College of San Mateo  
Official Course Outline

1. **COURSE ID:** PLSC 200  
**TITLE:** National, State and Local Governments  
**Units:** 3.0 units  
**Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours  
**Method of Grading:** Letter Grade Only  
**Recommended Preparation:**  
Eligibility for ENGL 100 or ENGL 105, and completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, any READ 400-level course.

2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**  
**Degree Credit**  
**Transfer credit:** CSU; UC  
**AA/AS Degree Requirements:**  
CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E1. Option 1: by completing PLSC 200 or 210  
CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E5b. Social Science  
**CSU GE:**  
CSU GE Area D: SOCIAL SCIENCES: DSI - Social Institutions  
CSU GE Area D: SOCIAL SCIENCES: US 2  
CSU GE Area D: SOCIAL SCIENCES: US 3  
**IGETC:**  
IGETC Area 4: SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES: Social and Behavioral Sciences

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**  
**Catalog Description:**  
A study of the structure and function of the basic national, state and local government institutions. The course will examine the dynamics of the constitutional power relationship between the respective branches of government and the operational relationship between the national, state and local governments. Note: Upon transfer to a U.C. campus, students who have completed both PLSC 200 and PLSC 210 will receive transfer credit for only one 3-unit course.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**  
Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:  
1. Effectively communicate understanding of the roles played by state actors (such as the 3 branches of government) and non-state actors (such as interest groups, political parties and the news media) on the development and implementation of policy.  
2. Critically analyze theories on the impact of federalism, the separation of powers and economic inequality on the development and implementation of policy.  
3. Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy.  
4. Evaluate the ethical issues and conflicts inherent to contemporary political issues.  
5. Demonstrate understanding of the rights and duties of a citizen through participation in the political system.

5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**  
Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:  
1. Effectively communicate understanding of the roles played by state actors (such as the 3 branches of government) and non-state actors (such as interest groups, political parties and the news media) on the development and implementation of policy.  
2. Critically analyze theories on the impact of federalism, the separation of powers and economic inequality on the development and implementation of policy.  
3. Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy.  
4. Evaluate the ethical issues and conflicts inherent to contemporary political issues.  
5. Demonstrate understanding of the rights and duties of a citizen through participation in the political system.

6. **COURSE CONTENT:**  
**Lecture Content:**  
1. Federalism and the constitutions of the U.S. and the State of California.  
2. The structures of and relationships between the local, state and federal governments.  
3. The common law legal system, the structure of the California and US court systems, civil litigation and criminal proceedings.
criminal proceedings, the rights of criminal defendants, the Supreme Court, and judicial review.
5. Religion and politics.
6. Civil rights and racial and gender relations.
8. The impact of the capitalist economic system on representative democracy.
9. The mass media, interest groups, and political parties.
10. Campaign finance and the impact of money on politics and public policy.
11. Primary elections, general elections and voting.
12. The Legislative Branch of government: Congress and the California state legislature.
13. The Executive Branch: presidents, governors and the bureaucracy.
14. Domestic policymaking: budgetary, economic, social welfare, health, environment, energy, etc.
15. Foreign and defense policymaking.

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:
Typical methods of instruction may include:
A. Lecture
B. Discussion
C. Field Experience
D. Field Trips
E. Guest Speakers
F. Service Learning
G. Other (Specify): Lecture, classroom discussions and debates, small group discussions, individual and group presentations, use of multimedia (including videos, Power Point presentations and use of Internet sources to supplement the textbooks). Student assignments include written work emphasizing critical thinking skills (analysis of the readings and/or research), as well as fieldwork like volunteering for a political campaign or a political organization or an elected official. Students typically read 50 to 100 pages per week in the textbook and other sources.

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS
Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:
Writing Assignments:
Research papers, analytical essays, short-answer questions on assigned readings, letters to elected representatives, reports on political events attended, reports on participation in political activities.

Reading Assignments:
Textbooks, websites, reports, newspapers, newsmagazines

Other Outside Assignments:
Oral presentations. Service learning as a volunteer or intern with an organization whose work is related to politics or government.

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION
Representative methods of evaluation may include:
A. Class Participation
B. Class Performance
C. Class Work
D. Exams/Tests
E. Field Trips
F. Group Projects
G. Homework
H. Oral Presentation
I. Papers
J. Projects
K. Quizzes
L. Research Projects
M. Simulation
N. Written examination

10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):
Possible textbooks include: