

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered Department of Asian and International Studies
with effect from Semester A 2017/18**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: U.S. Politics and Society

Course Code: AIS4130

Course Duration: One semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: B4

Arts and Humanities

Proposed Area:
(for GE courses only)

Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

Science and Technology

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Precursors:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Equivalent Courses:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Exclusive Courses:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course introduces students to major political issues and institutions of U.S. politics within a broader societal context. It analyses the global impact of the U.S.'s foreign policy, its economic and environmental policies as well as its cultural influence. It will examine how U.S. politics has become strikingly disharmonious and its politics increasingly polarized. Students in the course will explore how American society became increasingly divided after the civil rights, anti-Vietnam war, and countercultural movements of the 1960s (with the Democratic Party moving left) as well as the resurgence of the religious right and economic libertarians in the 1970s and 1980s (leading the Republicans to become more conservative). Such political and party divisions, in turn, reflect deep social cleavages along class, racial, gender, generational, regional, and religious lines. The course will also explore how the U.S. as a 'lonely' superpower confronts increasingly assertive regional powers. Particular focus will be put on U.S.-Chinese relations. Theories of social cleavages, of key American political institutions (the presidency, Congress, the judiciary, political parties, etc), and well as of international relations will be applied by students to engage in problem solving exercises of problems facing the U.S. that are relevant to many other economically advanced societies, including Hong Kong.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs [#]	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Identify and critically evaluate key issues in U.S. politics and society	20%			
2.	Explain political behaviour, institutional processes, social developments, and policy outcomes using relevant theories and models.	20%			
3.	Appraise and critique arguments about political processes and social change in the U.S.	20%			
4.	Discover and innovate by demonstrating an ability to apply factual and theoretical knowledge to a problem-based activity.	20%			
5.	Analyse and synthesise information and communicate it effectively.	20%			
		100%			

* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

[#] Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5		
CILO 1-3, 5	Lectures and class discussions	√	√	√		√		
CILO 4	Memorandum (to a leading politician, policy maker, social activist, etc.)				√			
CILO 3-4	Group presentations			√	√			
CILO 1-5	Quiz	√	√	√	√	√		
CILO 2-5	Short written assignment		√	√	√	√		

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5			
Continuous Assessment: ____%								
Attendance and participation in group discussions	√	√					10%	
Short reports and presentations		√	√	√			30%	
Memorandum				√			30%	
Quiz	√	√	√	√	√		30%	
Examination: ____% (duration: _____, if applicable)								
* The weightings should add up to 100%.							100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
Attendance and participation in group discussions	Students are expected to attend all lectures and tutorials. Failure to do so will deduct marks. Participating in class discussions with quality interventions will add marks.	Excellent participation in lecture and tutorial discussions.	Good participation in lecture and tutorial discussions.	Adequate participation in lecture and tutorial discussions.	Limited participation in lecture and tutorial discussions.	Inadequate participation in lecture and tutorial discussions.
Short reports and presentations	Need to show capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and detailed research of a topic.	Excellent capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Good capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Adequate capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Limited capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Inadequate capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.
Memorandum	Need to show capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and detailed research of a topic.	Excellent capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Good capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Adequate capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Limited capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.	Inadequate capacity to persuade, critical thinking, and effort in researching a topic.
Quiz	Need to master the topics covered in class, and a capacity to critically reflect on them.	Excellent knowledge of the topics covered in class and capacity to critically reflect on them.	Good knowledge of the topics covered in class and capacity to critically reflect on them.	Adequate knowledge of the topics covered in class and capacity to critically reflect on them.	Limited knowledge of the topics covered in class and capacity to critically reflect on them.	Inadequate knowledge of the topics covered in class and capacity to critically reflect on them.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

U.S. politics, international studies, comparative politics, social cleavages, race, class, gender, religion, region, political parties, the presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court, the judiciary, interest groups, social policy, environmental policy, gay rights, abortion, multiculturalism, foreign policy.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Aldrich, J. H., 1995. <i>Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2.	Alesina, A. & Rosenthal, H., 1995. <i>Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3.	Bailey, M. A. & Maltmann, F., 2011. <i>The Constrained Court: Law, Politics, and the Decisions Justices Make</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press.
4.	Bartels, L. M., 2008. <i>Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
5.	Black, E. & Black, M., 2008. <i>Divided Government: The Ferocious Struggle for Power in American Politics</i> . New York: Simon and Schuster.
6.	Edwards, G.C. 2012. <i>Overreach: Leadership in the Obama Presidency</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press.
7.	Evans, M., 2011. Power and Paradox: Asian Geopolitics and Sino-American Relations in the 21st Century. <i>Orbis</i> , 55(1), pp. 85-113.
8.	Frank, T., 2004. <i>What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America</i> . New York: Henry Holt.
9.	Gelman, A., et al., 2008. <i>Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way they Do</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press.
10.	Holbrook, T. M., 1996. <i>Do Campaigns Matter?</i> Thousand Oaks: Sage.
11.	Huntington, S. P., 1983. <i>American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University.
12.	Huntington, S. P., 1999. The Lonely Superpower. <i>Foreign Affairs</i> , 78(2), pp. 35-49.
13.	Kluger, R., 2004. <i>Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality</i> . New York: Vintage.
14.	Lim, E., 2014. <i>The Lovers' Quarrel: The Two Foundings and American Political Development</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press.
15.	Lipset, S. M. & Marks, G., 2001. <i>Why it Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States</i> . New York: W.W. Norton.
16.	Mayhew, D., 2002. <i>America's Congress: Actions in the Public Sphere, James Madison through Newt Gingrich</i> . New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
17.	Menza, J. & Brooks, C., 1999. <i>Social Cleavages and Political Change: Voter Alignment and U.S. Party Coalitions</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
18.	Reilly, B. 2013. Presidentialism reconsidered: The relevance of an old debate. <i>Ethnopolitics</i> 12 (1): pp. 82–85.
19.	Skowronek, S., 1997. <i>The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University.
20.	Skowronek, S., 2008. <i>Presidential leadership in political time: Reprise and reappraisal</i> . Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas.
21.	Sinclair, B., 2006. <i>Party Wars: Polarization and the Politics of National Policy Making</i> .

	Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press.
22.	Singh, R., 2008. <i>Governing America: The Politics of a Divided Democracy</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
23.	Smith, R. A., 2007. <i>The American Anomaly: U.S. Politics and Government in Comparative Perspective</i> . London: Routledge.
24.	Wilson, G. K., 1998. <i>Only in America? The Politics of the United States in Comparative Perspective</i> . Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House.
25.	Wooldridge, A. & Micklethwait, J., 2004. <i>The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America</i> . New York: Penguin.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

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