

# PO260 The Australian Political System

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Keith Suter

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**Phone:** 02 9358 5847

**Contact Hours:** Generally prior to or following classes and strictly by arrangement with coordinator.

**Course Dates:** Meeting twice weekly, 3-4 hour sessions

**Course Time & Location:** BU Sydney Study Abroad campus, schedule to be decided

**Course Credits:** 4 BU credits

**Hub Units:** 1 Hub unit

**Capacity:** Diversity, Civic Engagement and Global Citizenship

**Unit:** Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy

## Course Description

### Summary:

This course examines the Australian system of government and key public policy issues, such as economic policy, foreign affairs, defence, environment, human rights, health and social policy. Comparisons are made where appropriate with the US system of government and key public policy issues. There is also passing reference to the British system of government.

The overall intention in studying The Australian Political System is that students will acquire a strong knowledge and critical understanding of Australian culture and society, and Australia's place within the Asia-Pacific region.

### Question-driven course description:

An introduction to an understanding of Australian government and politics, which focuses upon the following questions:

- a. What are the key *institutions* of government in Australia and the US: the constitution, the instruments of government, political parties, and interests' groups, in both the historical and current contexts?
- b. What are the major domestic and external *issues* of political debate?
- c. What are the policy making *processes* and policy case studies to consider?

### 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
- e. developing a greater understanding of US politics on the basis of comparison with Australian politics

## **Hub Learning Outcomes**

**BU Hub Units:** 1

**Capacity:** Diversity, Civic Engagement and Global Citizenship

**Area:** Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy

In CAS PO 260 The Australian Political System, students study comparative political systems of Australia and USA (primarily) with some reference to UK politics. This challenges students beyond their comfort zone whilst also refining their knowledge of the US system and culture. Whether a student comes from the US or elsewhere, this course introduces the elements of political global diversity that are on the table for discussion; this interrogates many previous cultural and political assumptions held by students and deepens each student's understanding of politics, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific Region. Ultimately a study of comparative political systems, also extends to gaining knowledge of cultural differences and to societal diversities which enlightens students to the needs of sensitivity towards people from different backgrounds.

## **Program Learning Outcomes**

### **Study Abroad Sydney Program Outcome:**

The student will “demonstrate knowledge of Australian culture and society with respect to a combination of the following areas: Australian politics, industry, science and technology, economics, social policy, environmental policy, literature and the arts, film, marketing, advertising, and mass media”.

## **Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning**

For this course, formal lectures, group tutorials and seminar presentations have been organized. Field trip will be undertaken to Canberra.

Attendance at all sessions is compulsory.

## **Books and Other Course Materials**

A great deal of photocopied material will be distributed during the lectures and will be made available on Blackboard. Australian political documentaries will also be shown each week, followed by a discussion of their contents.

**Required Reading** (extracts will be posted on blackboard learn from the following book list; each extract is required to be read ahead of the class to which it is relevant as listed in the course schedule).

Alomes, Stephen *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988*, Angus & Robertson, 1988

Andreas, Peter and Nadelmann, Ethan *Policing the Globe: Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations*, Oxford University Press, 2008

Angrist, Misha *Here is a Human Being: At the Dawn of Personal Genomics*, Harper, 2011

Beder, Sharon *Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism* Chelsea Green, 2002

Blackburn, Robin *Age Shock: How Finance is Failing Us*, Verso, 2006

Blainey, Geoffrey *The Story of Australia's People: The Rise and Rise of a New Australia*, Viking, 2016

Bowen, Catherine Drinker *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention May to September 1787*, Little Brown, 1986

Boyer, Susan *Across Great Divides: True Stories of Life at Sydney Cove*, Birrong, 2013

Brown, Lester *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse*, Norton, 2011

Bryant, Nick *The Rise and Fall of Australia: How a Great Nation Lost its Way*, Bantam, 2014

Burarrwanga Laklak *Welcome to My Country*, Allen & Unwin, 2013

Button, James *Speechless: A Year in my Father's Business*, Melbourne University Press, 2012

Carr, Bob *Diary of a Foreign Minister*, New South, 2014

Clarke, F.G., *Australia: A Concise Political and Social History*, Harcourt Brace, 1992

Colman, James *The House that Jack Built: Jack Munday Green Bans Hero*, New South, 2016

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

Crispin, Ken *The Quest for Justice*, Scribe, 2010

Eccleston, R., Williams, P. Hollander, R. *The Foundations of Australian Politics*, Pearson, 2006

Edwards, Peter *Permanent Friends? Historical Reflections on the Australian-American Alliance*, Lowy, 2005

Ferguson, Niall *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*, Penguin, 2008

Firth, S., *Australia in International Politics*, Allen and Unwin, 1999

Fitzgerald, Ross and Holt, Stephen *Alan Reid: The Red Fox*, New South, 2010

Flannery, Tim *We are the Weather Makers*, Text, 2006

Gill, Bates and Jakobson Linda *China Matters: Getting it Right for Australia*, La Trobe University Press, 2017

Gillard, Julia *My Story* Random House, 2014

Grant, Bruce *The Crisis of Loyalty: A Study of Australian Foreign Policy*, Angus & Robertson, 1972

Gyngell, Allan *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World since 1942*, La Trobe University Press, 2017

Haidt, Jonathan *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Allen Lane, 2012

Hamilton, Clive *Silent Invasion: China's Influence in Australia*, Hardie Grant, 2018

Hartcher, Peter *The Sweet Spot: How Australia made its own Luck and Could now throw it all away*, Black Inc, 2012

Houston, James *A Multicultural Odyssey*, Coventry, 2018

Ignatieff, Michael *Fire and Ashes: Success and Failure in Politics*, Harvard University Press, 2013

International Law Association (Australian Branch) *Indigenous Peoples: Issues in International and Australian Law*, 2004

Keane, John *The Life and Death of Democracy*, Simon & Schuster, 2009

Knox, Malcolm *Boom: The Underground History of Australia from Gold Rush to GFC*, Viking, 2013

Langton, Marcia et al *Honour Among Nations? Treaties and Agreements with Indigenous People*, Melbourne University Press, 2004

Lawrence, Carmen *Fear and Politics*, Scribe, 2006

Lopez, Ian Hanley *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, Oxford University Press, 2014

Lovell, D. et al *The Australian Political System*, Longman, 1998

Machiavelli *The Prince*, Penguin

Masters, Chris *Jones Town: The Power and Myth of Alan Jones*, Allen & Unwin, 2006

Mayer, Jane *Dark Money*, Scribe, 2016

McGrath, Kim *Crossing the Line: Australia's Secret History in the Timor Sea*, Redback, 2017

McKew, Maxine *Tales from the Political Trenches*, Melbourne University Press, 2012

McLean, Denis *The Prickly Pair: Making Nationalism in Australia and New Zealand*, University of Otago Press, 2003

Megalogenis, George *The Longest Decade*, Scribe, 2006

Moynihan, Pat and Cassels, Alan *Selling Sickness: How Drug Companies are Turning us all into Patients* Allen & Unwin, 2005

Mulligan, Martin and Hill, Stuart *Ecological Pioneers: A Social History of Australian Ecological Thought and Action*, Cambridge University Press, 2001

Murphy, Philip *The Empire's New Cloths: The Myth of the Commonwealth*, Hurst, 2018

Oreskes, Naomi and Conway Erik *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* Bloomsbury, 2020

Pine Joseph and Gilmore, James *The Experience Economy*, Harvard Business School, 1999

Uren, David *The Kingdom and the Quarry: China, Australia, Fear and Greed*, Black Inc, 2012

Preston, Richard *The Hot Zone*, Anchor, 1994

Radetsky, Peter *The Invisible Invaders: The Story of the Emerging Age of Viruses*, Little Brown, 1991

Reynolds, Henry *Frontier: Aborigines, Settlers and Land*, Allen & Unwin, 1987

Ryan, Colleen *Fairfax: Rise and Fall*, University of Melbourne Press, 2013

Savva, Niki *The Road to Ruin: How Tony Abbott and Peta Credlin Destroyed their own Government*, Scribe, 2016

Scott, Rosie and Heiss, Anita *The Intervention: An Anthology*, New South, 2016

Summers, John *et al Government, Politics, Power and Policy in Australia*, Longman, 2002

Tanner, Lindsay *Sideshow: Dumbing Down Democracy*, Scribe, 2011

Tsamenyi, Martin *et al The United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea: What it Means to Australia and Australia's Maritime Industries*, University of Wollongong, 1996

Vaillant, George *Ageing Well* Scribe, 2006

Williams, Pamela *Killing Fairfax: Packer, Murdoch and the Ultimate Revenge*, Harper Collins, 2013

*The Oxford Companion to Australian Politics*, Oxford University Press, 2007

## Internet:

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC): [www.abc.net.au/iview](http://www.abc.net.au/iview)

Australian Council of Social Service: [www.acoss.org.au](http://www.acoss.org.au)

Australian Institute for International Affairs:

[www.internationalaffairs.org.au](http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au)

Centre for Independent Studies: [www.cis.org.au](http://www.cis.org.au)

Global Directions: [www.global-directions.com](http://www.global-directions.com)

Inside Story, Swinburne Institute for Social Research: [www.inside.org.au](http://www.inside.org.au)

Kurzweil Accelerating Intelligence [www.kurzweilai.net](http://www.kurzweilai.net)

Lowy Institute [www.lowyinstitute.org](http://www.lowyinstitute.org)

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS): [www.sbs.com.au](http://www.sbs.com.au)

The Conversation [www.theconversation.edu.au](http://www.theconversation.edu.au)

The City of Sydney has an excellent Library network (with branches near BU) and so students are encouraged the use that network.

Global Truths podcasts: <https://www.podcastone.com.au/Global-Truths>

## Courseware

[www.bu.edu/learn/PO260](http://www.bu.edu/learn/PO260)

This is an active online link to all materials including course outline, criteria sheets, due dates of assignments, secondary sources, online links, and announcements. There are also required viewing texts, and discussion platform responses on bbl which are required for the course.

## Assignments and Grading

### Final Grades

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	below 60

## Assessment Weighting and due dates

1. Participation (including a weekly news commentary) **Ongoing.** 5%

Structured weekly news commentary on current issues in Australian politics.

2. Mid-course Short Paper 15%

A short paper, of about 1,200 words to be submitted through the Library by **4.00pm on Friday Week 3.**

3. Seminar Presentation 15%

This will be a presentation (10-15mins) on the same topic as chosen for the research paper, which will be delivered **at the seminar Week 7.**

4. Research Paper 40%

A research paper of between 2500-3000 words on a topic chosen from the list supplied, to be submitted through the Library, with a cover sheet, **by 5.00pm Thursday Week 7.**

5. Final Examination 25%

A two-hour examination will be held at **1.00pm on Friday Week 7.** There will be a limited written choice of questions, which will be based on the lecture topics. This is a closed book/notes examination.

## Assessment Descriptions

### Participation 5%

As part of the assessment, students will be on a roster to do a 5-Minute News Commentary.

The intention is to do a capsule commentary on a current Australian politics topic that has emerged over the previous week.

Students will be allocated to cover one of the following: Economics, Social Policy, Foreign Policy, or Environment.

Each commentary will need to cover:

- nature of the issue
- what happened
- some of the context (to help the rest of us understand the issue)
- speculation on what could happen next
- whether or not this news update has US/international implications

### Mid-course short paper 15%

A short paper, of about 1200 words to be submitted through the Library by 4:00pm on Friday Week 3 on the question *How does Australia's compulsory voting affect the conduct and outcome of Australia's elections? Your argument should reference the non-compulsory voting*

*system in the US. Do you think compulsory voting as part of the US political system would be beneficial? Why or why not?*

Essays should be double-spaced.

**Seminar presentation      15%**

This will be a presentation (10-15mins) on the same topic as chosen for the research paper. During Class in Week 7 Tuesday.

**Research paper      40%**

A research paper of between 2500-3000 words on a topic chosen from this list, to be submitted through the Library, with a cover sheet, by **5:00 pm Thursday Week 7**.

Essays should be double-spaced.

**Topic options:**

1. What are the political implications of the Overton Window theory for Australia's current climate change debate?
2. Is there any role for "vision" in Australian politics?
3. What are the political implications of the "Witness K" case?
4. What are the political implications of the proposal to increase the Newstart allowance?
5. Under what conditions could you ever envisage the Australian Government implementing an Australian version of China's Social Credit System?

**Examination      25%**

Essay-based closed book/closed notes exam. There will be a limited written choice of questions, which will be based on the lecture topics.

## **Resources/Support/How to Succeed in This Course:**

There is the opportunity of students meeting the professor face-to-face either ahead of or following class times; students can also make contact for longer meeting times via email or submit questions via email.

Being prepared for each scheduled class will mean students gain more from lectures and interactive class discussions.

There is also ample material on the BU learn site for students to expand their contextual knowledge of set texts and the BU Sydney library has additional material for research.

Professors are notified of students with documented disabilities or special needs ahead of first classes and offer assistance to these students in line with BU policy, which is also BU Sydney policy.



## **Community of Learning: Class and University Policies**

**Course members' responsibility** for ensuring a positive learning environment (e.g., participation/ discussion guidelines).

It is the responsibility of both the professor and all student members of the class to ensure a positive learning environment. It is thus understood that any member of the class who demonstrates behavior which undermines this positive learning environment will: firstly, be questioned and counseled regarding this behavior, seeking a satisfactory outcome; secondly, upon further recurrence, be brought into the delivery of the class material in an effort to involve them more; lastly, in light of the behavior continuing, the student will be expelled from the learning space for the rest of that day's class, and a grade deduction will be implemented as for "missing class without verifiable extraordinary reasons". (There is no precedent for this behavioral model thus far on our programs.)

### **Course Matters**

#### **Attendance at all classes is mandatory.**

**Any absence for medical reasons or other misadventure must be supported by a medical certificate or a letter offering a satisfactory explanation. Strict penalties apply, on a pro rata basis, for any unapproved absence. Missing one class without reason would attract as much as a 10% penalty.**

#### **Statement on Plagiarism**

**All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "... expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean".**

#### **Late Work**

**In general, there will be no extensions granted for any coursework. The exception is where there are clear and acceptable reasons for late submission. In this case a written statement outlining any serious illness or misadventure together with supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificates) must be provided or a strict penalty of 5% per day will apply.**

# Outline of Class Meetings: Date, Topic, Readings Due, Assignments Due

## The Lecture Program

### **Week 1: Class 1: Introduction to Political Science**

Haidt, Jonathan *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Allen Lane, 2012

Ignatieff, Michael *Fire and Ashes: Success and Failure in Politics*, Harvard University Press, 2013

Keane, John *The Life and Death of Democracy*, Simon & Schuster, 2009

Machiavelli *The Prince*, Penguin

Summers, John *et al Government, Politics, Power and Policy in Australia*, Longman, 2002

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

### **Class 2: Introduction to Australia**

Alomes, Stephen *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988*, Angus & Robertson, 1988

Blainey, Geoffrey *The Story of Australia's People: The Rise and Rise of a New Australia*, Viking, 2016

Boyer, Susan *Across Great Divides: True Stories of Life at Sydney Cove*, Birrong, 2013

Clarke, F.G., *Australia: A Concise Political and Social History*, Harcourt Brace 1992

Cook, I., *Government and Democracy in Australia*, Oxford University Press 2004

Megalogenis, George *The Longest Decade*, Scribe, 2006

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

### **Week 2: Class 3: Political Culture, Political Institutions**

Bowen, Catherine Drinker *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention May to September 1787*, Little Brown, 1986

Eccleston, R., Williams, P. Hollander, R. *The Foundations of Australian Politics*, Pearson, 2006

Houston, James *A Multicultural Odyssey*, Coventry, 2018

Lovell, D. *et al The Australian Political System*, Longman, 1998

*The Oxford Companion to Australian Politics*, Oxford University Press, 2007

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

### **Class 4: Election Systems, Political Parties, Pressure. Groups**

Button, James *Speechless: A Year in my Father's Business*, Melbourne University Press, 2012

Colman, James *The House that Jack Built: Jack Munday Green Bans Hero*, New South, 2016

Hamilton, Clive *Silent Invasion: China's Influence in Australia*, Hardie Grant, 2018

Mayer, Jane *Dark Money*, Scribe, 2016

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

**Week 3: Class 5: Women in Australian Politics, Media**

Fitzgerald, Ross and Holt, Stephen *Alan Reid: The Red Fox*, New South, 2010  
Gillard, Julia *My Story* Random House, 2014  
Lawrence, Carmen *Fear and Politics*, Scribe, 2006  
Lopez, Ian Hanley *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, Oxford University Press, 2014  
Masters, Chris *Jones Town: The Power and Myth of Alan Jones*, Allen & Unwin, 2006  
McKew, Maxine *Tales from the Political Trenches*, Melbourne University Press, 2012  
Oreskes, Naomi and Conway Erik *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* Bloomsbury, 2020  
Ryan, Colleen *Fairfax: Rise and Fall*, University of Melbourne Press, 2013  
Savva, Niki *The Road to Ruin: How Tony Abbott and Peta Credlin Destroyed their own Government*, Scribe, 2016  
Tanner, Lindsay *Sideshow: Dumbing Down Democracy*, Scribe, 2011  
Williams, Pamela *Killing Fairfax: Packer, Murdoch and the Ultimate Revenge*, Harper Collins, 2013

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

**Class 6: Australia's Place in the World; Introduction to Canberra**

Carr, Bob *Diary of a Foreign Minister*, New South, 2014  
Edwards, Peter *Permanent Friends? Historical Reflections on the Australian-American Alliance*, Lowy, 2005  
Firth, S., *Australia in International Politics*, Allen and Unwin 1999  
Grant, Bruce *The Crisis of Loyalty: A Study of Australian Foreign Policy*, Angus & Robertson, 1972  
Gyngell, Allan *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World since 1942*, La Trobe University Press, 2017  
McGrath, Kim *Crossing the Line: Australia's Secret History in the Timor Sea*, Redback, 2017  
McLean, Denis *The Prickly Pair: Making Nationalism in Australia and New Zealand*, University of Otago Press, 2003  
Murphy, Philip *The Empire's New Cloths: The Myth of the Commonwealth*, Hurst, 2018

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

**Week 3 Friday : Mid-Course Short Paper by 4.00pm**

**Week 4: Monday: Canberra field trip**

## **Class 7: Australian Economy**

Bryant, Nick *The Rise and Fall of Australia: How a Great Nation Lost its Way*, Bantam, 2014  
Ferguson, Niall *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*, Penguin, 2008  
Gill, Bates and Jakobson Linda *China Matters: Getting it Right for Australia*, La Trobe University Press, 2017  
Hartcher, Peter *The Sweet Spot: How Australia made its own Luck and Could now throw it all away*, Black Inc, 2012  
Knox, Malcolm *Boom: The Underground History of Australia from Gold Rush to GFC*, Viking, 2013  
Pine Joseph and Gilmore, James *The Experience Economy*, Harvard Business School, 1999  
Uren, David *The Kingdom and the Quarry: China, Australia, Fear and Greed*, Black Inc, 2012

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

## **Class 8: Environmental Politics, Healthcare**

Beder, Sharon *Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism*  
Chelsea Green, 2002  
Brown, Lester *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse*,  
Norton, 2011  
Flannery, Tim *We are the Weather Makers*, Text, 2006  
Mulligan, Martin and Hill, Stuart *Ecological Pioneers: A Social History of Australian Ecological  
Thought and Action*, Cambridge University Press, 2001  
Tsamenyi, Martin *et al The United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea: What it Means to  
Australia and Australia's Maritime Industries*, University of Wollongong, 1996  
  
Angrist, Misha *Here is a Human Being: At the Dawn of Personal Genomics*, Harper, 2011  
Blackburn, Robin *Age Shock: How Finance is Failing Us*, Verso, 2006  
Moynihan, Pat and Cassels, Alan *Selling Sickness: How Drug Companies are Turning us all into  
Patients* Allen & Unwin, 2005  
Preston, Richard *The Hot Zone*, Anchor, 1994  
Radetsky, Peter *The Invisible Invaders: The Story of the Emerging Age of Viruses*, Little Brown,  
1991  
Vaillant, George *Ageing Well* Scribe, 2006

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

**Week 5: Class 9: no class: All Program Melbourne field trip**

## **Class 10: Law and Order, Future Global Trends**

Andreas, Peter and Nadelmann, Ethan *Policing the Globe: Criminalization and Crime Control in  
International Relations*, Oxford University Press, 2008  
Crispin, Ken *The Quest for Justice*, Scribe, 2010

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

**Week 6:      Class 11: Indigenous Affairs (and voluntary class presentations)**

Burarrwanga Laklak *Welcome to My Country*, Allen & Unwin, 2013

International Law Association (Australian Branch) *Indigenous Peoples: Issues in International and Australian Law*, 2004

Langton, Marcia et al *Honour Among Nations? Treaties and Agreements with Indigenous People*, Melbourne University Press, 2004

Reynolds, Henry *Frontier: Aborigines, Settlers and Land*, Allen & Unwin, 1987

Scott, Rosie and Heiss, Anita *The Intervention: An Anthology*, New South, 2016

*\*Required extracts will be provided on Blackboard*

**Class 12: no class (compulsory class AN 368 examination today)**

**Week 7:      Class 13: class presentations on research reports**

**Thursday: : *Research papers due by 5pm***

**Friday: *Final Exam 1.00pm***