

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

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School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

This course introduces you to the institutions, practices and principles of representative democracy and justice, within a comparative context. You will learn about the Australian constitutional framework, the separation of powers and the judicial system, the "unwritten constitution" of governing conventions, and human rights. You will come to appreciate Australian electoral systems and behaviour, as well as the institutions of Prime Minister, Cabinet and political leadership. The course considers the role of political parties, the media, and questions of citizenship in regard to sex and gender, race, and class. These elements of Australian representative democracy, as well as the controversial issues that they cover, are compared to their counterparts in other countries. This course is predicated on the assumption that democracy is full of paradoxes and contradictions that need to be understood in order to change the world.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. employ key concepts, principles, and theories in analysis of key institutions of representative democracy
2. analyse the political system and political issues in Australia in comparison with their counterparts in other representative democracies in light of leading theories of democracy and justice
3. develop structured and complex arguments that include (a) critical evaluation of concepts and institutions and (b) addressing research questions by relating concepts and institutions to evidence in Australia and other countries
4. practise ethical scholarship and develop a commitment to the principles of academic integrity appropriate to undergraduate study in politics

Teaching Strategies

Rationale

This course is designed to give you a sound knowledge of central theories and practices required for studies in political sciences. It will equip you with the primary communication, theory and research skills to enable further research in politics and international relations. The course sets out to engage and provoke discussion of modern politics in contemporary Australian and comparative settings. It does so using lectures and tutorials. You will be required to actively participate in small and large group tasks, and in writing assignments.

Teaching Strategies

Learning outcomes are addressed through a weekly format of a two-hour lecture and one-hour tutorial.

Assessment

Students are expected to submit written work for the course in electronic form, via Turnitin in Moodle. Please submit as a word file (that is, .doc or .docx, NOT .pdf). UNSW provides support for students in using TurnItIn, at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/turnitin-support>. This webpage includes information on how to generate and interpret originality reports in TurnItIn. Support is also available from the central TurnItIn Help Center at http://turnitin.com/en_us/support/help-center.

A suggested template for the essay, and a marking rubric, will be supplied by the Course Coordinator. It is the responsibility of students to keep a copy of their work in case of loss. Submitted work will be marked and returned electronically, which enables feedback to be much more thorough (and legible). If you have any difficulties with electronic submission, please see the Course Coordinator as soon as possible.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Tests	40%	Week 4 and Week 10	1, 2
Tutorial work	10%	26 April	1, 2
Essay	50%	26 April	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Tests

Length: Responses to questions

Details:

Two online tests each worth 20%, will be held in Week 4 and Week 10 of the semester. The tests will comprise short answer questions together with a longer response on key themes and institutions covered in the course. Each test will be marked within 2 weeks of submission and you will receive numerical grades.

Additional details:

You are required to do the assigned readings every week as the basis for tutorial discussion. These readings also form the basis for online quizzes, in Week 4 and Week 10. The quizzes require you to demonstrate that you have read and tried to understand the assigned passages, as well as lecture and tutorial material.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Tutorial work

Length: 500 words

Details:

You will be assessed on your work in and contribution to tutorials, including a reflective final report to be submitted at the end of semester. You will be advised of the marking criteria in the course guide and in lectures. There will be opportunities throughout the semester to discuss your progress in class discussion and to be provided a provisional assessment grade and comment.

Additional details:

One of the aims of tutorials is to develop your *spoken* competence and skills, that is, in argument and discussion with others on the problems we consider. Your participation will be appraised according to the regularity and quality of your participation, the quality of your preparation for tutorials, and your willingness to contribute to discussions with your fellow students. As part of the assessment for tutorial participation, you are required to write a short report on your contribution to tutorial discussion and argument. The report should be approximately 500 words in length, and is to be handed in by 1 May. I shall take your report into consideration in assigning you a mark for tutorial participation. Please note that you can only improve your mark through your report, but that you will not be assigned a mark for tutorial participation unless you do hand in a report.

Your report should be based on *your* experience of tutorials: it should not be an evaluation of your teacher/s (there will be other opportunities for you to do this!). In your report, you should try to highlight what you see as the strengths of your contribution to tutorials, and what you see as the reasons for any weaknesses in your contribution. Some of the other things you might mention include the preparation you have done for the tutorials in terms of both reading and thinking. You can also note whether the readings clarified questions for you – or unsettled, disturbed, confused, perplexed or inspired you. And finally, remember that valuable and valued participation in tutorials (or any other discussion for that matter!) is not a matter of monopolising the conversation, nor of speaking the loudest or the longest. Valuable participation can also include how your own thoughts and words contributed to an intelligent and imaginative understanding and/or resolution of the questions being discussed. I understand and appreciate that different students begin from different levels of understanding and confidence. There is variation in the form of tutorials from week to week, and most students find that they are able to participate effectively in small-group discussions in particular.

You might find it useful to keep a weekly diary and to draw on that as the basis of your final report on your tutorial participation. Students will be advised of the marking criteria in the course guide and in lectures. There will be opportunities throughout the semester to discuss their progress in class discussion and to be provided a provisional assessment grade and comment.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Essay

Details:

You will write a research essay of 2500 words which addresses one of the topics discussed in the lecture and tutorial program. This will enable assessment of acquired knowledge as well as feedback on writing

and research skills.

You will receive individual written feedback and a numerical grade within three weeks of submission. The feedback sheet/rubric will be available at the start of the course so that you can work towards specified standards.

This essay is the final assessment of the course.

Additional details:

An essay of around 2500 words must be submitted to the Turnitin essay box by 11.59pm on Monday 26 April. There is no hardcopy submission of the essay. You will not be penalised for going over the word limit, but please remember that it is important to be succinct and to avoid being long-winded in all written work. If the comments on your written work are not sufficiently helpful, we can of course discuss your ideas and questions.

Essay questions are based on course topics, and a list of questions will be provided to students. You are encouraged to use a specific topic or topics as the basis of your essay, or as case studies, or as examples. Possible ways to approach the essay will be considered in greater detail in lectures and tutorials. Students will receive individual written feedback and a numerical grade within two weeks of submission. The feedback sheet/rubric will be available to students at the start of the course so that they can work towards specified standards.

Essays submitted late will be penalised unless an extension has been granted on medical or compassionate grounds, *in advance* of the due date. The pressure of other course work is not acceptable as sufficient grounds for an extension. In making any request for an extension, be guided by your own principled sense of fairness. The penalty for late submission without permission is 3% (of the perfect mark) per day late (not including weekends). Late work will not be accepted once marked assignments have been returned, whether an extension has been granted or not.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 15 February - 19 February		<p>General introduction: Orientation and questions. The lecture in this week covers organisational matters including the course outline, objectives and organization. Assessment requirements will be discussed in detail. Tutorial times will be confirmed, and office hours announced. The lecture also provides an overview of the Australian political system and its principles. Tutorials begin in Week 1. Useful background reading includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Australian Constitution• 'Introduction to 21st-Century Australian Politics', chapter 1 of <i>Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges</i> ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
Week 2: 22 February - 26 February		<p>The Australian constitutional framework: Democracy and representation. The lecture explains the structure and principles of the Australian constitution, and the Westminster system of responsibility. The various types of parliamentary offices and procedures are explained in relation to the Senate and the House as representative (and democratic) institutions. The lecture also explains their relation to various theories of representation, including authorisation, delegation, representation and the contestable idea of 'mandate'. You should be able to outline the ways in which the Australian constitution distributes power between the arms of government and limits the overall power of government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alan Fenna, 'The Australian System of Government', Chapter 2 of <i>Government and Politics in Australia</i> 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna et al. (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013)• Stephen Harrington, 'Australians Couldn't

		<p>Care Less about Politics? Really?', <i>The Conversation</i> 4 February 2016, https://theconversation.com/australians-couldnt-care-less-about-politics-really-53875</p>
<p>Week 3: 1 March - 5 March</p>		<p>Separation of powers and the judicial system. The lecture outlines the ways in which power is distributed between the arms of government and how the judiciary limits the power of parliament. The lecture considers whether judicial review is consistent with democracy, and its relation to parliamentary sovereignty and the will of the people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Turner, 'The High Court of Australia and Political Science: A Revised Historiography and New Research Agenda' <i>Australian Journal of Political Science</i> 50.2 (2015) 347-364 • 'The Political Rulebook: The Australian Constitution and the High Court', chapter 5 of <i>Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges</i> ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
<p>Week 4: 8 March - 12 March</p>		<p>The unwritten constitution: Conventions and human rights. The lecture explores how Australia's written constitution operates in conjunction with various conventions and customs. The idea of an unwritten constitution is explored through questions of responsibility. Although Australia's constitution does not include a 'bill of rights', the High Court has upheld various guarantees consistent with Australia's international obligations in regard to the UN structure of human rights, and the lecture looks at the fabric of these protections and how they relate to majoritarian rule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Summers, 'Parliament and Responsible Government', Chapter 3 of <i>Government and Politics in Australia</i> 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna, Jane Robbins and John Summers (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013) • Robert French, 'Human Rights Protection in Australia and the United Kingdom: Contrasts and Comparisons' <i>Brief</i> 42.2 (March 2015) 14-21 <p>NB First online quiz this week!</p>

<p>Week 5: 15 March - 19 March</p>		<p>Electoral systems and behaviour. The lecture explains the electoral system in terms of the idea that there is no clear 'democratic principle' to guide voting systems, no one way of assuring 'the people's will', which is taken to be the fundamental idea of democracy. An explanation is provided of compulsory voting, as well as first-past-the-post, preferential and proportional voting systems, with their advantages and disadvantages. The different types of voters and voting behaviour, and attempts to ensure fairness in the electoral system, are set out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Costar, 'The Electoral System', Chapter 9 of <i>Government and Politics in Australia</i> 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna, Jane Robbins and John Summers (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013) • Haydon Manning, 'Voters and Voting', Chapter 14 of <i>Government and Politics in Australia</i> 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna, Jane Robbins and John Summers (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013)
<p>Week 6: 22 March - 26 March</p>		<p>Flexibility week.</p>
<p>Week 7: 29 March - 2 April</p>		<p>Prime Ministers, Cabinet & leadership. The lecture this week explains the role of the prime minister (PM), his or her Cabinet and their relation to the Westminster Model, in the context of the fact that there is no mention of the PM in the constitution and no job specification to follow. The job relies on what an individual makes of it and so this lecture also examines fluid concepts of political leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Executive: Functions, Power and Accountability', Chapter 4 of <i>Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges</i> ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) • James Walter, 'Political Leadership', Chapter 15 of <i>Government and Politics in Australia</i> 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna, Jane Robbins and John Summers (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013)
<p>Week 8: 5 April - 9 April</p>		<p>Political parties. This lecture examines the history and character of the two major parties in Australian politics, the Liberal-National and the Labor Party. The main beliefs and commitments of these parties</p>

		<p>will be explored, and how they affect the conduct of government. Minor parties are frequently cited as means for refreshing the political system with new ideas, new issues and new faces (an argument of better representation). Their supporters often portray them as ‘real democracy’ and ‘new politics’ but the parties often come and go and have difficulty with pragmatic politics. The role of the minor parties in democracy is explained in relation to pluralism, representation, majoritarianism versus minority views, and balance of power, with emphasis on the expanded role of the Senate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Origins and Evolution of the Major Parties’, chapter 8 of <i>Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges</i> ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) • ‘A Growing Influence: Minor Parties and Independents’, chapter 9 of <i>Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges</i> ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
<p>Week 9: 12 April - 16 April</p>		<p>Citizenship: Sex and gender in politics. This lecture looks at how citizenship, the political system and the conduct of politics in Australia are gendered. It examines the representation of women in Australian politics and patterns of change, and how women’s presence in parliament changes or does not change the way politics is conducted. The example of Julia Gillard is used to reflect on such issues. The lecture also provides a general introduction to measures against sexual and other forms of discrimination in Australia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennifer Curtin, ‘Gender, Politics and the Representation of Women’, Chapter 19 of <i>Government and Politics in Australia</i> 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna, Jane Robbins and John Summers (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013) • Marian Sawer, ‘Misogyny and Misrepresentation: Women in Australian Parliaments’ <i>Political Science</i> 65.1 (2013) 105-117

Week 10: 19 April - 23 April

The media and politics. The lecture examines the historic role of the media in representative democracies in connecting voters to politicians and parties but also providing watchdogs on government. We also explore uses of media by political parties in the creation of image and message. We will examine the arguments used to claim the media and public relations have power in Australia, and the difficulties in making such claims.

- 'The Fourth Estate: News Media in the Digital Age', chapter 11 of *Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges* ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
- Ian Ward, '[Mapping the Australian PR State](#)' in *Government Communication in Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 3-18

Conclusion and farewells. The lecture also tries to draw together more explicitly the different themes and threads of the course around themes of democracy, representation and justice.

- Oliver Hidalgo, 'Conceptual History and Politics: Is the Concept of Democracy Essentially Contested?' *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 4.2 (2008) 176-201
- Margaret Canovan, 'Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy' *Political Studies* 47.1 (1999) 2-16

NB Second online quiz this week!

ESSAY DUE BY MONDAY 26 APRIL

TUTORIAL REPORT DUE BY MONDAY 26 APRIL

Resources

Prescribed Resources

The core textbooks for the course are *Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges* ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), and *Government and Politics in Australia* 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna et al. (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013).

Recommended Resources

Tutorials presuppose that you have read and made an honest attempt to understand the required reading for each week, which is starred in the course guide below.

The core texts for the course are *Australia Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges* ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), and *Government and Politics in Australia* 10th ed., ed. Alan Fenna et al. (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2013).

A supplement to these texts is the Politics section of *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/au/politics>, which provides academic commentary on latest events in a more journalistic style. For your own benefit you should keep up to date each week with coverage of Australian issues. It is also important that as citizens, and students of politics, you read at least one good news source daily (the *Guardian* [open source] or the *New York Times* is adequate), as well as other sources that provide information and argument about the state of the world.

Journal websites often carry information on the most viewed and most cited articles; these are likely to be interesting and often influential contributions. Google Scholar will also point you to articles that have cited a particular article and hence are related to the topic.

Please feel free to ask the Course Coordinator for suggestions about other books, articles or websites that might help you to gain understanding in specific areas of interest to you. **And in general, do not allow yourself to fall behind with work because of not asking for help!**

- **Useful online sources include**

[Google](#) and [Google Scholar](#)

Of course! You can set up the preferences to link Google Scholar to the UNSW Library (<http://www.library.unsw.edu.au>) even when you are not on campus: go to Google Scholar> settings> library links, and enter 'University of New South Wales' in the box for 'Library'.

[Australian Parliament](#)

This site provides access to debates, legislation, committees, parliamentary who's who etc., with a digital search of records from 1901 at [ParlInfo](#), and invaluable publications at the [Parliamentary Library](#). Each of the Australian state and territory governments also has its own website.

[High Court of Australia](#)

The Court's home page offers decisions, transcripts, recent speeches, biographies of the judges, etc.

[Australian Legal Information Institute \(AustLII\)](#)

This site provides access to an extensive selection of primary and secondary Australian legal and political materials, and has links to many international legal databases and electronic journals.

[United Nations](#)

The UN site offers access to documents, decisions and everything else to do with the UN. As the site is gigantic, it is sometimes quicker to search for UN documents using [Google](#).

[The White House](#)

The official website for the White House and the 46th President of the USA.

[Supreme Court of the United States](#), and [Oyez](#)

These sites offers US Supreme Court decisions as well as lots of other material, eg access to oral arguments, transcripts and cases.

[European Parliament](#), and [Council of Europe](#)

Websites for the two main governing bodies in Europe.

[United Kingdom Parliament](#)

This site offers access to both political and legal decisions, plus all the usual stuff on government. There are also separate websites for the [Scottish Government \(Riaghaltas na h-Alba\)](#), the [Welsh Government \(Llywodraeth Cymru\)](#), and the [Northern Ireland Executive](#).

Many other useful databases are available via the [UNSW Library website](#).

Course Evaluation and Development

UNSW provides support for students in using TurnItIn to receive feedback at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-use-turnitin-within-moodle>. Please access this page to learn how to retrieve grades and comments on your assignment.

Assessment task	Feedback mechanism	Feedback date
Online quiz	Turnitin mark	By Week 6
Online quiz	Turnitin mark	By 10 May
Major essay	Mark and comments	By 10 May
Tutorial participation + report	Mark and comments	By 10 May

At UNSW, student evaluative feedback is gathered periodically using, among other means, the Course

and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process. Student feedback on this course is gathered through CATEI evaluations at the end of the course, and at any time students are welcome to email or speak to the course convenor about questions or problems. It is sometimes the case that students understand the significance of some of the problems considered only after the course is formally completed, and students are also always welcome to contact the course convenor after classes have finished, even many years after the course has ended. All feedback is carefully considered, reflected upon, and used to evaluate and refine all aspects of the course.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

Image Credit

<https://www.theage.com.au/ftimages/2007/10/14/1192300596647.html>

CRICOS

CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.