

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

NOTE: ANY CHANGES TO A CSD MUST GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RELEVANT APPROVAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING LTFC.

Academic School/Department: Communications, Arts and Social Sciences

Programme: Political Science

FHEQ Level: 5

Course Title: Politics in the USA

Course Code: PLT 5400

Course Leader: Dr Michael F. Keating

Student Engagement Hours: **120**

Lectures: 22.5

Seminar / Tutorials: 22.5

Independent / Guided Learning : 75

Semester: FALL and/or SPRING and/or SUMMER

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

Course Description:

Examines the nature of politics and political processes in the United States of America. The course considers the theoretical and actual implementation of policy. Constitutional mandates and constraints on the different branches of government are addressed, along with the impact of these on policy making processes. The course then examines and explores post-war policy practices, considering both internal and external influences on political processes in the USA.

Pre-requisites: PLT 3100 or PLT 3105 or HST 4100

Aims and Objectives:

- To understand the political system in the USA and the political structures and processes that regulate government
- To analyse the nature of American democratic values
- To examine the components of American government; the legislature, the executive and the judiciary
- To consider the rise of external influences and the impact that these elements have upon the USA's ability to govern itself.
- To consider the design of the Constitution and the aspirations of the Founding Fathers against historical developments in political practice in the USA

Programme Outcomes:

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

5B(i); 5B(ii); 5B(iii); 5C(i); 5C(ii); 5C(iii); 5D(i); 5D(ii); 5D(iii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the Departmental/Schools page of the portal.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of US political institutions, practices and systems
- Demonstrates a critical and theoretical engagement with core problems and issues in US Politics
- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of the continuities and transformations evident in US Politics
- Demonstrates the necessary IT skills, and the ability to adapt writing and presentation skills to different contexts, audiences and degrees of complexity, to produce well-developed work that will translate into the workplace
- Completes assigned work with a degree of autonomy, clarity, technical competence, capacity for self-evaluation and critical thinking appropriate for a 5000-level course

Indicative Content:

- USA Constitution, Founding Principles and Debates
- USA political institutions
- Policy making and processes in the USA
- Key issues in politics in the USA
- Key debates in political science in the context of the USA
- Key developments in ideology and practice in US politics

Assessment:

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Council on June 28, 2012.

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.

