**Sample Course Outline**

Politics and Law

General Year 12

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Sample course outline

Politics and Law – General Year 12

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

| **Week** | **Key teaching points** |
| --- | --- |
| 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 USACommence 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
 |
| 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. |

## Semester 2 – Unit 4 – Representation and justice

| **Week** | **Key teaching points** |
| --- | --- |
| 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
 |
| 10**–**13 | **Task 8 Part A:** Investigation – a criminal trial in Western AustraliaCommence 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
 |
|  | * 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 |