



SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

POLITICS AND LAW
ATAR YEAR 11

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Sample course outline

Politics and Law – ATAR Year 11

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

Week	Key teaching points
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a liberal democracy? • The operating principles of a liberal democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equality of political rights-gender/ ethnicity/age ▪ majority rule ▪ political participation ▪ political freedom • Meaning of the above concepts, when achieved historically and when achieved in Australia
2–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of the political and legal system in Australia, including the federal structure/ overview • Roles of legislative, executive and judicial branches of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in general ▪ in Australia • The doctrine of the separation of powers • The federal structure in Australia and the division of powers • The Westminster system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ key elements ▪ how it is reflected in the Australian political system • Representative government and responsible government • Review of the doctrine of the separation of powers and the Australian political system • The American and Canadian federal systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ key elements ▪ what is reflected in the Australian federal system • The Swiss referendum process and section 128 of the Commonwealth Constitution
4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia as an example of a democratic political and legal system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ overall review ▪ any qualifications, in terms of structure and processes, within the operation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government ▪ the extent that the operating principles of a liberal democracy exist • The meaning of judicial independence and its existence in Australia • North Korea as an example of a non-democratic political and legal system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the structure of the North Korean system in terms of executive, legislative and judicial branches ▪ the processes within each branch; the relationship between the branches; the extent that the operating principles of a liberal democracy are practised • The meaning of the terms ‘constitutionalism’ and ‘the rule of law’ and the extent that each is upheld in Australia and North Korea • Similarities and differences between a democratic and non-democratic political and legal system

Week	Key teaching points
7–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament and statute law: legislative process of the Commonwealth Parliament using an example of a bill that has gone through most stages in each House • Use the bill to examine a contemporary issue (last three years) involving the legislative process, especially executive dominance and/or minor party influence • Courts and common law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English common law ▪ common law in Australia ▪ the court hierarchy in Western Australia/Australia ▪ the doctrine of precedent and how it operates ▪ methods of statutory interpretation • Use relevant examples to explain courts and law making • The relationship between statute law and common law using a relevant example • The sovereignty of parliament • Subordinate authorities and delegated legislation
11–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key processes of civil and criminal trials in Western Australia: pre-trial, trial and post-trial stages • Use the problems associated with a jury trial to examine a contemporary issue (last three years) involving the judicial process
14–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key processes of the Indonesian legal system: pre-trial; trial and post-trial
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semester 1 examination

Unit 2 – Semester 2 – Representation and justice

Week	Key teaching points
1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what is a political party? ▪ what is the role of major, minor and micro political parties active in the Australian political system? ▪ what is a pressure group? ▪ what is the role of pressure groups in the Australian political and legal system? • Examine the various ways political parties and pressure groups participate in the political and legal system • How individuals, political parties and pressure groups can participate in the electoral processes in Australia • The difference between political parties in terms of female representatives in Australian parliaments (contemporary issue centering on representation)
4–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral and voting systems since Federation in Western Australia/ Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ simple majority; preferential and optional preferential system; proportional representation ▪ extension of the franchise; compulsory voting; group ticket voting • The advantages and disadvantages of the voting systems used in Australia with reference to at least one recent election • Should changes be made to the current regulations governing donations to political parties in Australia by individuals and groups? (electoral reform) • How fair are Australian elections? • The electoral and voting system of the USA including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ simple majority; the franchise; non-compulsory voting ▪ the Electoral College and the election of the President ▪ frequency of Congressional elections
8–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths and weaknesses of Western Australia’s adversarial criminal law processes • Strengths and weaknesses of Western Australia’s adversarial civil law processes (Investigation)
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the implications of the cost of legal representation (a contemporary issue centering on justice)
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments for and against the abolition of the jury trial in Western Australia (a proposed reform to the criminal process in Western Australia) with reference to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ particular jury trials ▪ exemptions from a jury trial and trial by judge alone ▪ eligibility of jurors ▪ juror exemption
14–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths and weaknesses of the processes and procedures of the Indonesian (non-common law) legal system
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semester 2 examination