



SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAMME

TRIMESTER 2 2007

POLS 207: MODERN AMERICAN POLITICS

CRN 1288

LECTURER: Professor Nigel Roberts.

ROOM: MY 533 (in the Murphy annexe).

PHONE: 463-5288

EMAIL: Nigel.Robert88vuw.ac.nz

Note: Emails to Nigel Roberts about POLS 207 must have POLS 207 in the subject line; if they don't, they are liable to be deleted as spam.

LECTURE TIMES: Tuesdays and Fridays, 2:10-3:00 pm.

VENUE: HM LT206 (in the Hugh Mackenzie lecture-theatre block).

TUTORIALS: Details about the 2007 tutorial programme for POLS 207 will be given to students at the first lecture and will also be put onto the POLS 207 Blackboard website (see below).

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 9:00-9:50 am; Fridays 9:00-9:50 am.

OTHER INFORMATION: **It is essential that all POLS 207 students regularly consult the POLS 207 Blackboard website**, because – whenever it's necessary to do so – all other additional information about POLS 207 will be posted on the POLS 207 Blackboard website.

COURSE AIMS: The course aims to introduce students to modern American politics, with a particular focus on the evolution and development of America's system of government. POLS 207 will study some of the major themes in US politics by examining the relationships between the different branches of government under the US Constitution.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of the course, students should have a thorough understanding of (1) the key elements of the United States Constitution; (2) the key elements of the United States political system; and (3) the contents of – including the facts and the arguments in – the POLS 207 set text (namely, David McKay, *Essentials of American Government*).

COURSE CONTENT: An outline of the structure and contents of the course can be found on page 3.

COURSE TEXTBOOK: The textbook for the course is David McKay, *Essentials of American Government* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000).

The textbook can be purchased from Vicbooks located in the Student Union Building on Kelburn Campus. Customers can order textbooks online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop the

day after placing an order online. Opening hours are 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays); 10:00 am – 1:00 pm Saturdays. Phone: 463-5515.

ASSESSMENT: There is 100% internal assessment for this course.

- A series of in-class tests, which – as outlined in the booklet entitled *PROSPECTUS 2007: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS* – are worth 40% of the overall grade awarded to students.
- A research paper of *at least* 3,500 words which will count for 60% of the overall grade awarded to POLS 207 students.

The purpose of the in-class tests is to ensure that students acquire an accurate and detailed empirical knowledge of the bases of US government and politics; and the purpose of the research paper is to enable students to explore in considerable detail aspects of modern American politics that interest them.

Full details of the topic for the research paper, and the date on which it is due, are given on pages 3 and 4.

Your research paper must be submitted by its due date. Extensions will be granted only to those who meet the University's *aegrotat* rules (e.g., students with a medical certificate, a family bereavement, or critical personal circumstances beyond their control). A **hard copy** of your research paper must be deposited in the POLS 207 essay box that's outside MY 517, **and an electronic copy** must be emailed to Nigel.Roberts@vuw.ac.nz (remember, of course, to put POLS 207 into the subject line of the email).

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS: POLS 207 has the following mandatory requirements:

- To gain a pass in POLS 207, each student must submit the written work specified for the course – *i.e.*, the research paper – on or by the specified date (subject only to the provisions stated below in the section entitled PENALTIES for the late submission of work).
- To gain a pass in POLS 207, each student must sit at least **eight** of the weekly in-class tests.
- To gain a pass in POLS 207, each student must attend at least **eight** of the weekly tutorials.

A student who has obtained an overall mark of 50% or more, but failed to satisfy any of the three mandatory requirements for the course, will receive a K grade for the course, while a course mark of less than 50% will result in the appropriate fail grade (that is, in a D, E or F grade).

PENALTIES: In accordance with Political Science and International Relations rules, students will be penalised for late submission of written work. There will be a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days. Work that is more than 8 days late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked. However, penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary.

AEGROTATS: Please note that under the revised Examination Statute (Sections 6-10) students may now apply for an aegrotat pass in respect of any item of assessment falling within the last three weeks before the day on which lectures cease (in the case of POLS 207, the starting point for this period is 24 Sept. 2007).

The following rules apply:

- Where a student is not able to sit a test falling within these last three weeks because of illness or injury etc., an alternative test will be arranged where possible. If the student has completed in the view of the course supervisor, sufficient marked assessment relevant to the objectives of the course, an average mark may be offered. Where a student has an essay or other piece of assessment due in the last three weeks, and has a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation, the student will be given an extension;
- If none of the above is available to the student, e.g., if she/he has an ongoing illness, then an aegrotat will be considered. See Examination Statutes 6-10 for a full explanation of the rules governing the provision of aegrotats in these circumstances.

POLS 207 2007 COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIRED READINGS:

Week number	Beginning	Topic	Required readings from the textbook
1	Monday, 9 July	Introduction	Chapters 1 and 2
2	Monday, 16 July	The Constitution; federalism	Chapters 3 and 4
3	Monday, 23 July	The legislative branch of government	Chapters 7 and 8
4	Monday, 30 July	The executive branch of government	Chapter 9
5	Monday, 6 August	The executive branch of government – <i>cont.</i>	Chapter 10
6	Monday, 13 August	The judicial branch of government	Chapter 12
	<i>Monday, 20 August</i>	<i>Mid-trimester break</i>	
	<i>Monday, 27 August</i>	<i>Mid-trimester break</i>	
7	Monday, 3 September	Political parties	Chapter 5
8	Monday, 10 September	Political participation	Chapter 6
9	Monday, 17 September	Pressure groups	Chapter 11
10	Monday, 24 September	Civil rights and civil liberties	Chapter 13
11	Monday, 1 October	Domestic policies	Chapters 14 and 15
12	Monday, 8 October	International policies	Chapter 16 and 17

IN-CLASS TESTS:

You are required to sit a *minimum* of **eight** of the eleven POLS 207 **weekly in-class tests**.

Each of the eleven tests will consist of short answers (including, frequently, answers to multiple choice questions). Each week, the in-class test questions will be drawn from the readings assigned for the week in question. For example, in Week 2 there will be a test on either Tuesday, 17 July, or Friday, 20 July, covering the material in chapters 3 and 4 of David McKay's *Essentials of American Government*.

Although you are required to sit a minimum of eight of the weekly tests, for the purpose of calculating your final grade, only **your four best in-class test results will count towards your final POLS 207 grade**. (In other words, your four best test scores will each contribute a total of 10% towards your final POLS 207 grade, and together they will account for the 40% of your overall POLS 207 grade).

The eleven weekly in-class test series will start in week 2 of the course – that is, in the week beginning Monday, 16 July 2007 – and will continue for the remainder of the trimester.

RESEARCH PAPER:

As indicated on page 2 of this course outline, you are also required to write a research paper of *at least* 3,500 words, and it will count for 60% of your overall POLS 207 grade. **The final version of your research paper has to be handed in by no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, 12 October 2007.**

Before beginning to write your research paper, however, you will need to submit and have approved by me a brief (one page or so) **research paper proposal** containing (a) the title of and brief details about the topic you will be researching, and (b) a reading list for the topic that – in addition to any readings you may want to use from the POLS 207 textbook – includes at least eight books, academic journal articles, and / or chapters in books. Please note, too, that unnecessary and / or overuse of the Internet will be penalised and that wikipedia is not an acceptable source for your research paper. **Your research paper proposal must be emailed to me at any time prior to 5:00 pm on Friday, 17 August 2007.**

RESEARCH PAPER (cont.):

The topic for the research paper is as follows:

In 2006, Radio New Zealand surveyed New Zealanders' views about the "defining moments" in New Zealand's history. What is one of the defining moments in modern American politics (*i.e.*, in post-World War II politics in America)? Why have you chosen it as a defining moment, and what effects – short-term and long-term – has it had on American politics?

Nigel S. Roberts
Monday, 28 May 2007

Workload

Including class contact hours, the standard University guideline for an appropriate amount of work to maintain satisfactory progress in this course is 15 hours per week.

General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at:

www.vuw.ac.nz

Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be available to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is, however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Students with disabilities (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

Student support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. Assistance for specific groups is available from Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.