

INT245 Politics of the USA

School: School of Law and Society

2026 | Semester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

The United States of America, as the world's only superpower, plays a dominant role in international politics. Its system of government, constitution and democratic model have provided examples for many states including Australia. This course will examine the development of the major political institutions of the United States and consider some important contemporary political issues. It will then examine the role the United States plays in international politics.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus tutorial/workshop	2hrs	Week 1	13 times
Learning materials – Asynchronous online learning materials	1hr	Week 1	13 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Asynchronous online learning materials	1hr	Week 1	13 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Online tutorial/workshop	2hrs	Week 1	13 times

1.3. Course Topics

Introduction to Class

First Peoples

Founding Documents

Constitutional Amendments Part 1

Constitutional Amendments Part 2

Civil Rights Part 1

Civil Rights Part 2

Three Branches: Congress

Three Branches: Executive

Three Branches: Judiciary

US Foreign Policy

2. What level is this course?

200 Level (Developing)

Building on and expanding the scope of introductory knowledge and skills, developing breadth or depth and applying knowledge and skills in a new context. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally, undertaken in the second or third full-time year of an undergraduate programs.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES		GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Contribute and engage in course content discussions with academic staff and peers during tutorials.	Ethical Engaged
2	Discuss, explain and describe US political history and practice including actors, institutions, processes, key events.	Knowledgeable
3	Demonstrate research, critical analysis skills, and argument development in essay papers, tutorials and verbally during the tutorial and in written assignments.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker
4	Apply scholarly writing, research and reference practice in the field of Politics and International Relations.	Empowered

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of "pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites".

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Timely and detailed feedback is provided for each assessment. Feedback is provided both within text and general comments to build scholarly skills. Students are able to seek feedback through face-to-face discussion with the course coordinator. Tutorials will include extended discussion and review of the assessment task requirements and scope.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Journal	Individual	30%	250 words	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	Online Discussion Board
All	2	Examination - not Centrally Scheduled	Individual	30%	1000-1500 words	Week 7	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Essay	Individual	40%	1500-2000 word research essay	Exam Period	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Discussion Board

GOAL:	You will actively prepare for and then engage in classroom discussions and constructively respond to course content questions, theories and practices through the weekly readings. These will be used to support the final assessment essay.		
PRODUCT:	Journal		
FORMAT:	This is a 250 word class discussion entry based on the class readings. Student will submit and respond to an online discussion posts Weeks 2-11. Preparation for tutorials will require reading from the required and recommended reading list for the week's tutorial and thinking about the issues highlighted for tutorial focus. This discussion post aids in tutorial discussion.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrated knowledge of some of the relevant reading and lectures	1 2
	2	Demonstrated capacity to analyse readings and arguments put to the class	1 2 4
	3	Demonstrate an understanding of the actors, institutions, processes, key events and concepts relevant to this course contributed to class and group discussions with relevant and informed comments	1 2
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Organisation		

All - Assessment Task 2: Midterm exam

GOAL:	Students will apply their knowledge from course readings in short essay format for the first half of the class.		
PRODUCT:	Examination - not Centrally Scheduled		
FORMAT:	A take home essay in two parts. Part 1 will ask the student to analyse two current events using class readings and learning materials. Part 2 will ask students to pick two short essay questions to answer.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Scholarly and authoritative reference sources are used to directly support claims and arguments	2 4
	2	Demonstrates critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of argument	2 4
	3	Completely answers the questions using course materials	2 3
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 3: Final Reflection Essay

GOAL:	To draw out and elaborate on a key topic (or topics) of the course which interest you most. Re-read and reflect on your weekly reading summaries. Ponder a constellation of themes or issues which you have explored across the whole span of the semester.		
PRODUCT:	Essay		
FORMAT:	Write a short but well-thought-out essay of approximately 1500-2000 words discussing some aspect of class themes or issues. Student will draw upon Assessment 1 discussion blogs, class readings, class materials and some outside research as necessary.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	A clear, consistent thesis is evident	2 4
	2	Scholarly and authoritative reference sources are used to directly support claims and arguments	1 4
	3	Critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of argument is evident	2 3 4
	4	The paper is +/- 10 percent of the stated word count.	3
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication		

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	Richard M. Valelly	2013	American Politics: A Very Short Introduction	n/a	Oxford University Press

8.2. Specific requirements

Not applicable

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%

The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submission of assessment tasks may be penalised at the following maximum rate:

- 5% (of the assessment task's identified value) per day for the first two days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- 10% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day - 20% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day and subsequent days up to and including seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- A result of zero is awarded for an assessment task submitted after seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task. Weekdays and weekends are included in the calculation of days late. To request an extension you must contact your course coordinator to negotiate an outcome.

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au