

JEFFERSON COLLEGE

COURSE SYLLABUS

PSC103

CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES

3 Credit Hours

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PSC103 Current Political Issues

I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

- A. Prerequisite: None
- B. 3 semester hours credit
- C. Current Political Issues focuses on government policies in a variety of areas and their impact on individuals. Policies will include environmental, civil liberties, civil rights, economic, tax and business government relations, foreign policy, and domestic issues, such as health, welfare, education, crime, and others. This course will partially fulfill the social and behavioral science requirements for the Associate of Arts degrees. (F, S, Su)

II. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES/CORRESPONDING ASSESSMENT MEASURES

Expected Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures
Identify the political framework through which public policy decisions are made	Written exam Classroom discussion Quiz
Describe and discuss the influence such factors as our culture, ideologies, social structures, interest groups, and concern for individual rights have on policy making in domestic and foreign policy	Written exam Classroom discussion Quiz
Analyze and evaluate the power relationships between federal, state, and local government	Written exam Classroom discussion Quiz
Understand and discuss the interaction between individuals, groups, and each section and level of government	Written exam Classroom discussion Quiz Research project
Analyze and understand the role of the U.S. in the modern international system	Written exam Classroom discussion Quiz Research project
Integrate information read in the articles and heard in class discussion with information read in current news media	Research project Classroom discussion Quiz Written exam

III. OUTLINE OF TOPICS

- A. Social programs and policies
 - 1. Present social welfare programs
 - a) Social security
 - b) Immigration
 - c) Environment
 - d) Education
 - e) Health care
 - 2. The relationship between federal, state, and local governments regarding each domestic policy area
 - 3. Political reform of domestic policies

- B. Economic programs and policies
 - 1. Budget and tax policies of federal, state, and local government
 - 2. The role of the federal government in overall economic policy
 - a) Fiscal
 - b) Monetary
 - 3. The relationship between government and business/labor
 - 4. Trade policies of the U.S. and other governments

- C. Civil liberties
 - 1. Legislation and Supreme Court decisions
 - a) Freedom of speech
 - b) Freedom of expression
 - c) Freedom of religion
 - d) Right to privacy
 - e) Obscenity
 - f) Right to assemble
 - 2. The role of law in determining the rights of criminal suspects
 - 3. The role of the government in protecting individual rights and liberties

- D. Civil rights
 - 1. History of the civil rights movement in the United States
 - 2. Activities and strategies of civil rights groups
 - a) Race
 - b) Sex
 - c) Religion
 - d) Age
 - e) Disability
 - 3. Legislation and court decisions related to discrimination
 - a) Public facilities
 - b) Employment
 - c) Housing

4. Recent issues, events, and government policies related to minority groups
 - a) African-Americans
 - b) Hispanics
 - c) Native-Americans
 - d) Asian-Americans
 - e) Women's movement
 - f) Gay rights movement
 - g) Disabilities
 - h) Seniors
 - i) Juveniles

- E. Foreign and defense policy
 1. American foreign policy from independence to the post 9-11 world
 2. The 2000 transition from Cold War focus to a multipolar approach on international relations
 - a) Economic influences
 - b) Military influences
 - c) Non-governmental influences
 3. Instruments used to conduct foreign policy
 - a) State Department
 - b) CIA
 - c) United Nations
 4. Goals and ideals of U.S. foreign and defense policy
 - a) Immigration
 - b) Human rights
 - c) International trade
 - d) Economics issues

IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Classroom lecture
- B. Class discussion of text and current events
- C. Video and other media presentations
- D. Preparation of a research paper/project related to a current political topic (library research)
- E. Guest speakers

V. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

No textbook required; articles for each topic are posted on class webpage

VI. REQUIRED MATERIALS

None

VII. SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES

Study guide optional

VIII. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Four exams--multiple-choice and essay questions
- B. Research paper/project related to a current political topic (library research)
- C. Classroom attendance and participation in discussion
- D. Quizzes

IX. ADA AA STATEMENT

Any student requiring special accommodations should inform the instructor and the Coordinator of Disability Support Services (Library; phone 636-797-3169).

X. ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

All students are responsible for complying with campus policies, as stated in the Student Handbook (see College website, <http://www.jeffco.edu>).

XI. ATTENDANCE STATEMENT

Students earn their financial aid by regularly attending and actively participating in their coursework. If a student does not actively participate, he/she may have to return financial aid funds. Consult the College Catalog or a Student Financial Services representative for more details.

XII. OUTSIDE OF CLASS ACADEMICALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES

The U.S. Department of Education mandates that students be made aware of expectations regarding coursework to be completed outside the classroom. Students are expected to spend substantial time outside of class meetings engaging in academically related activities, such as reading, studying, and completing assignments. Specifically, time spent on academically-related activities outside of class, combined with time spent in class meetings, is expected to be a minimum of 37.5 hours over the duration of the term for each credit hour.