

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department: Social Sciences and Humanities

Programme: Political Science
International Relations

FHEQ Level: 3

Course Title: Government, State, Politics

Course Code: PLT 3102

Total Hours: 120

Timetabled Hours: 45

Guided Learning Hours: 0

Independent Learning Hours: 75

Credits: 12 UK CATS credits
6 ECTS credits
3 US credits

Course Description:

This course examines the political experience, institutions, behavior and processes within major political systems that operate in today's world. Within the course we analyse major concepts including power, legitimacy, society, and sovereignty and take into account approaches and methods of political science. As a result, we are able to produce comparative analyses of different states and governments and provide a critical understanding of political decision-making processes and the continuing transformation of the modern state.

Pre-requisites:

None

Aims and Objectives:

- To help students develop a critical understanding of decision-making processes across a range of states, societies and political institutions
- To introduce the major branches of the governmental-societal process in a variety of countries and how their operation can be understood
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business and the media) which require articulate, clear thinking individuals with a grasp of government, state and politics
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21st century
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

Political Science: A3(i); B3(i); C3(i); D3(i)

International Relations: A3(i); B3(i); C3(i); D3(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates an understanding of core concepts used to study political science
- Demonstrates a comparative understanding of government, state and politics: political institutions, practices and systems
- Demonstrates the ability to gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to communicate arguments effectively in written, oral or other forms
- Demonstrates an awareness of views other than their own
- Completes obligations with regards to assigned work

Indicative Content:

- Basic approaches to the comparative study of government, state and politics
- Core concepts for the comparative study political systems
- Theories of the role of political institutions in structuring political behavior and attitudes
- Comparative political institutions and decision-making processes in major Western and non-Western states
- Key international and historical junctures in the transformation of government, state and politics, including contemporary drivers of change

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes prepared.

Indicative Texts:

O'Neil, P., K. Fields and D. Share (2020) *Cases in Comparative Politics*. 7th ed. New York and London: WW Norton.

Hague, R., M. Harrop and G. McCormick (2019) *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. 11th ed. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	