

Political Science 103A California Politics

Welcome to Political Science 103A: California Politics! I'm your professor, Thad Kousser, and you can always reach me at tkousser@ucsd.edu. You can see who I am at <https://polisci.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/faculty-directory/currently-active-faculty/kousser-profile.html>.

Textbook: All of the assigned readings from this course will come from *Governing California, Third Edition* (Berkeley Public Policy Press, 2013), edited by Ethan Rarick. [Note that this edition is completely different from the first and second editions – don't buy them!] Many online booksellers have new and used copies. I have made the relevant chapters available through the Canvas site. But the book is quite affordable and those who learn best from a physical rather than virtual copy may prefer to invest in the \$15-\$30 that it costs -- and there are also other excellent chapters that I have not assigned, written by a diverse set of authors. There are also a few readings from newspaper articles that I will post on the course Canvas page.

Assignments: Your grade for this course will be composed of:

30% Completion of six quizzes, worth 5 points each. The goal here is to ensure that you are keeping on top of the weekly lectures and readings, rewarding you for your consistent effort. These are multiple choice quizzes on Canvas, and I allow you to retake each of them twice (for a total of three attempts), keeping your best score.

30% of your grade will come from a midterm, which you will take on Monday, May 1st, in class. It should only take one hour, but so that you can focus on substance rather than rushing, I will give you up to 1.5 hours to complete it. I will circulate a review sheet.

40% of your grade will come from writing a 5-7 page take home final exam in the form of a "vote recommendation memo," in which you advise a member of California's state legislature to vote for or against an actual bill introduced in the legislature this year. I'll provide information about this assignment soon after the midterm and it will be due on the evening of Wednesday, June 14th by 10pm via Canvas.

Note that, as is often the case when professors use weighted grading formulas, the grade you see on Canvas will likely NOT reflect your true percentage. You can use the grades for each assignment that you see on Canvas and the weighting scheme above, and please reach out to our teaching team if you have any questions.

Lectures and Discussions

This course will focus on in-person lectures and discussions, though we will make occasional use of podcasted or video-recorded lectures from the past. The best way by far to succeed in the class will be to attend our weekly in person meetings on Monday nights and engage in course discussions.

Office Hours

I will hold virtual office hours from 2-4pm on Tuesdays. At least at the beginning of the quarter, these will be virtual office hours held at <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/98128466566>. To sign up for one or more 15 minute slots at office hours, please use my [Google calendar](#) (Signing up this way ensures that you will have my undivided attention). Office hours are a great opportunity to ask substantive questions about the course or just to talk about potential career options for political science majors. Or if you simply are facing a challenge, or want to learn more about our department and university, or wish to debate whether the Lakers are better than the Warriors and by how large a margin, you are very welcome and I'll look forward to getting the chance to know you individually.

Students with Disabilities

We want to be able to serve you well and welcome your communication. Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://osd.ucsd.edu/>). Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department **well in advance** of any exams or assignments. Please connect with the OSD Liaison for the Department of Political Science via the [Virtual Advising Center](#) as soon as possible.

Academic Advising

Students who have questions pertaining to Political Science academic advising are asked to reach out the Department's Undergraduate Advisor, Emilie Hines, who can be reached via the [Virtual Advising Center](#). Academic advising questions often include (but not limited to): add/drop deadlines, course enrollment policies, planning major and minor requirements, quarter-by-quarter plans, department petitions and paperwork, and referrals to campus and student support services.

Inclusive Classroom Statement

I am fully committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspectives, experiences, and identities. We urge each of you to contribute your unique perspectives to discussions of course questions, themes, and materials so that we can learn from them, and from each other. If you should ever feel excluded, or unable to fully participate in class for any reason, please let me know, or you may also submit anonymous written feedback to the Department of Political Science's Undergraduate Advisor, [Emilie Hines](#). Emily will bring these anonymous comments to my attention. Additional resources to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in our classroom, and beyond, may be found here: Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

858.822.3542 | diversity@ucsd.edu | <https://diversity.ucsd.edu/>
<https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/diversity/index.html>
<https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/4400.html>

Reporting Sexual Harassment or Assault and Receiving Support. The health, well-being and safety of our campus community members is our top priority. All allegations of sexual harassment and sexual violence are taken very seriously. Formal reports are made to the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (<https://ophd.ucsd.edu>), and there is also the confidential support resource of CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center. CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center (<https://care.ucsd.edu/>) provides confidential support services

to survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking. CARE provides information and resources about reporting options to those who meet with its office and can provide support and accompaniment if the individual chooses to make a report to OPHD.

Basic Needs. Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to contact: foodpantry@ucsd.edu or basicneeds@ucsd.edu.

Extensions and Late Assignments: Please reach out to me at tkousser@ucsd.edu if you have an illness or documented family emergency. We will work out an extension with no penalty. If you do not have a reason, I will accept late papers with a penalty of 5% for the next calendar day, an additional 5% for each day after that. For the final exam, we will be constrained by grading deadlines as to how long we may offer extensions. I have never seen a paper improve at a rate greater than the one at which you lose points. Stay in touch and we can work out ways to address your obstacles. Because of grading deadlines, we cannot accept the final paper past Saturday, June 17.

Course Outline

Part I. Political Institutions in Flux

April 3. Course Introduction and Direct Democracy

Initiative Process 101 (in person) and The Recall (via podcast)

- a. Ken Miller, "Direct Democracy: The Initiative, Referendum, and Recall" *Governing California*

April 10. California's State Legislature

Professionalizing the California Legislature.

- b. Thad Kousser, "Partisan Polarization and Government Gridlock," Chapter 11 in *Governing California*.

Term Limits and the Future of the Legislature.

- c. Bruce Cain, Thad Kousser, and Karl Kurtz, "The Legislature: Life Under Term Limits," Chapter 10 in *Governing California*.

April 17. Governors and Elections in California

Bargaining with Governors and Movements and Elections in California.

- d. Ethan Rarick, "Governors and the Executive Branch," Chapter 9 in *Governing California*.

April 24. Electoral Reform in California.

Primaries and Redistricting and New Rules of the Political Game

- e. Seth Masket, "Polarization Interrupted? California's Experiment with the Top-Two Primary," Chapter 7 in *Governing California*.

- f. Vladimir Kogan and Eric McGhee, “Redistricting: Did Radical Reform Produce Different Results,” Chapter 6 in *Governing California*.

May 1st. In-Class Midterm

Watch videos of guest lectures by Lorena Gonzalez and Kevin Liao.

Part II. The Geopolitics of Diversity

May 8. The Geopolitics of Diversity

Diversity and Participation.

- g. Jack Citrin, Morris Levy, and Andrea Campbell, “State of Change: Immigration Politics and the New Demography of California,” Chapter 2 in *Governing California*.

Political Incorporation of Minority Groups.

- h. [“The racist massacre that killed 10% of L.A.’s Chinese population and brought shame to the city.”](#) in the *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 2021
- i. "Slavery Case in Coronado Riveted Nation 75 Years Ago" in the San Diego Union Tribune, July 3, 2022

May 15. Translating Demographics into Governance

Race as a Political Issue: Demographics and Initiatives.

- a. “California’s Political Geography: Coast vs. Inland and Increasingly Blue,” Kenneth P. Miller and Frederick Douzet, Chapter 3 in *Governing California*.

Moving On Up to Sacramento.

Part III. Perspectives on Policy.

May 22. Crime and Punishment

Crime and Punishment I: The System.

- j. David A. Carrillo, “The California Judiciary,” Chapter 12 in *Governing California*.

Crime and Punishment II: Race and Crime.

- k. [Proposition 47’s Impact on Racial Disparity in Criminal Justice Outcomes](#), Public Policy Institute of California.

May 29. Memorial Day

June 5. Local Government and Environmental Politics

The Layers of California Government.

- l. Max Nieman, “Local Government: Designing and Financing the Cities and Counties of California,” Chapter 13 in *Governing California*.

Environmental Politics.

- m. Megan Mullin, "Water: A Case Study in Federalism," Chapter 15 in *Governing California*.