

POLITICS218: American Politics and Public Policy

Arts

(15 points)

Course Prescription

Explores American politics and policy. Analyses the US political system and its governance, including the ideas of federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances. Examines the country's development, its legal and policy-making system, the dynamics between the various actors, and the struggle for power and policy. Covers political parties, participation, interest groups, social movements, media, campaigns and elections.

Course Overview

Welcome to American Politics! It's a great time to study this subject. We will analyze the US political system and its governance, which is built upon the ideas of federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances. We will study the country's development, its legal and policy-making system, the dynamics between the various actors, and the struggle for power and policy. Within this, we'll cover political parties, participation, interest groups, social movements, media, campaigns and elections to make sense of the factors that make the USA what it is today. Our central questions are:

What kind of government is the USA?

How democratic is this system?

What makes it operate in the way it does?

How might this system function under the current regime?

The course includes six weeks of lectures and discussions. Given the enormity of the subject, we have a lot of information to get through. We will begin with the founding and governing structure of the USA, examining each branch—the executive, legislative, and judicial branch—their interaction, struggle for power, and examine what power means in the American context.

How and why did this system come about?

Where is power?

How is it manifested?

How have these branches changed in the current day?

Have they changed under the Trump presidency?

We'll explore the forces in law-making, governance, and understand the resulting laws and policies.

What are the dynamics of power?

How have these changed over time?

Have the historically powerless become more or less powerful?

How have social movements and their struggle for civil and political rights fared in a system that had excluded some of their rights?

We'll also investigate campaigns and elections, voting behaviour, political culture, public opinion, and the effects of money, information, framing, and emotions.

How do all of these forces interact to influence elections and political outcomes?

Are there lessons learned for other countries?

Course Requirements

Prerequisite: 30 points at Stage I in Politics and International Relations, or POLITICS 106 and 30 points in Global Politics and Human Rights Restriction: POLITICS 347

Capabilities Developed in this Course

Capability 1: People and Place

Capability 3: Knowledge and Practice

Capability 4: Critical Thinking

Capability 6: Communication

Graduate Profile: [Bachelor of Arts](#)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Learn How and why the US politics has developed to what it is today. (Capability 1 and 4)
2. Understand and critically evaluate the state of U.S. democracy (Capability 3)
3. Analyse governance and overall system in the US (Capability 1 and 4)
4. Explain the pros and cons of the system (Capability 6)

Assessments

Assessment Type	Percentage	Classification
Class Participation	5%	Individual Coursework
In-class Quiz	5%	Individual Coursework
Mid-term test 1	20%	Individual Test
Mid-term test 2/ Thought Questions	25%	Individual Test

Final Exam	45%	Individual Examination
5 types	100%	

Workload Expectations

This course is a standard 15 point course and students are expected to spend 10 hours per week involved in each 15 point course that they are enrolled in.

For this course, you can expect 24 hours of lectures, and 11 hours of lectorials/seminars.

Delivery Mode

Campus Experience

This course is not available for delivery to students studying remotely outside NZ in 2024.

Lectures will be available as recordings.

The course will only include live online events if lockdowns require.

Attendance on campus is required for the exam.

The lectures and lectorials/seminars for the course are scheduled as a standard weekly delivery.

Learning Resources

Course materials are made available in a learning and collaboration tool called Canvas which also includes reading lists and lecture recordings (where available).

Please remember that the recording of any class on a personal device requires the permission of the instructor.

Student Feedback

At the end of every semester students will be invited to give feedback on the course and teaching through a tool called SET or Qualtrics. The lecturers and course co-ordinators will consider all feedback and respond with summaries and actions.

Your feedback helps teachers to improve the course and its delivery for future students.

Class Representatives in each class can take feedback to the department and faculty staff-student consultative committees.

Clarity with timing of assessments.

Academic Integrity

The University of Auckland will not tolerate cheating, or assisting others to cheat, and views cheating in coursework as a serious academic offence. The work that a student submits for grading must be the student's own work, reflecting their learning. Where work from other sources is used, it must be properly acknowledged and referenced. This requirement also applies to sources on the internet. A student's assessed work may be reviewed for potential plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct, using computerised detection mechanisms.

Class Representatives

Class representatives are students tasked with representing student issues to departments, faculties, and the wider university. If you have a complaint about this course, please contact your class rep who will know how to raise it in the right channels. See your departmental noticeboard for contact details for your class reps.

Inclusive Learning

All students are asked to discuss any impairment related requirements privately, face to face and/or in written form with the course coordinator, lecturer or tutor.

Student Disability Services also provides support for students with a wide range of impairments, both visible and invisible, to succeed and excel at the University. For more information and contact details, please visit the [Student Disability Services' website](http://disability.auckland.ac.nz) <http://disability.auckland.ac.nz>

Well-being always comes first

We all go through tough times during the semester, or see our friends struggling. There is lots of help out there - for more information, look at this [Canvas page](https://canvas.auckland.ac.nz/courses/33894) <https://canvas.auckland.ac.nz/courses/33894>, which has links to various support services in the University and the wider community.

Special Circumstances

If your ability to complete assessed coursework is affected by illness or other personal circumstances outside of your control, contact a member of teaching staff as soon as possible before the assessment is due.

If your personal circumstances significantly affect your performance, or preparation, for an exam or eligible written test, refer to the University's [aegrotat or compassionate consideration page](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/academic-information/exams-and-final-results/during-exams/aegrotat-and-compassionate-consideration.html) <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/academic-information/exams-and-final-results/during-exams/aegrotat-and-compassionate-consideration.html>.

This should be done as soon as possible and no later than seven days after the affected test or exam date.

Learning Continuity

In the event of an unexpected disruption, we undertake to maintain the continuity and standard of teaching and learning in all your courses throughout the year. If there are unexpected disruptions the University has contingency plans to ensure that access to your course continues and course assessment continues to meet

the principles of the University's assessment policy. Some adjustments may need to be made in emergencies. You will be kept fully informed by your course co-ordinator/director, and if disruption occurs you should refer to the university website for information about how to proceed.

Student Charter and Responsibilities

The Student Charter assumes and acknowledges that students are active participants in the learning process and that they have responsibilities to the institution and the international community of scholars. The University expects that students will act at all times in a way that demonstrates respect for the rights of other students and staff so that the learning environment is both safe and productive. For further information visit [Student Charter](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/forms-policies-and-guidelines/student-policies-and-guidelines/student-charter.html) <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/forms-policies-and-guidelines/student-policies-and-guidelines/student-charter.html>.

Disclaimer

Elements of this outline may be subject to change. The latest information about the course will be available for enrolled students in Canvas.

In this course students may be asked to submit coursework assessments digitally. The University reserves the right to conduct scheduled tests and examinations for this course online or through the use of computers or other electronic devices. Where tests or examinations are conducted online remote invigilation arrangements may be used. In exceptional circumstances changes to elements of this course may be necessary at short notice. Students enrolled in this course will be informed of any such changes and the reasons for them, as soon as possible, through Canvas.