Welcome and thank you for your interest in taking Political Science 150. This is a fully online course, meaning there are no face-to-face meetings and most of the work is submitted via the Web (although you are required to take the exams in the TLC or other proctored location). If you have never taken an online course before, it is recommended that you first enroll in Counseling 070 and complete the following Blackboard tutorial: http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/OnlineOrientation/. Online courses in general require more self-discipline and can be difficult if a student lacks focus or motivation. Please be prepared to log in regularly (2-3 times per week) to complete your assignments on time. To log into Blackboard, go to http://bb9.canyons.edu/. Your username is your student ID and your password is student (unless you have previously changed it). YOU MUST LOG IN TO BLACKBOARD BY TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11 OR YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE COURSE.

In this class, we will study our government institutions, both at the national and state level. We will use contemporary theories of democracy to analyze those institutions and how they function. Current events will play an integral role and you will be expected to follow state and national political news. It is important that you learn how to think in a critical manner: not simply the functions of our government, but also why the government functions the way it does. We will also study the role of third parties such as interest groups and political parties in the government. It is my expectation that upon completion of this course, you will understand the crucial role politics plays in all of our lives and how important it is that as citizens we participate in that process.

The specifics of the assignments can be found in the syllabus but in general the course requires weekly quizzes, a research paper about current events, as well as a midterm and a non-cumulative final. The midterm and the final must be taken in the Tutoring and Learning Center or other proctoring center. You are not required to log in at any specified time but there are due dates posted for each assignment.

The spring session begins on February 10. This course will be accessible on the first day of the semester (possibly one day prior) but you can get a head start by purchasing the textbooks, which are as follows:
1. We the People, An Introduction to American Politics (Ninth Edition)
   by Ginsberg, Lowi, and Weir. Norton
2. Governing California in the Twenty-First Century
   by J. Theodore Anagnoson (Third Edition)

*Please note that the bookstore has a custom text which has both of these bound together for COC students at a reduced price. You are welcome to purchase them separately elsewhere and older editions are fine (but keep in mind some of the current political issues will not be included so the newer editions are definitely better).

We will begin the semester with the first chapter in each book and instructions for all of the assignments (readings, discussions, paper and exams) will be posted in the “Unit Assignments” area. When you do log-in please begin in the “Start Here” area for further instructions.

Feel free to contact me through email should you have additional questions. I normally respond to emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays). I look forward to some insightful political “discussions” with you.

Sincerely,
Lena Smyth