



## 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:

### POLS 202 - American Government



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

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Format

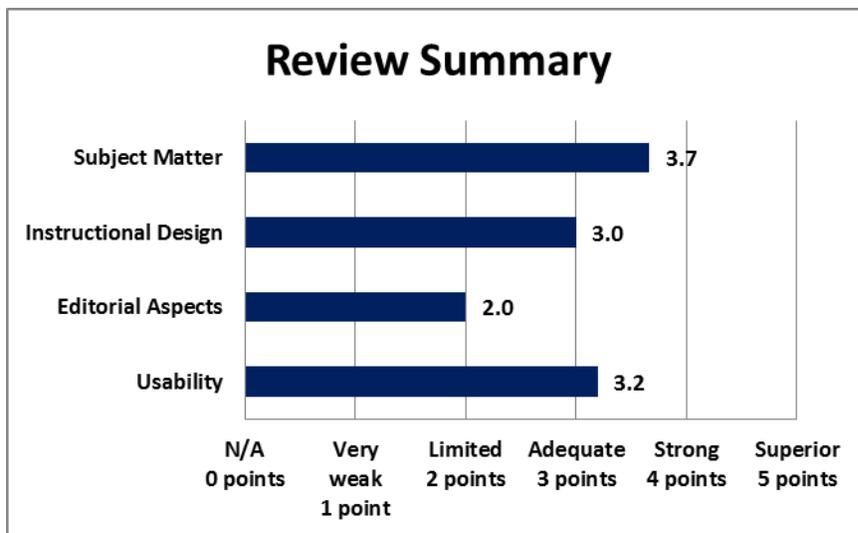
Reviewed:

[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 culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include |             |                 |                 |                 | X              |                  |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Total Points: 22 out of 30

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

- This online textbook is based on the online textbook of the Saylor Foundation. As such it has all the strengths and weaknesses of that textbook.
- The course materials were very good on accessibility issues and the types of issues professors would have if they developed their own course materials around the Haberman and Maxwell resources.
- Images, test banks, and course summaries. There are quizzes and tests, but with the answers also provided, the dilemma of online textbooks like these is how to provide testing without also giving out the answers, which would be searchable by 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: 21 out of 35

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

- I found that the organization of the course materials lacked coherence. Each module was organized around one subject, such as Political Culture and Socialization, but there was no indication of why the modules were presented in this order.
- I doubt the value of starting American Government and Politics textbooks by looking at the media first, instead of the underlying structures of American government--founding, US Constitution and constitution-making, and federalism. The impression given to students is that only the media count in determining what is reality.
- The course material fragments the consciousness of students by throwing out many ideas, sources, topics to discuss, and movies to see.
- Some of the course materials are based on the politics and government of Washington State. Professors in other countries would have to adapt the textbook materials to their state.

| 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: 10 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- There are some grammatical errors. Media is referred to in the singular, instead of plural. But these errors are very few.
- The course materials cannot be clear if they are not coherent.

| 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.

- The subfolder arrangement in Google Docs was not immediately clear to the reader. Each module subfolder should have been labelled. To examine the content of each subfolder module, it had to be clicked so that the reader could see what the module covered in Content.
- If the subfolders had been labelled on the outside, this would have saved the reader much 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: 3 out of 10

## Overall Comments

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

- It gives links to many articles and resources students can use to further explore a topic.

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

- Clearer and more coherent organization so that other professors can adapt it to their teaching interests, colleges, and parts of the United States.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)  
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For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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