Sample course outline
Politics and Law – General Year 12

Semester 1 – Unit 3 – Democracy and the rule of law

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Key teaching points</th>
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| 1–2  | **Political and legal systems**  
• operating principals of a liberal democracy  
  ▪ equality of political rights  
  ▪ majority rule  
  ▪ political participation  
  ▪ political freedom  
• development of the operating principles of a liberal democracy in Australia with comparison to one other modern liberal democracy such as the USA  
  ▪ political rights and freedoms  
  ▪ types of ‘majorities’ used  
  ▪ extent and nature of political participation |
| 3–5  | **Task 1 Part A**: Investigation – separation of powers doctrine in Australia and the USA  
  Commence research and analysis  
  **Political and legal systems**  
• roles of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government  
  ▪ nature of the power each arm wields  
  ▪ checks and balances each arm has over the other two  
• the institutions in Australia that perform the legislative, executive and judicial functions of government  
• the extent to which the doctrine of separation of powers exists in Australia  
  ▪ parliamentary Executive  
  ▪ independence of the judiciary  
  ▪ parliament as a rubber stamp?  
• the operation of the rule of law in Western Australia or Australia  
  ▪ examples of public officials abusing their power  
  ▪ legal consequences for those officials  
  **Task 2**: Explanation – operating principles of a liberal democracy  
  **Political and legal systems**  
• structure and processes of the political and legal system in Australia, including federalism  
  **Political and legal issues**  
• State’s rights within the Australian federal system  
  ▪ Cooperative vs coercive federalism  
  ▪ Issue: Introduction of the National Curriculum |
| 6–7  | **Political and legal research skills**  
• Research and analysis  
• Communication  
  **Task 1 Part A**: Investigation – research due  
  **Task 1 Part B**: Investigation – validation in-class report  
  **Political and legal systems**  
• key influences on the structure of the political and legal system in Australia:  
  ▪ the Westminster system of government  
  ▪ English common law  
  ▪ the American federal system  
  ▪ the Canadian federal system  
  ▪ the Swiss referendum process |
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| 8–10  | **Task 3:** Source analysis – influences on the political and legal system in Australia  
**Political and legal research skills**  
• Research and analysis  
• Communication  
**Political and legal systems**  
• structures and processes of the political and legal system in Iraq as an example of a theocracy  
**Political and legal issues**  
• the rule of law in a non-democratic political and legal system  
  ▪ women and the Iranian legal system  
  ▪ non-Muslims in the Iranian legal system |
| 11–13 | **Political and legal systems**  
• the court hierarchy in Western Australia with reference to both criminal and civil law  
  ▪ benefits  
  ▪ jurisdictional limits  
• the process of civil and criminal trials in Western Australia  
  ▪ pre-trial procedures  
  ▪ trial procedures  
  ▪ post-trial outcomes  
• the trial process in a non-common law legal system  
  ▪ the inquisitorial trial process  
  ▪ pre-trial, trial and post-trial procedures  
**Task 4:** Externally set task |
| 14–15 | Revision  
**Task 5:** In-class test on a representative sample of the content from Unit 3. |
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| 1    | **Political and legal systems**  
• the Western Australian and Commonwealth electoral systems since Federation:  
  ▪ compulsory voting  
  ▪ the extension of the franchise  
  ▪ electoral frequency at the State and Commonwealth level  
  ▪ group ticket voting (GTV) |
| 2–3  | **Political and legal systems**  
• voting systems used in Australia since Federation:  
  ▪ first past the post  
  ▪ preferential  
  ▪ optional preferential, such as used in Queensland and New South Wales  
  ▪ proportional representation  
**Task 6:** Explanation – In-class essay on compulsory voting |
| 4–6  | **Political and legal systems**  
• advantages and disadvantages of the current voting systems used in Australia/Western Australia, including reference to one vote one value and the extent to which the will of the people is represented  
  ▪ type of majority required  
  ▪ vote wastage  
  ▪ winner’s bonus  
  ▪ level of informal vote  
  ▪ simplicity vs complexity  
  ▪ micro vs minor vs major parties  
**Political and legal issues**  
• the electoral and voting system in Australia in terms of the principles of fair elections  
  ▪ periodical  
  ▪ genuine choice  
  ▪ informed voters  
  ▪ confidence in the system  
  ▪ secret ballot  
  ▪ universal suffrage  
**Task 7:** Source analysis – voting systems used in Australia |
| 7–9  | **Political and legal systems**  
• an examination of a recent (the last ten years) election in Australia with reference to the influence on the outcome of:  
  ▪ the campaign  
  ▪ policies  
  ▪ personalities  
  ▪ media, including social media  
  ▪ the voting and electoral systems  
**Task 8 Part A:** Investigation – a criminal trial in Western Australia  
Commence research and analysis  
**Political and legal systems**  
• strengths and weaknesses of the trial process of the adversarial system in Western Australia  
  ▪ role of parties  
  ▪ role of judges (are they impartial or biased?)  
  ▪ rules of evidence  
  ▪ contest hides or exposes the truth?  
• an examination of a recent (the last ten years) civil or criminal trial in Western Australia – the Lloyd Rayney murder trial |
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|      | • strengths and weaknesses of the trial process of a non-common law legal system in one other country  
  ▪ role of parties  
  ▪ role of judges (are they too powerful?)  
  ▪ rules of evidence  
  **Political and legal research skills**  
  • Research and analysis  
  • Communication  
  **Task 8 Part A:** Research due In  
  **Task 8 Part B:** Class presentation on investigation findings |
| 14–15 | **Political and legal research skills**  
  • Research and analysis  
  • Communication  
  **Political and legal issues**  
  • the extent to which justice prevails in the judicial system in Western Australia  
  ▪ construct reasoned arguments For or Against justice prevailing  
  **Task 9:** In-class test on a representative sample of the content from Unit 4 |