

# Politics 101

## CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

Semester/  
Academic  
Year

**Summer 2019**

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Course  
delivery

**Lecture/guided  
discussion**

Summer Course 4 weeks

### **Brief description**

The purpose of this course is to help students understand the world around them through an engaged investigation into the academic discipline commonly called political science. This entails becoming familiar with local, national, regional and international aspects of political discourses and developments in the contemporary world.

### **Aims**

Politics is one of the richest fields of human inquiry, made all the more essential in that just about everything we do in this life can be interpreted to have a political sense. This course is concerned with contemporary politics on two distinct levels. First, it deals with those activities and issues of importance to anyone who is a member of a modern liberal democratic polity -- rights and responsibilities, voting and political participation, power, authority, and legitimacy, ideology and culture -- in short, political socialization and citizenship. Second, it examines how polities govern themselves and relate with other polities, through a study of the branches of government, of political parties and interest groups, and of different actors in international relations.

### **Content**

The course begins by recapitulating the work, methods and subfields of political science, major political ideologies, the concept of political culture and the processes of political socialization. The course then moves on to consider the parameters of political participation, the individual and the citizen in the political process, to the understanding of political groups (interest groups, political parties) as well as aspects of war and terrorism. It then considers lawmaking and the division of power, government at work, executives and bureaucrats, public policy and policy formation and the notion of justice and legal cultures. It finally discusses different types of local, regional, provincial and federal governments, international government, the contemporary

international system as well as political and economic globalization and the prospects for global democracy.

### **Learning outcomes**

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

- gain an understanding of major political ideas and key political concepts
- understand aspects of political engagement at the local, regional, national, and international levels
- reflect critically on the nature of security, war, and terrorism
- analyze aspects of political socialization and political communication

## **Assessment**

- |                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>a. Tests (2)</b>           | <b>50%</b> |
| <b>b. Writing Assignment</b>  | <b>30%</b> |
| <b>c. Class Presentation</b>  | <b>10%</b> |
| <b>d. Class Participation</b> | <b>10%</b> |

### **Transferable skills**

This course provides students with an opportunity to develop, practice, and test a wide range of transferable skills which will help them to conceptualize and evaluate examples and ideas. Independent project work and problem solving will be one of the central goals of the course. It will be achieved through the need to submit their essays. Students will know how to use the many sources of information available and the emphasis throughout the course will be on student participation and communication. In class participation will entail group work occasionally when students will be asked to discuss as a group the core issues related to the lecture topics. Students will be expected to submit their work in word-processed format. Also, students will be encouraged to search for sources of information on the web, as well as seeking sources through electronic information sources. The need to meet an essay deadline will focus students' attention on the need to manage their time. The list of transferable skills culminates with the enhancement of the capacity to analyze and formulate arguments under time constraints through in-class tests.

# Course Schedule

## Week 1

- W introduction to the course / politics in the news?
- W what is politics? / key concepts
- Th studying politics / 'mapping' politics
- Th what is ideology? / political ideologies I

## Week 2

- M political ideologies II
- M art and politics
- T democracy
- T the issue of free speech
- W democratic governance
- W political geography
- Th politics and the state
- Th the state and the economy

## Week 3

- M geopolitics
- M nations and nationalism
- T globalization/s
- T globalization/s
- W violence and war
- W security and terrorism
- Th **(TEST #1 July 4<sup>th</sup>)**
- Th **(TEST #1 July 4<sup>th</sup>)**

**(Writing Assignment Due: July 1<sup>st</sup>)**

#### **Week 4**

- M identity politics
- M a clash of civilizations?
  
- T *Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?*
- T contemporary society and political culture
  
- W politics and the media
- W politics and the media
  
- Th *Wag the Dog*
- Th *Wag the Dog*

#### **Week 5**

- M **TEST #2 (July 15<sup>th</sup>)**
- M **TEST #2 (July 15<sup>th</sup>)**
  
- T Class Presentations (July 16<sup>th</sup>)
- T Class Presentations (July 16<sup>th</sup>)
  
- W Class Presentations (July 17<sup>th</sup>)
- W Class Presentations (July 17<sup>th</sup>)

**THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF THESSALONIKI  
US GRADING SYSTEM/SCALE**

Grade Description	% points	US Letter Grade	US point grade
Excellent	95-100	A	4.0
Very Good (high)	90-94	A-	3.67
Very Good (low)	85-89	B+	3.33
Good (high)	80-84	B	3.0
Good (low)	75-79	B-	2.67
Satisfactory (high)	70-74	C+	2.33
Satisfactory (low)	65-69	C	2.0
Fail	0-64	F	0

**CLASS PARTICIPATION AND PLAGIARISM**

Students are encouraged to contribute to class discussions through active participation. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated; ACT policies on plagiarism will be enforced to the letter. Submission of late assignments will result in a 10% reduction.

**ACT Absence Policy**

**Maximum Allowed Number of Absences**

The maximum allowed number of absences for all ACT courses stands at 6 (six) hours per course.

**Excusing Absences**

To excuse absences for good cause (such as medical reasons or personal crises), the student should contact the Registrar's office and, ahead of time or at the latest within a week from the time the absences took place, provide written proof of the cause of the absences. The documents submitted are then evaluated by the Assistant Dean, who decides whether there are valid grounds for excusing the absences.

**Successful Attendance**

A student is considered to have successfully attended a course if he/she has attended 75% of the course lectures. Thus, the maximum number of absences (excused or not) stands at 11 hours. In case of an unsuccessful attendance, the student is administratively withdrawn from the course. The student has the right to appeal the decision to be administratively withdrawn from a course due to excessive absences and seek reinstatement. In this case, the student, within three working days, must fill in a 'mitigating circumstances' form in the Registrar's office,

where the reasons of the appeal should be explained. Following this, a formal hearing of the Academic Standards and Performance Committee (ASPC) takes place. The decision of the Committee is final.

Instances of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the act of stealing or using the ideas or writings of another person and passing them off as one's own.

### **College-wide Policy on Academic Integrity**

All academic divisions at ACT, both undergraduate and graduate, will apply the following policy on academic integrity:

"A student committing an act of Academic Dishonesty in a given course will receive an F (0 percentage points) in the assignment where the academic infraction took place. If a student commits an act of Academic Dishonesty for a second time in the same course, this student will receive a failing grade in that course".

### **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:**

If you have specific physical, psychological, or any other learning disabilities that you believe may require accommodations for this course, you should visit the Dean's office by bringing the appropriate documentation. The Writing Center (1st floor, Bissell Library) is staffed by experienced English faculty. You are encouraged to use its services.

### **Indicative Bibliography**

[Axford, Barrie, Browning, Gary K., Huggins, Richard, Rosamond, Ben](#) with Alan Grant and John Turner, *Politics: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Routledge, 2002.

[Andrain, Charles F., Apter, David Ernest.](#) *Political protest and social change : analyzing politics*, New York University Press, 1995.

[Avineri, Shlomo,](#) *The social and political thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge U.P., 1990, c1968.

Bellamy, Richard. *Citizenship: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2008.

[Brem, Stefan, Stiles, Kendall W.](#) *Cooperating without America : theories and case studies of non-hegemonic regimes*, Routledge 2009.

[Bronner, Stephen Eric.](#) *Twentieth century political theory: a reader*, Routledge, 2005.

Heywood, Andrew, *Political ideas and concepts: an introduction*, St. Martin's Press, 1994.

[Jacobsohn, John A.](#) An introduction to Political Science, Wadsworth Publishing, 1998.

Lawson, Kay, *The Human Polity. A comparative Introduction to Political Science*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Houghton Mifflin Co, Boston and N.Y.

[Leftwich, Adrian,](#) *What is politics?: the activity and its study*, Polity, 2004.

Machiavelli, Niccolo, Adams, Robert Martin, [\*The prince: a new translation, backgrounds, interpretations, peripherica\*](#), Norton, c.1977.

[McClelland, J. S. \*A history of Western political thought\*](#). Routledge, 1996.

McNair, Brian. *An Introduction to Political Communication*. Fifth Edition. Routledge. 2011.

Minogue, Kenneth. *Politics: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2000.

[Pollock, Philip H. , \*The essentials of political analysis\*](#). CQ Press, 2005.