



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAMME

POLS 207: MODERN AMERICAN POLITICS

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2014

Important dates

Trimester dates: 14 July to 16 November 2014

Teaching dates: 14 July to 17 October 2014

Mid-trimester break: 25 August to 7 September 2014

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Lectures: Monday, 15.10-16.00; Wednesday, 15.10-16.00

Tutorials: Monday, 16.10-17.00; Wednesday, 16.10-17.00

Venue: Cotton COLT122

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Professor Stephen Levine

Room No: MY 534

Phone: 463-6099

Email: Stephen.Levine@vuw.ac.nz

Note: Emails about POLS 207 *must* have POLS 207 in the subject line; if they don't, they are liable to be deleted as spam.

Office hours: Fridays 11:00-12.00 and Fridays 2.00-3.00. Other appointment hours can be arranged by email (or by speaking with Professor Levine after class).

Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and tutorial programme will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

Prescription

An introduction to modern American politics, with a particular focus on the continued development of America's system of government. The course examines major political themes in U.S. politics against the background of the relationships between different branches of government under the U.S. Constitution.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. demonstrate a good understanding of basic features of the government and political system of the United States of America
2. demonstrate a good understanding of themes and information presented in the set text
3. write a well-organised, well-written, well-researched essay on an aspect of U.S. politics
4. explain a feature of U.S. politics by executing a well-organised, well-prepared oral presentation to a tutorial group.

Teaching format

The course has two 50-minute lectures per week. The second scheduled hour is for tutorials. Each student needs to join one of the two tutorial groups and may do so by attending a tutorial and advising the tutor.

Students are expected to attend the twice weekly lectures and the weekly tutorial. The course is delivered over 12 weeks of lectures and 11 weeks of tutorials. Both tutorials and lectures are essential aspects of the course and, with the textbook, constitute the primary means in which the course content is delivered. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, take part in tutorial discussion, and keep up with the required reading.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50% in POLS 207 each student must:

1. submit a research paper by **5 pm, Thursday 16 October**
2. sit a minimum of eight of the eleven POLS 207 weekly in-class tests
3. complete the required tutorial presentation

Workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, the overall workload for this course is 200 hours. This includes two hours of lectures and one hour of tutorials per week.

Preparation and attendance at class meetings: 36 hours

Tutorial presentation: 4 hours

Essay: 100 hours

In-class tests: 60 hours

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Research essay (3500 words)	50%	1, 3	16 October
2	11 weekly in-class tests	50%	1, 2	Weekly

The research essay, worth 50%, is due on 16 October and is approximately 3500 words. The research essay enables students to explore in considerable detail aspects of American politics that interest them. Further details about the research essay assignment will be provided by the course organiser.

There are 11 weekly in-class tests, beginning in the second week of the course. Students are required to sit a minimum of eight of the 11 weekly in-class tests. The in-class tests assess students' understanding of basic features of U.S. government and politics. Each week, the in-class test questions will be drawn from the readings assigned for the previous week. Some questions will also be drawn from the preceding lectures and may also be drawn from the tutorial presentations. For the purpose of calculating the final grade, only the five best in-class test results will count towards the final POLS 207 grade. (In other words, the five best test scores will each contribute a total of 10% towards the final POLS 207 grade; together they will account for 50% of the final POLS 207 grade).

The tutorial presentation provides an opportunity for students to explore a feature of U.S. government and politics of particular interest to them. Whilst it does not carry marks, it is a mandatory course requirement. Further details about the tutorial presentation will be provided by the course organiser.

Submission and return of work

Essays should be submitted through the office essay drop-off point, Murphy Room 518, together with completed cover sheet which is available from the office. Essays must also be submitted to Professor Levine by email (as a Word attachment).

Students will be advised, via Blackboard, when essays are available to be collected. Essays will be returned through the Political Science and International Relations office, Murphy Room 518, between the hours of 2.00 and 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday. Students must show their Student ID card before collection.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Extensions will be granted under exceptional circumstances (for example, illness or family-related personal circumstances). The course coordinator should be approached prior to the assessment deadline (either by email or in person).

Penalties

Where extensions have not been granted, students will be penalised for late submission of written work – **a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days.** Work that is more than eight days late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked. However, penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary.

Set text

William T. Bianco and David T. Canon, *American Politics Today*, 3rd edition (2013). See www.vicbooks.co.nz for details on textbook purchases.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected during the first week of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course. Student feedback on University courses may be found at

www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz