Coordinator
Prof. Tony Palfreeman

Course Description

An introduction to an understanding of Australian government and politics, focusing on
a. the key institutions of the Federation: the constitution, the instruments of government, political parties, interests groups, in both the historical and current contexts,
b. the major domestic and external issues of political debate
c. the policy making processes and policy case studies

Course Objectives

a. Establishing a conceptual and analytical framework for the study of politics, domestic and global
b. Acquiring a basic understanding of Australian government and politics in both the historical and contemporary contexts
c. An analysis of Australia’s place in the world
d. Developing the skills needed for effective research, logical argument and clear presentation

Assessment

1. Research Paper 40%
   A research paper of between 2500-3000 on a topic chosen from the list supplied.

2. Seminar Presentation 15%
   A presentation (10-15mins) on the same topic chosen for the research paper. A one page outline of the presentation to be supplied for the seminar discussion.
3. Mid-course Test 15%
   A take-home written test based on the lecture material discussed up to that date.

4. Final Examination 25%
   A two-hour, two question examination. There will be a limited choice of questions, which will be based on the major lecture topics

5. Participation 5%
   All absences must be supported by documentation delivered to the academic director of the program.

N.B. The grading system for written work and examinations, and the dangers of plagiarism will be found at the end of these notes.

The lecture program

Week 1  *The Stage. Part 1*
  - Introduction to the study of politics
    - Analysing a political system - the four key questions
    - Domestic systems and the global system
    - Identifying key issues of debate
    - Identifying strengths and weaknesses in the domestic *polis*

*The Stage. Part 2*
  - Australia - the physical dimensions
  - Geography, population, geopolitics
  - Political history

Week 2  *The Stage Part 3*
  - The Australian political system
    - the federal constitution
    - the formal distribution of powers
    - the institutions of government
    - federal & state relations
    - the inherited values and political culture

*The Political battleground, Part 1*
  - the nature of political conflict
  - the key issues, history and overview
- growth and development - the conflicting interests
- social order - the conflicting ideologies
- national identity - conflicting values- core, multicultural or tribal
- the population debate
- human rights
- the environment

Week 3

Deliver of seminar papers

Week 4

The Political battleground. Part2
- the tyranny of distance
- security - the enemy without
- Australia at war
- globalisation - threat or opportunity?
- regionalism - big fish in small pond?
- human rights and self-determination
- the global environment

Week 5

The Actors and the political process Part1

- leaders and legislators
- parties and politicians
- bureaucrats and officialdom
- interest groups
- voter power

The Actors and the political process Part2

- diplomats and soldiers
- traders
- transnational corporations
- international institutions and NGOs
- Australia as “good international citizen”
Week 6  
*Policy Action  Part 1*
- The decision making processes
  - Managing the economy
  - Social policies
  - Population and immigration policies
  - Indigenous policies
  - Managing the environment

Week 7  
Possible Field Trip

*Policy Action  Part 2*
  - Globalisation and economic policies
  - Foreign policies
  - Defence policies

Week 8  
*General Conclusions*
Global politics - present and future

- The Australian political system - a critique
  - Australia in the world - autonomies, vulnerabilities and policy capacities
  - Lessons from the past
  - Future trends and predictions

Source material

Books
  Text Book
  Summers.J., Woodward, D., Parkin., A
  *Government, Politics, Power and Policy in Australia*
  7th ed. Longmans 2002

Highly recommended
  *The Oxford Companion to Australian Politics*
  Oxford U.P 2007

  Eccleston, R., Williams, P. Hollander, R.,
  *The Foundations of Australian politics*
  Pearson Edu. 2006
Clarke, F.G., *Australia; a concise political and social history*  
Harcourt Brace 1992

Firth, S., *Australia in international politics*  
Allen and Unwin 1999

Cook, I., *Government and Democracy in Australia*  
Oxford U.P. 2004

The Boyer Lectures, ABC Books, 2000

Further Reading  
To be advised during the course

Journals  
Note particularly

  Australian Quarterly  
  Australian Journal of Political Science  
  Australian Journal of Politics and History  
  Australian Journal of International Affairs  
  Quadrant  
  Public Administration  
  The Diplomat

Official documents and speeches

  Hansard, Commonwealth Gazette, Foreign Affairs Record, etc

The Internet