



## 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](http://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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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

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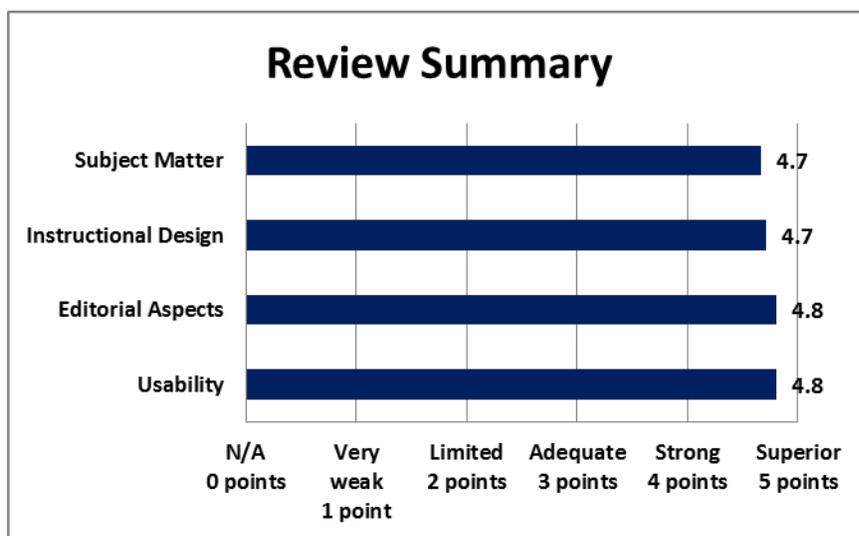
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



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   |             |                 |                 |                 | X              |                  |

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| culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Total Points: 28 out of 30

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

- Well organized and systematic approach to the Introduction to American politics with five central guidance themes: American political foundations (e.g. American political culture, the Constitution, federalism); American political behavior (e.g. public opinion, mass media, political parties; interest groups, campaigns, elections and electoral participation), American institutions, Civil liberties and Civil rights; and Making Policy in the American system.
- There are no images but there is a final exam at the end of the class. Did not see text banks.

| 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: 33 out of 35

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

- The reading level and reading time investment are high for undergraduates. It is assumed that students have taken Introduction to Politics – suggested by the textbook's author -- before they take the course.
- In addition, costs of the textbook and other required textbooks to complete the course will significantly add to the overall costs.
- There are not sufficient ancillary materials in the textbook.
- Learning outcomes are extensively listed (over 40 listed -- too many) for learning assessment purposes.
- Textual style is prominent over visual style in textbook.

| 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: 24 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- There are no graphics, animation or audio dimensions to the text and there are no "conventional" editorial features per se; but the textbook is organized "unconventionally" into units well laid out and well written.
- References are clearly seen throughout the units as well as the required reading assignments

| 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: 24 out of 25

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

- The textbook requires access (on-line, pdf and other access points) to reading the Saylor Student Handbook, American Government and Politics in the Information Age, Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World, other textbooks and assumes the student has already taken the Introduction to Politics (as a prerequisite). Very heavy reading component to the course demanding a large investment of reading time.

| 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: 9 out of 10

## Overall Comments

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

- A listing of merits: a) learning outcomes for student learning assessment purposes; b) extensive coverage and depth of the American Government textbook; c) its overall sophistication and analytical focus.

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

- A number of recommendations: a) remove the prerequisite -- Introduction to Politics; b) reduce the number of required textbooks in the course; c) cut down the number of learning outcomes to a manageable level; d) reduce heavy reading time investment by one third; and e) add graphics, animation or audio dimensions to the main textbook.

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.)



For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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