1. **Title of the module**

POLI6170 (PO617) Contemporary Politics and Government in the USA

1. **Division which will be responsible for management of the module**

Division of Human and Social Sciences

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 5

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

30 credits (15 ECTS)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Autumn and Spring

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

None

1. **The courses of study to which the module contributes**

The module is open to all students on the School of Pol/IR undergraduate degrees and as an elective module.

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**

8.1 Have a thorough knowledge of the structure of the US governmental system;

8.2 Describe and account for the operation of the US’s political institutions, including those ‘intermediate’ institutions (parties, media etc) that link citizens to their government;

8.3 Understand how the individual institutions interact and work together (or not, as the case may be);

8.4 Comprehend the relationship between government institutions and the US’s cultural and societal attributes;

8.5 Understand how the governmental structure and political culture interact to produce certain policy outcomes;

8.6 Identify and analyse some of the major political problems facing the US at the dawn of a new century.

1. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**

9.1 Engage critically with political phenomena, including the vocabulary, concepts, theories and methods of political debate;

9.2 Examine and evaluate different interpretations of political issues, events and solutions to problems;

9.3 Describe, evaluate and apply different approaches involved in collecting, analysing and presenting political information;

9.4 Develop reasoned arguments, synthesise relevant information and exercise critical judgement;

9.5 Communicate effectively;

9.6 Work independently, demonstrating initiative, self-organisation and time-management.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

POLI6170 offers a comprehensive introduction to the politics and national government of the United States. The course is divided into four inter-linked parts. In Part I students will be introduced to the ‘foundations’ of the US political system. Students will examine the history of the republic, its economy and society, the values and beliefs American people subscribe to, and the basic structure of the political system. Part I therefore provides essential knowledge upon which the rest of the course builds. In Part II students will examine those ‘intermediate’ institutions (interest groups, parties, elections and the media) that link people to their government. We will look at why Americans vote the way they do; at the role US parties play and their relevance to Americans’ lives; at whether interest groups have usurped the role of parties; and at whether the media exacerbate cynicism about politicians and the wider political system. In Part III students focus on the three institutions of the federal government: the Congress, Presidency and Supreme Court. We will examine both the institution that is Congress and the individuals that are elected to it and ask whether they have compatible goals or not, and whether Congress has usurped some of the roles and power of the presidency. Similarly, we will examine the extent to which the Presidency is an institution in decline or resurgent in the new century. Finally, we will examine the political and legal role that the Supreme Court plays in the modern US political system. In the fourth and final part of the course, students focus on the policymaking process in the US. We will look at how and why policy is made, and examine the extent to which the policy solutions produced by the political system are optimal.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

* David McKay, American Politics and Society, 9th edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017)
* Gillian Peele, Bruce Cain, Jonathan Herbert and Andrew Wroe, (eds.), Developments in American Politics 9 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021)
* Russell Duncan and Joseph Goddard, Contemporary United States, 5th edition (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total contact hours: 44

Private study hours: 256

Total study hours: 300

1. **Assessment methods**
   1. Main assessment methods

* Exam, 3 hours, 50%
* Essay 1, 2500 words, 25%
* Essay 2, 2500 words, 25%

13.2 Reassessment methods

Reassessment Instrument: 100% coursework

1. **Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section12) and methods of assessment (section 13)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Lectures | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  |  |
| Seminars | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essays | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Exam | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

a) Accessible resources and curriculum

b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

Examples of international contexts and organisations will be used where applicable to illustrate the subject content. Students will have the opportunity to develop the ability to think globally and have an understanding of international cultures through working with team members and students within their cohort, from diverse range of backgrounds.

**DIVISIONAL USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts CLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| 21.07.21 | Minor | September 2021 | 8,9,11,13,14 | No |
|  |  |  |  |  |