



Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

Introduction to American Politics



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Format

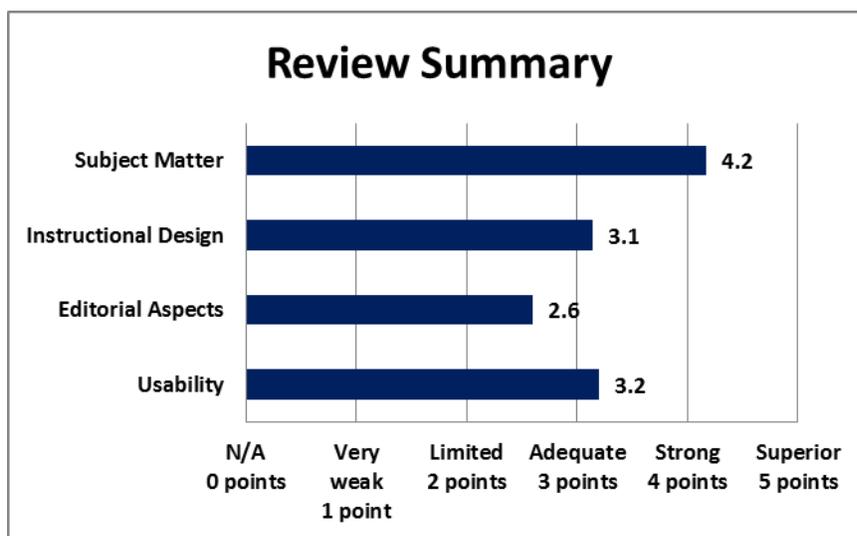
Reviewed:

[Online](#)

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Date Reviewed:

December 2015



California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [POLS 110](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?					X	
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?					X	
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?						X
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of					X	

offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						
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Total Points: 25 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- The textbook was strong on content, although it presented the standard Introduction to Government material. For example, there were a couple of paragraphs in Ch. 2 on the Case against the Articles of Confederation. Greater historical coverage of the Articles would show that there were also achievements: the Northwest Ordinance, settlement of land claims, and reduction of states' debts.
- Most information was accurate; for example, Chapter 4 noted, quite rightly that the start of applying the Bill of Rights to the states was the case of Chicago Burlington v. Chicago, 1897.
- I am not convinced that an introductory chapter should take a media approach and that this should be the opening chapter of the textbook.
- Students are in danger of seeing everything through the lens of the media. I do not see the value of including movies in the section "Recommended Viewing" at the end of each chapter. At least separate the movies from the documentaries. I do not see the value of including a propaganda movie "Triumph of the Will" along with movies.
- I particularly liked the contrast the textbook makes between media perception and reality. For example in the Chapter on Civil Rights, the Enduring Images of the civil rights movement are given a more thorough treatment.
- Chapter summaries, test banks, and images for Powerpoint presentations are typically required. The ancillary material did include all of these and was strong on unit activities for each section of the textbook. I am unsure of the value of having a final exam with the answers in the ancillary material, when it would be easy for students to find this. Or perhaps there are ways of safeguarding this from the students.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?				X		
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)					X	
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?					X	
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?				X		
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?				X		
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)					X	
Is the textbook searchable?		X				

Total Points: 22 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- Each chapter begins with a Preamble. Most of the chapter preambles are effective and interesting (Chapter 7 on the American flag is the weakest.
- At the end of each preamble more is needed on why that example was chosen to illustrate the subject of the chapter. Was the example typical? Why was it chosen over other case studies?
- I would have preferred that all the footnotes were at the end of each chapter, rather than at the end of each section.
- The end of the chapter should summarize all the key takeaways of the different chapter sections.

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?			X			
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?					X	
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)			X			

Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)				X		
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)					X	

Total Points: 13 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- There should be an opening page listing a Table of Contents. This information was in the opening pages "Plan of the Book, but was not readily apparent to the reader.
- There were many typographical errors when I accessed the textbook both online and on Kindle. The most common error was words joined together. The examples were too numerous to mention here.
- Table columns were not wide enough to accommodate data (For example Tables 3.1 and 3.2.
- Many chapter headings were orphaned at the bottom of many pages. Each chapter should begin on a separate webpage.

Usability (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?				X		
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)					X	
Can the textbook be printed easily?					X	
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?			X			
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?				X		

Total Points: 16 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- To improve ease of use, the reader should be able to click on a footnote reference and be taken to the reference for that footnote. I was unable to do this both online and on my Kindle.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?				X		
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
				X		

Total Points: 6 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- The merits of the textbook are its emphasis on the role of the media in American government and how this shapes the behavior of many of our political institutions and processes. It was also strong in showing the differences between media coverage and perceptions and fact.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- Correction of numerous typographical errors.
- A greater attention to visual look of the textbook and a clearer demarcation of each chapter.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to the [textbook site in MERLOT](#) (Please [register](#) in MERLOT to post your feedback.)



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