

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!] The Bookstore has new and used copies, as do online booksellers. I have made the relevant chapters available on the [UCSD Library Electronic Course Reserves](#), though the book is quite affordable and those who learn best from a physical rather than virtual copy may prefer to invest in it -- and there are also other excellent meetings 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:

40% Completion of four of the quizzes, worth 10 points each. You will be able to choose four quizzes out of the seven offered quizzes. You will earn the full 10 points as long as you score a 60% or above on the quiz. The goal here is to ensure that you are keeping on top of the weekly readings, podcasted lectures, and Zoom-recorded discussions.

30% of your grade will come from a midterm, which you will take on Thursday, July 15th. It should only take one hour, but so that you can focus on substance rather than rushing, you'll be able to take it for any two-hour period in the 24 hours of that day.

30% of your grade will come from writing a 5-7 page paper 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 in Week 2, it will be due at the end of Week 5, on Thursday, July 29th.

Note the because of the way I'm allowing flexibility on quizzes, the grade you see on Canvas will NOT reflect your true percentage. You can use the grades for each assignment that you see on Canvas and the weighting scheme above, or simply ask me!

Lectures and Discussions

This course will be a hybrid between asynchronous lectures (taken from podcasts and Zooms recorded in the past) and live Zoom discussions in which everyone is invited to participate.

1. For each Tuesday and Thursday, I have posted two podcasted lectures, each lasting about hour, that I delivered in a prior version of this class. Each of these will be paired with a set of PowerPoint slides. You can download the slides and listen to the podcasts whenever you like.

2. I will hold live Zoom discussions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1pm until 1:50pm, in which I'll provide some updates on recent changes in California politics, answer your questions, discuss course concepts with you, and bring in guest speakers. You can participate live, or you can watch the discussions once they are posted to Canvas. To connect live through your computer or phone, use:

<https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/95735216078> Meeting ID: 957 3521 6078

+16692192599,,95735216078# US (San Jose)

Office Hours

I will hold virtual office hours from 11am-1pm on Tuesdays. 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. Office hours will be held at the same Zoom as the course lectures, <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/95735216078>

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. The OSD Liaison for the Department of Political Science is Joanna Peralta; please connect with her 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, Natalie Ikker, 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, [Natalie Ikker](#), Natalie 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>

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 business day after that. Students will max out at a 25% reduction. 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.

Course Outline

Part I. Political Institutions in Flux

June 29 Course Introduction and Direct Democracy

Attend or watch the course introduction at 1pm at <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/95735216078>

Lecture 2 Initiatives and Referendums

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

Lecture 3 The Recall

- b. Watch this 7-minute video from ABC on the night of the 2003 recall:
<https://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/oct-2003-recall-california-election-9108039>

July 1 California's State Legislature

Professionalizing the California Legislature.

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

Term Limits and the Future of the Legislature.

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

July 6 Governors and Elections in California

Bargaining with Governors

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

Movements and Elections in California.

July 8 Primaries and Redistricting in California.

- f. Seth Masket, "Polarization Interrupted? California's Experiment with the Top-Two Primary," Chapter 7 in *Governing California*.
- g. Vladimir Kogan and Eric McGhee, "Redistricting: Did Radical Reform Produce Different Results," Chapter 6 in *Governing California*.

Part II. The Geopolitics of Diversity

July 13 The Geopolitics of Diversity

Diversity and Participation.

- h. 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.

- i. ["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

July 15 Take the Midterm and Enjoy the Guest Lectures (Lorena Gonzalez and Kevin Liao)

July 20. 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.

July 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.

July 27 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*.