

University of the West of Scotland

Module Descriptor

Session: 202425

Title of Module: American Politics & Policy			
Code: PLTC09019	SCQF Level: 11 (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)	Credit Points: 20	ECTS: 10 (European Credit Transfer Scheme)
School:	School of Education & Social Sciences		
Module Co-ordinator:	C Bradshaw		
Summary of Module			
<p>This module is designed to offer students the chance to engage critically with a variety of ideas, institutions and issues in the contemporary United States. The course will begin with a consideration of the Constitution of the United States, and the separate institutions which comprise the federal political structures; specifically, the Presidency, Congress and the Supreme Court. This deliberation will be taken in order to examine how the United States operates at a federal level, both in terms of constitutional, political, policy and public expectations, as well as actuality. We shall consider the framework of each aspect of the federal system and how it connects together, institutionally and in reality. A mixture of lectures and seminars will allow us to examine, together, key aspects of the system in America today. The course also includes analysing the powers of both governmental and non-governmental institutions, elections and voting behaviour, as well as policymaking. Attention is also played to the debates surrounding specific policy issues and the idea of American exceptionalism.</p> <p>Overall, the course will therefore examine the outcomes and interplay between the institutions, elected politicians, the policy process, and the public to examine the nature of the political system of the United States of America. We shall consider whether the ideals of the American system are still in place and whether they can be, and are being, realized in contemporary political outcomes.</p>			

Module Delivery Method					
Face-To-Face	Blended	Fully Online	HybridC	Hybrid 0	Work-Based Learning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
See Guidance Note for details.					

Campus(es) for Module Delivery

The module will normally be offered on the following campuses / or by Distance/Online Learning: (Provided viable student numbers permit) (tick as appropriate)						
Paisley:	Ayr:	Dumfries:	Lanarkshire:	London:	Distance/Online Learning:	Other:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New College Lanarkshire

Term(s) for Module Delivery					
(Provided viable student numbers permit).					
Term 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Term 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Term 3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Learning Outcomes: (maximum of 5 statements) These should take cognisance of the SCQF level descriptors and be at the appropriate level for the module. At the end of this module the student will be able to:	
L1	Demonstrate a broad knowledge and understanding of key aspects of US politics and policy and the constitutional and ideological underpinnings of the system.
L2	Deploy a variety of theoretical approaches and concepts to engage in critical analysis of events, institutions and ideas in the United States of America.
L3	Analyse a contested issue in US politics & policy making effective use of a variety of printed and electronic sources.
L4	Present the results of self-directed study and analysis clearly and concisely in written form.
L5	Click or tap here to enter text.
Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	<p>SCQF Level 9</p> <p>Demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of the scope, key features and central themes of the American Federal institutions and electoral system.</p> <p>Demonstrate a critical perception of the central theoretical and</p>

	<p>conceptual approaches to American politics & policy.</p> <p>Demonstrate detailed awareness and knowledge of specialized areas of American Federal politics and policy.</p>	
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	<p>SCQF Level 9</p> <p>Engage in the interpretation and examination of complex socio-political concepts</p> <p>Apply conceptual and theoretical tools to understand key aspects of the American Federal system</p> <p>Retrieving, interpreting and manipulating primary and secondary information from a variety of sources including electronic sources</p>	
Generic Cognitive skills	<p>SCQF Level 9.</p> <p>Critical analysis and evaluation of core ideas, concepts and issues in the contemporary USA</p> <p>Identify flaws and apply reasoning in theoretical arguments and analysis</p> <p>Collate information from a variety of sources, including academic research publications</p>	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	<p>SCQF Level 9</p> <p>Communicating effectively and appropriately in speech and writing</p> <p>Interpreting complex primary materials</p> <p>Making effective use of information retrieval systems and use information technology applications to present documents in an appropriate form</p>	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with others	<p>SCQF Level 9</p> <p>Working effectively, together with others in groups or teams, taking a leadership role or exercising autonomy, where appropriate.</p> <p>Systematically identifying and addressing their own learning needs both in current and new areas, making use of research materials as appropriate.</p>	
Pre-requisites:	Before undertaking this module the student should have undertaken the following:	
	Module Code:	Module Title:
	Other:	Any social science modules at level 8 modules or equivalent

Co-requisites	Module Code:	Module Title:
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*Indicates that module descriptor is not published.

<p>Learning and teaching The lecture and supported workshop format will be structured in a way that facilitates research-led teaching and learning. Through undertaking a range of inquiry-based and problem-solving activities, students will be encouraged to become active participants in their own learning experience.</p> <p>This module will support the acquisition and development of generic attributes and employability, lifelong learning and citizenship competencies by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Highlighting assessment-employability linkages to ensure the skills and competencies learners are developing are made explicit and allowing learners to evidence the development of these skills and competencies; 2) Supporting learners in the development of digital literacies through, for example, the use of online research engines and electronic tools. Learners will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their digital skills and competencies and develop their understanding of 'digital influence'; 3) Providing learners with the opportunity to work with peers in order to develop leadership and negotiation skills and support the development of diversity awareness and interpersonal sensitivity; 4) Supporting learners in the development of self-reflection and evaluation skills and competencies through the explicit focus on personal development planning <p>Student contact will primarily take place through a series of blended lectures and workshops and on-line exercises. A range of learning and teaching strategies will be deployed throughout the duration of the module in order to reflect the range of learning styles of students, with opportunities for assessment based on online contributions, and oral and written presentation of academic work.</p>	
<p>In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours.</p>	
<p>Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:</p>	<p>Student Learning Hours (Normally totalling 200 hours): (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)</p>
Lecture/Core Content Delivery	26
Tutorial/Synchronous Support Activity	10
Independent Study	164

	Hours Total 200
**Indicative Resources: (eg. Core text, journals, internet access)	
<p>The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:</p> <p>The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:</p> <p>Duncan, Russell and Joseph Goddard (2020) Contemporary United States, 6th Edition, Palgrave</p> <p>Greenhouse, L. (2020), The US Supreme Court: A Very Brief Introduction (Oxford: OUP) ISBN: 9780190079819</p> <p>McKay, David (2022) American Politics and Society. Wiley-Blackwell; 10th edition ISBN 9781119578369</p> <p>Peele, Gillian (Editor), Jon Herbert (Editor), Bruce E. Cain (Editor), Andrew Wroe (Editor) (2022) Developments in American Politics 9. Palgrave Macmillan Cham. ISBN 978-3-030-89739-0</p> <p>Polsby, Nelson W., (2020) Presidential elections : strategies and structures of American politics. Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN: 9781538125113</p>	
<p>(**N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)</p>	
Attendance and Engagement Requirements	
<p>In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure: Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.</p> <p>For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:</p> <p>All fulltime students (part-time and distant learning students should check with their programme leader for any queries) are required to attend all scheduled classes and participate with all delivered elements of the module as part of their engagement with their programme of study. Consideration will be given to students who have protection under the appropriate equality law. Please refer to UWS Regulations, Chapter 1, 1.64 – 1.67, available at the following link: http://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/rights-and-regulations/regulatory-framework/</p>	
Equality and Diversity	
<p>The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code. Please ensure</p>	

any specific requirements are detailed in this section. Module Co-ordinators should consider the accessibility of their module for groups with protected characteristics..

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	Social Science
Assessment Results (Pass/Fail)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
School Assessment Board	Under Graduate Social Science
Moderator	G. Coia
External Examiner	J Halsall
Accreditation Details	None
Changes/Version Number	

Assessment: (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)

This section should make transparent what assessment categories form part of this module (stating what % contributes to the final mark).

Maximum of 3 main assessment categories can be identified (which may comprise smaller elements of assessment).

NB: The 30% aggregate regulation (Reg. 3.9) (40% for PG) for each main category must be taken into account. When using PSMD, if all assessments are recorded in the one box, only one assessment grid will show and the 30% (40% at PG) aggregate regulation will not stand. For the aggregate regulation to stand, each component of assessment must be captured in a separate box.

Please provide brief information about the overall approach to assessment that is taken within the module. In order to be flexible with assessment delivery, be brief, but do state assessment type (e.g. written assignment rather than "essay" / presentation, etc) and keep the detail for the module handbook. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Assessment 1 - A Class Test worth 30% of the final mark.

Assessment 2 – A Written Submission worth 70% of the final mark.

(N.B. (i) **Assessment Outcomes Grids** for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed.

(ii) An **indicative schedule** listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Assessment Outcome Grids (See Guidance Note)

Component 1							
Assessment Type (Footnote B.)	Learning Outcome (1)	Learning Outcome (2)	Learning Outcome (3)	Learning Outcome (4)	Learning Outcome (5)	Weighting (%) of Assessment Element	Timetabled Contact Hours
MCQ	X	X				30	1

Component 2							
Assessment Type (Footnote B.)	Learning Outcome (1)	Learning Outcome (2)	Learning Outcome (3)	Learning Outcome (4)	Learning Outcome (5)	Weighting (%) of Assessment Element	Timetabled Contact Hours
Essay			X	X		70	3

Change Control:

What	When	Who
Further guidance on aggregate regulation and application when completing template	16/01/2020	H McLean
Updated contact hours	14/09/21	H McLean
Updated Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure	19/10/2023	C Winter
Updated UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code	19/10/2023	C Winter
Guidance Note 23-24 provided	12/12/23	D Taylor
General housekeeping to text across sections.	12/12/23	D Taylor
Amended assessment statement and associated learning objectives met	20/03/2024	M Leith
Updated indicative reading list to reflect latest additions of material employed in module	20/3/2024	M Leith

Version Number: MD Template 1 (2023-24)