

ARTS2818

Australian Politics

Term 3, 2022



Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Helen Pringle	h.pringle@unsw.edu.au	By appointment, in person or via Teams/zoom	MB 145	9065 5302

School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

Room 159

Morven Brown C20

email: soss@unsw.edu.au

phone: 02 9385 1807

Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW Arts, Design and Architecture Kensington and Paddington campuses are built on Aboriginal Lands. We pay our respects to the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples who are the Custodians of these lands. We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.



Image courtesy of the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous [UNSW's Indigenous strategy](#)

Course Details

Units of Credit 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).

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 task	Weight	Due Date	Course Learning Outcomes Assessed
1. Test	30%	14/10/2022 11:59 PM	1, 2
2. Tutorial work	10%	21/11/2022 11:59 PM	1, 2
3. Essay	60%	21/11/2022 11:59 PM	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment 1: Test

Assessment length: Responses to questions

Due date: 14/10/2022 11:59 PM

One online test each worth 30%, will be held in Week 5 of the semester. The test will comprise short answer questions together with a longer response on key themes and institutions covered in the course. The test will be marked within 2 weeks of submission and you will receive numerical grades.

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

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 the online quiz. The quiz requires you to demonstrate that you have read and tried to understand the assigned passages, as well as lecture and tutorial material.

Assessment 2: Tutorial work

Assessment length: 500 words

Due date: 21/11/2022 11:59 PM

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.

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

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. 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.

Assessment 3: Essay

Assessment length: 2501 words

Due date: 21/11/2022 11:59 PM

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.

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

Additional details

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.

Attendance Requirements

The School of Social Sciences expects that students will attend and participate actively in 100% of learning and teaching activities (henceforth 'classes', to include lectures, tutorials, seminars, labs, online activities and so on). If you attend fewer than 80% of classes, you may be refused final assessment. This means that if you do not attend at least 80% of possible classes your final assignment or exam may receive a mark of zero. You are responsible for keeping track of your attendance and contacting your course convenor immediately if you are concerned about your attendance record and its impact on your ability to complete the course successfully.

For the purpose of attendance monitoring, the final assessment for this course is an essay worth 60% of your overall grade for this course. This is the assessment item that will be graded at zero if you do not meet the attendance requirement for this course.

For this course, attendance is calculated as shown in the table below:

Learning activity	Monitoring mechanism	Minimum attendance requirement
Tutorials	A roll is taken. Moreover, attendance affects your ability to do well in all assessment tasks.	8/10

If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, or leave class with more than 15 minutes remaining, you may be recorded as absent. If such a penalty is imposed, you will be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours. Attempts to falsify attendance records will be treated as student misconduct under the *Student Misconduct Procedure*.

Please note: Lectures and tutorials are conducted in person and online. As far as possible, we will try to follow activities as if we were engaged in face-to-face teaching and learning. Back-up arrangements (Plan B) are in place in case of Covid or similar complications.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
O week: 5 September - 9 September		Orientation Week: there are no lectures or tutorials this week. Lectures and tutorials begin in Week 1.
Week 1: 12 September - 16 September		General introduction: Orientation and questions. The lecture this week covers organisational matters including the course guide, objectives and organization. Assessment requirements will be discussed in detail. Tutorial times will be confirmed, and consultation

		<p>availability announced. The lecture also provides an overview of the Australian political system and its principles. Tutorials also 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>Australian Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Old Institutions, New Challenges</i> ed. Glenn Gefford et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
<p>Week 2: 19 September - 23 September</p>		<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>
<p>Week 3: 26 September - 30 September</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>
<p>Week 4: 3 October - 7 October</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</p>

		the fabric of these protections and how they relate to majoritarian rule.
Week 5: 10 October - 14 October		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.
	Assessment: Test	Due by Friday 14 October
Week 6: 17 October - 21 October		Flexibility Week. There are no formal classes this week.
Week 7: 24 October - 28 October		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 depends partly on what an individual makes of it and so this lecture also examines fluid concepts of political leadership.
Week 8: 31 October - 4 November		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 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>Week 9: 7 November - 11 November</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 as Prime Minister is used to reflect on such issues. The lecture also provides a general introduction to measures against sex discrimination, and other forms of discrimination, in Australia.</p>
<p>Week 10: 14 November - 18 November</p>		<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Assessment: Tutorial work Due by Monday 21 November 11:59PM
 Assessment: Essay Due by Monday 21 November 11:59PM

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Textbooks of use in the course include *Australian 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* 11th ed., ed. Alan Fenna and Rob Manwaring (Sydney: Pearson Australia, 2021). A very useful reference work is *The Oxford Handbook of Australian Politics*, ed. Jenny M. Lewis and Anne Tiernan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

Recommended Resources

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

The Politics section of *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/au/politics>, 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 our 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](#) (off and on).

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	Within two weeks
Major essay	Mark and comments	Within two weeks
Tutorial participation + report	Mark and comments	Within two weeks

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, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Late Submission Penalty

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per calendar day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five calendar days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request [Special Consideration](#) as early as possible before the deadline. Support with [Time Management is available here](#).

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 includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original 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 for the purpose of them plagiarising, 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.

The UNSW Academic Skills support offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. 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 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

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided).

Please see: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines> for essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;
- Dean's List;
- review of results;
- credit transfer;
- cross-institutional study and exchange;
- examination information;
- enrolment information;
- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;

And other essential academic information.

Image Credit

https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://www.theage.com.au/ftimages/2007/10/14/1192300596647.html

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