PSC103
CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES
3 Credit Hours

Prepared By:
Dedric Todd Lee

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Arts & Science Education
Dr. Mindy Selsor, Dean
PSC103  Current Political Issues

I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

A. Prerequisite: None

B. 3 semester hours credit

C. Current Political Issues focuses on government policies in a variety of areas and their impact on individuals. Policies will include environmental, civil liberties, civil rights, economic, tax, and business-government relations, foreign policy, and domestic issues such as health, welfare, education, crime, and others. This course will partially fulfill the social and behavioral science requirements for the Associate of Arts degrees. (F,S,Su)

II. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT MEASURES

| Identify the political framework through which public policy decisions are made. | Written Exam  
Classroom Discussion  
Quiz |
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| Describe and discuss the influence of such factors as our culture, ideologies, social structures, interest groups, and concern for individual rights have on policy making in domestic and foreign policy areas | Written Exam  
Classroom Discussion  
Quiz |
| Analyze and evaluate the power relationships between federal, state, and local government | Written Exam  
Classroom Discussion  
Quiz |
| Understand and discuss the interaction between individuals, groups, and each section and level of government | Written Exam  
Classroom Discussion  
Quiz  
Research Project |
| Analyze and understand the role of the U.S. in the modern international system. | Written Exam  
Classroom Discussion  
Quiz  
Research Project |
| Integrate information read in the articles and heard in class discussion with information read in current news media | Research Project  
Classroom Discussion  
Quiz  
Written Exam |
III. COURSE OUTLINE WITH UNIT OBJECTIVES

A. Social Programs and Policies
1. Evaluate and discuss the present social welfare programs (i.e., social security, immigration, environment, education, health care, and others).
2. Describe the relationship between federal, state, and local governments regarding each domestic policy area.
3. Examine political reform of domestic policies.

B. Economic Programs and Policies
1. Describe the budget and tax policies of federal, state, and local government.
2. Examine the role of the federal government in overall economic policy (fiscal and monetary).
3. Discuss the relationship between government and business/labor.
4. Examine trade policies of the U.S. and other governments.

C. Civil Liberties
1. Examine legislation and Supreme Court decisions in relation to speech, expression, religion, privacy, obscenity, assembly, and other rights.
2. Discuss the role of law in determining the rights of criminal suspects.
3. Describe the role of the government in protecting individual rights and liberties.

D. Civil Rights
1. Describe the history of the civil rights movement in the United States.
2. Evaluate the activities and strategies of the civil rights groups involved in racial, sexual, religious, age, and disability issue areas.
3. Discuss legislation and court decisions related to discrimination in public facilities, employment, housing, and other areas.
4. Examine recent issues, events, and government policies related to the African-American, Hispanic, Native-American, Asian-American, women’s movement, gay rights movement, disabilities, and older and juvenile age groups.

E. Foreign and Defense Policy
1. Describe American foreign policy from independence to the post 9-11 world.
2. Analyze the 2000 transition from a Cold War focus to a multipolar approach of economic, military, and non-governmental influences on international relations.
3. Describe the instruments used to conduct foreign policy: State Department, CIA, United Nations, etc.
4. Discuss the goals and ideals of U.S. foreign and defense policy including immigration, human rights, international trade and economics issues, as well as other issues.
IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

A. Classroom lecture
B. Class discussion of text and current events
C. Video and other media presentations
D. Preparation of a research paper/project related to a current political topic (library research)
E. Guest speakers

V. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK (with publication information)

Articles for each topic are posted on class webpage.

VI. REQUIRED MATERIALS

None

VII. SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES

Study Guide optional

VIII. METHOD OF EVALUATION

A. Four exams. These include multiple-choice and essay questions.
B. A research paper/project related to a current political topic (library research).
C. Classroom attendance and participation in discussion.
D. Quizzes.

IX. ADA STATEMENT

Any statement requiring special accommodations should inform the instructor and the Coordinator of Disability Support Services (Library; phone 636-797-3000, ext. 169).

X. ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

All students are responsible for complying with campus policies as stated in the Student Handbook (see College Website).