**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 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 |
| 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 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 |
|  | * 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 |