

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: American Government and Politics

Course Number and Section:

POLISCI

2295G 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the workings of the American political system and government. The course will focus on the institutional setting (e.g., the Constitution, electoral system), the political process (i.e., elections, legislative and judicial processes), and actors (e.g., president, Members of Congress, interest groups, and the media). We will survey the central debates surrounding these institutions and actors with emphasis on how they function and interact within the constitutional “rules of the game.” The goal of the course is to help students arrive at a deeper understanding of politics in the United States.

Learning Outcomes:

Develop an understanding of the ways in which history, political culture, and demographics shape the American political system and government;

Explain the development and evolution of the US Constitution and how this has impacted American public opinion, shaped the role of the media;

Understand and explain how political parties, the electoral system, and interest groups shape and influence elections and outcomes;

Compare and contrast the US political system with other comparable democratic systems, such as that of Canada;

Develop the ability to critically assess these ideas and information and to clearly communicate your knowledge in written and oral form.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Stephen Brooks, Donald E. Abelson, and Melissa Haussman, Understanding American Politics. Third Edition (University of Toronto Press, 2024).

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Tutorial	Ongoing	20
Writing Assignment	03/28/2025	25

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Midterm Test	02/25/2025	25
Final Exam	April 2025	30

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Tuesday, December 3, 2024