

COMMON COURSE OUTLINE

Political Science POLS 1130 Introduction to U.S. Politics

COURSE DESCRIPTION

1. Credits 3
2. Lecture hours/week 3 lecture per week, no lab
3. Prerequisites none
4. Co-requisites none
5. MnTC goals
 - #5: History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - #9 Ethical and Civic Responsibility
6. Description:

Considers fundamentals of U.S. politics including constitutional principles, organization of government, basic freedoms, civil liberties, civil rights, political cultures, parties and interest groups, campaigns and elections, and national controversies. (From *2013-2014 Catalog*)

DATES LAST REVISED: March 2014, July 2015, November 2017 [for Transfer Pathway submission].

DATES LAST REVIEWED: August 2018

OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

Constitutional principles

- liberty, representation, democracy, constitutionalism
- checks and balances, separation of powers
- federalism
- First Amendment freedoms
- civil liberties, civil rights
- due process, equal protection

Political values

- liberty, order, equality
- ideologies
- political socialization

Political actors and activities

- media: media coverage and political information
- interest groups: lobbying
- political parties: organizing and campaigning

- polling
- campaigning and voting
- budgeting

Political institutions of government

- legislature
- executive
- courts
- bureaucracies

Political values in action

- civil liberties
- civil rights

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Assess U.S. government institutions, employing a variety of political science perspectives.
2. Assess U.S. government processes, employing a variety of political science perspectives.
3. Assess U.S. political values and culture, employing a variety of political science perspectives.
4. Reflect critically on one's own values as a citizen.
5. Develop skills that enable participation in public life.
6. Evaluate the historical evolution and current character of U.S. political values, institutions, processes, and conditions (MnTC goal 5b)
7. Assess how political values, activities, and institutions shape individual lives, public policies, and political, legal, economic, social, historical, and cultural conditions (MnTC goals 5a and 5c)
8. Illustrate how a variety of perspectives and motives – such as political-party preference and interest-group influence – can differently explain political, legal, economic, social, historical, and cultural conditions (MnTC goals 5c, 5d, and 9d)
9. Express, apply, and assess prominent national and personal political values (MnTC goals 9a)
10. Apply such core concepts as *politics*, *democracy*, *liberty*, *due process*, and *equal protection* to a variety of issues in U.S. politics (MnTC goals 9b)
11. Exercise and assess the rights, responsibilities, and ethical features of active citizenship (MnTC goals 9c and 9e)

METHODS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

May include diagnostic, formative, and summative versions of: answering questions on exams and quizzes; long-form writing (such as writing reactions to political events and conditions, evaluating public policy, advocating policy, writing research essays and political analyses);

short-form writing (such as in-class essays, book reviews, reflective writing, opinion pieces, Letters to the Editor, or other brief commentary); submitting a writing portfolio; and participating in group activities, group projects, classroom discussion, classroom presentations, classroom activities, oral presentations, or debates.

SPECIAL INFORMATION: None

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION about MnTC GOALS

From http://www.mntransfer.org/students/plan/s_mntc.php and links (viewed July 2015)

MnTC goals:

#5: History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Goal: To increase students' knowledge of how historians and social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events, and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity.

Students will be able to:

- a. Employ the methods and data that historians and social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
- b. Examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures.
- c. Use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
- d. Develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.

#9: Ethical and Civic Responsibility

Goal: To develop students' capacity to identify, discuss, and reflect upon the ethical dimensions of political, social, and personal life and to understand the ways in which they can exercise responsible and productive citizenship. While there are diverse views of social justice or the common good in a pluralistic society, students should learn that responsible citizenship requires them to develop skills to understand their own and others' positions, be part of the free exchange of ideas, and function as public-minded citizens.

Students will be able to:

- a. Examine, articulate, and apply their own ethical views.
- b. Understand and apply core concepts (e.g. politics, rights and obligations, justice, liberty) to specific issues.
- c. Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and scientific issues.
- d. Recognize the diversity of political motivations and interests of others.
- e. Identify ways to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.