

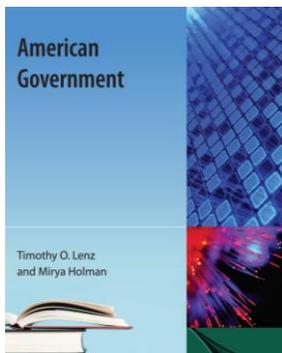


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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:

American Government



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Format

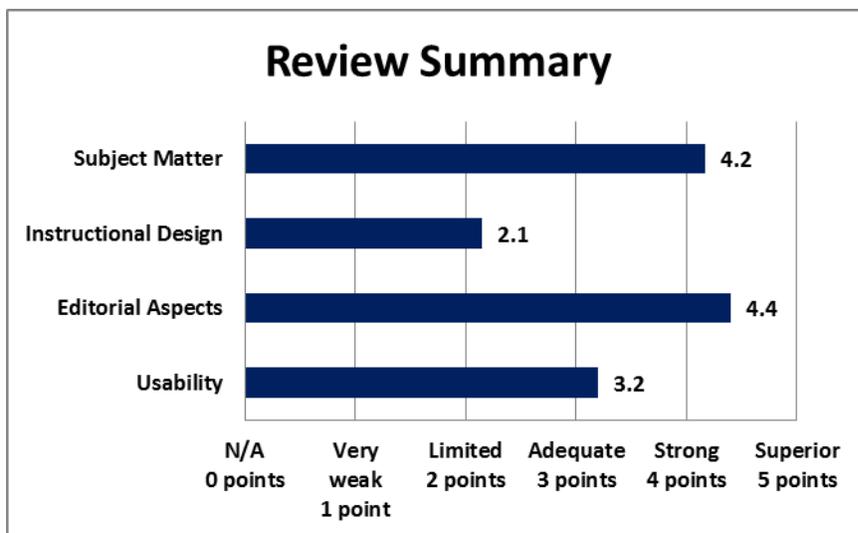
Reviewed:

[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 examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						X	

Total Points: 25 out of 30

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

- I liked the thematic component of the textbook, which looked at the "power problem" for different institutions.
- In Chapter 4, the authors state that the Kelo case involved a neighborhood that was blighted. This can be questionable; the town of New London said so, but the homeowners were insulted.
- The content is excellent, although it would need updating to include recent Supreme Court decisions, such as Obergefell.
- In Ch. 12, the authors state that Common Cause was founded by Ralph Nader; it was not. The founder was John Gardner.
- Regarding No. 6 in subject matter, the authors write in Ch. 17 "Native Americans...sometimes opposed American expansion west." I would say most of the time, rather than sometimes.
- I was not able to see any links to ancillary materials, such as images for Powerpoint sides, chapter summaries, or test 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: 15 out of 35

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

- I liked the inclusion of a chapter on Food Policy. It is rarely treated as a separate chapter in American Government textbooks, but it should be in the table of contents because of its policy importance.
- I am not sure why the authors had Civil Rights and Liberties as their last chapter. It is usually earlier in American government textbooks, near chapters on the constitution or federalism. The authors do not explain why it is the last chapter.
- I was not able to search the textbook on my iPad or Mac.

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: 22 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- I liked the visual design of the text; it was very pleasing.

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.

- I viewed the textbook on a tablet using Kindle, but when I tried to tap on each footnote, the kindle version did not take me to the footnote reference at the end of each chapter. Such a feature would make it helpful for students and reviewers.

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?

I would strongly recommend the textbook to colleagues for the following reasons:

- It has excellent content and shows expertise in political theory (references to philosophers, such as Hobbes and Locke)
- There is a theme running in the textbook, which is the power problem and what form it takes in different institutions, such as Congress, the presidency, Supreme Court, and the civil service. This continuity of consciousness is frequently missing in many American Government textbooks.
- The authors also challenge the reader to question issues such as whether the many exceptions to the exclusionary rule invalidate the worth of the rule itself.

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

- Some factual errors need correcting and there has to be an update of material to include recent judicial decisions.
- It would also have to be able to be customized to add material for California government and politics, which is an essential part of American government courses at the community college level and California State University.

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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