Dear Students,

Welcome to Political Science 150. This section of Political Science 150 is a completely online class. The course introduces students to the basic institutional structure of American government as well as California government. This course will require students to critically think about the role government plays in their own lives, and the role they can play in shaping government. Our government is democratic in nature and thus requires citizens to be involved in order for government to represent the will of the people. Consequently, regardless of your professional and educational goals there has always been, in this country, a requirement for individual participation in government in order for it to work properly. This course seeks to convey that principle and many others necessary to a proper foundational understanding of American government.

This course is designed around readings out of two required textbooks. Students are required to regularly participate online at the Blackboard class web. Students will be asked to answer questions online, participate in discussion groups, watch online lectures and assignments, take tests and write essays regarding the subject matter in the texts. As I often tell my students, you must not only think about the “what” of a particular topic or issue, but also the “how”, “when” and “why”. Learning occurs by a process of questioning yourself and others in order to expand your understanding of the material. Do not be a passive reader. Think about what you are reading and be prepared to answer questions that demand your analysis and personal thought and opinion.

In order to access this class online you must first complete an online tutorial. The tutorial will assist you with understanding Blackboard, COC’s course management program. You can access this tutorial at:

http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm

Completing this tutorial is not the same as logging on to the web site for this class. Make sure you complete the tutorial and then log on to the Blackboard class web site in order to ensure your enrollment in the class.

The requirements of this course can be found in the syllabus. Once you log onto the Blackboard web site use the menu on the left of the screen to go to “Course Documents”. There you will find the syllabus. Your assignments will be listed under the “Assignments” link. From there, you will receive weekly instructions on your individual assignments for this course.
You will be able to access the Blackboard web site for this class on the first day of the semester; possibly one day prior. Students who add the class after the course has been activated online should expect a two or three day delay before you are entered into the system and allowed to access the Blackboard web site. In order to access Blackboard you need a username and a password. Your User Name is your seven digit student ID number (NOT your social security number). For example: 7495876. Your password when the class begins is “student” (without the quotation marks). The following link will take you to a useful log on sheet to assist you with accessing BlackBoard:

http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/Blackboard_login.html.

In case you eventually use Blackboard for future classes after the completion of this particular course, you should make note that your password does not reset to “student” each semester. If you have any additional questions about Blackboard please refer to the COC distance learning departmental web site at:

http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/

The required books for the semester are:

Beginning in fall, 2013 the Department of Political Science adopted and now uses a custom textbook for Political Science 150. The Department made this decision to reduce the cost of the textbook available in the COC Bookstore. The custom textbook will be sold in the COC Bookstore and is a compilation of the following two widely published and available textbooks:

   *IMPORTANT: I am no longer using the shorter Essentials version. I am using the Full version. Thus if you know a student who previously took my class, please be aware that I am no longer using the Essentials version of We the People.

The custom textbook will not be available for purchase anywhere other than the COC Bookstore. But, these other versions are available at other sources for a much higher price, unless you purchase them used, of course. FYI.

Because this class is an online course, it requires commitment and personal responsibility on the part of students. You must be disciplined and keep up with the work. Also, you must have continual access to a computer with Internet access. Otherwise, you will not be able to reliably participate in this class. In this class you will be required to access the class web site on a regular and frequent basis. Students who fail to log into the class by Wednesday of the first week of the class will be dropped. Wait listed students will then be added to fill any vacant positions in enrollment. During the semester, students who fail to log on
for a period of 5 or more days will be dropped from enrollment. This is not a “real
time” class. You have the freedom to access the web site and conduct your
assignments when it is generally convenient to you. You do not need to be
online while other students are online unless a particular assignment calls for
such coordination. Additionally, any written assignments you submit must be in
Word format. Online courses are not easy. Students must be computer and
internet savvy. If navigating the Internet and computers in general is difficult for
you, this might not be your type of class. Keep that in mind.

Let me know if you have any additional questions. If so, feel free to e-mail me at
david.andrus@canyons.edu. Please note that while I frequently and consistently
return e-mail, a delay in any response is possible. Please allow me a reasonable
amount of time to respond as your inquiry might not be the only e-mail I have to
address. I hope you enjoy the course. Good luck.

(Here is one more resource that can help with basic educational skills.)

Skills for Success Workshops (Valuable Resource)
http://www.canyons.edu/offices/CTE/collegesuccess/studentresources.asp

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