site as well as other postings s/he chooses to share. When your TA has indicated that s/he has posted your grades for a paper or exam it is YOUR obligation to make sure your grade is recorded on BB. If you come to us at the end of the semester claiming to have turned in a paper or taken an exam and there is no grade, you are responsible. We will not retroactively grant you a grade.

CLASS MEETINGS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM
8/26 Introduction to the Class and Syllabus Review
8/28 Class cancelled; read Chapter One in M&K
9/2 Ideas That Shape America: Chapter Two in M&K
9/4 The Constitution: Chapter Three in M&K
9/9 Federalism and Nationalism: Chapter Four in M&K
*** Dashboard chapter exam for Chapter 4 due on 9/9

CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT
9/11 Introduction to California Politics; Direct Democracy: Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in VanVechten
9/16 California Budget Process, Chapter 8 in VanVechten
9/18 The Legislative, Executive Branch and Judicial Branch: Chapters 4-6 in VanVechten

9/23 MIDTERM EXAM #1

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS
9/25 Congress: Chapter Thirteen in M&K
9/30 Congress: Chapter Thirteen in M&K
10/2 Congress: Chapter Thirteen in M&K
*** chapter exam for chapter 13 due on 10/2

10/7 The Presidency: Chapter Fourteen in M&K
10/9 The Presidency: Chapter Fourteen in M&K
10/14 The Presidency; Bureaucracy: Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen in M&K
*** chapter exam for chapter 14 due on 10/14

10/16 The Judiciary: Chapter Sixteen in M&K
10/21 The Judiciary: Chapter Sixteen in M&K
*** chapter exam for chapter 16 due on 10/21

10/23 The Media Chapter Nine in M&K

10/28 MIDTERM #2

10/30 VIDEO: TBA

POWER TO THE PEOPLE?
11/4 Civil Liberties: Chapter Five in M&K
11/6 Civil Liberties: Chapter Five in M&K
*** chapter exam for chapter 5 due on 11/6

11/11: Veteran’s Day; No classes

11/13 Civil Rights: Chapter Six in M&K
11/18 Civil Rights: Chapter Six in M&K
*** chapter exam for chapter 6 due on 11/18

11/20 Interest Groups: Chapter Twelve in M&K
***chapter exam for chapter 12 due on 11/20

11/25 Public Opinion: Chapter Eight in M&K (NO CLASS MEETING OR OFFICE HOURS – PLEASE SEE BELOW)
***chapter exam for chapter 8 due on 11/25

PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO LECTURE OR DISCUSSION SECTIONS HELD ON 11/25 BUT YOUR ONLINE EXAM WILL STILL BE DUE ON 11/25. ALL UNIVERSITY CLASSES ARE CANCELLED 11/26-11/28 SO THERE WILL BE NO LECTURE OR DISCUSSION SECTIONS THOSE DAYS EITHER

11/27 Thanksgiving; no classes.

12/2 Political Parties; Political Participation: Chapters Eleven and Seven in M&K
***chapter exam for chapter 11 ONLY due on 12/2

12/4 Campaigns and Elections: Chapter Ten in M&K
12/9 Campaigns and Elections: Chapter Ten in M&K
***chapter exam for chapter 10 due on 12/9

12/16 FINAL EXAM: 10:30-12:30