Welcome to Introduction to American Government. These sections of POLISC 150 are listed as 100% on-line class however, \textit{all exams are taken in the TLC or at another location approved by the TLC}. The course is a survey course of the institutions, process, and problems of the American Government and the California State Government. A survey course means that we will be covering a wide range of subjects in a short amount of time. The emphasis is on the development and principles of the American Constitution, the mechanics of democratic politics and policy-making, and the nation’s and the state’s contemporary challenges.
It is often easy to get caught up in the technical aspects of this type of course but above all the idea is for you to gain an understanding of how our national and state governments work and that hopefully you will feel prepared to participate in them by, at the least, voting.

If you are new to distance learning, it is strongly suggested that you consider enrolling in Counseling 070. This can be done simultaneously with the course and will help you understand how best to take a course using this method. You can find information about this at http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/info/C. At the least you should take the Blackboard tutorial which you can get to at http://bb.canyons.edu. The tutorial will help you get to the course material and doesn’t take a lot of time to do.

In order to access Blackboard you will need a username and a password. Your user name is the initials of your first and last name, and the last five digits of your student ID number (not your Social Security number) for example tm12345. Your password when the class begins is “student” (without the quotations marks) Once you are in the Blackboard system you can change your password to anything you like. Don’t worry if you forget what you changed it to since if you e-mail me that you have I can always reset it to “student”.

For additional log on information follow this link: http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/BBSupport/Bbtechsupport2.asp.

You will probably not be able to get to the course materials until just a few days before classes begin. And, if you enroll within a
few days of the class beginning it takes a few days to add you to the course. In the mean time you can begin to get a jump on the material by reading the first three chapters in the textbook *We The People* textbook and the first chapter in *Governing California*. You can purchase the textbooks at the bookstore. Be sure you purchase the correct edition of the textbook since my lecture notes on-line reference specific page numbers.

Once you have access to the course material on Blackboard you will find the syllabus, schedule of when you need to take the exams, my lecture notes, a number of handouts, several study guides (one for each exam), the discussion boards, and the location where your grades will appear. Additional instructions are to be found in the syllabus.

**A note about commitment:**

On-line classes require a great deal of self-discipline and commitment. It is easy to become disconnected from the course since we do not meet at a specific place and time. I will prod you from time to time but eventually it is up to you to get the material, respond to the discussions, and take the exams within the allotted dates.

The following link takes you to an assessment that helps you determine if on-line courses are for you.

http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/info/Assessments.asp

If you have any questions please feel free to call me (310) 947-2632 or e-mail me at willymark1@aol.com. E-mailing me at my AOL address is the best way to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bill Mark, Ph. D