

**CENTRE FOR CANADIAN, US & LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES**  
**SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**  
**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**

Course	:	MA (PISM)
Course No.	:	IS513N
Course Title	:	Government and Politics in the United States
Course Type	:	Optional
Course Teacher	:	Dr. Saumyajit Ray
Credits	:	4
Semester	:	Monsoon
Contact hours	:	4 per week

**Course Objectives**

The aim of this advanced American government and politics course offered is to explain the unique constitutional and political system in the United States, a presidential form of government based on the doctrine of separation of powers made workable by checks and balances, and sustained by a successful two-party system. It involves a detailed study of America's constitutional principles; presidential and congressional elections; the federal executive, legislative, and judicial processes; the party system; the growth and expansion of rights and liberties in America; and the significant parts played by churches, the trade unions, and the American media among others. It would be the endeavor of this course to teach students about the political and governmental system in the United States in all its facets.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this semester-long course, students are expected to understand and explain, through the spoken and written word:

1. American presidential and midterm elections and interpret their results
2. Party platforms and election issues
3. The political backgrounds, decisions, and actions of particular American presidents
4. Relations between Congress and the President
5. Legislations, amendments, and case laws
6. The success and failure of political parties
7. The decisive parts played by churches, trade unions, and the American media in influencing voting behavior
8. The importance of voter support based on race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality
9. The relevance of ideology in the perpetual tussle between free market and welfare state capitalists

In addition, students are also expected to read and remember basic and advanced works on American government and politics, including biographies and autobiographies of American presidents and other leaders, utilize policy papers published by major think-tanks, both conservative and liberal, and write research papers on selected topics provided by the course teacher.

### **Evaluation Methods**

Term paper (25%), biographical/autobiographical reviews (25%), End Semester Examination (50%). The topics for the term papers and the biographies/autobiographies for review are to be decided by the course teacher.

### **Course Content**

#### **Unit I: Constitutional principles**

Republicanism, federalism, written Constitution, presidential system, divided government, church-state separation, independent judiciary, limited government, individual liberty

#### **Unit II: The federal legislature**

Congress (elections, functions and powers, leadership), committee system, unique position of House Speaker (with focus on select House Speakers)

#### **Unit III: The Presidency**

Presidential elections and succession, functions and powers of the President, the Administration, the President and other branches of government, presidential paraphernalia

#### **Unit IV: The judiciary**

The US Supreme Court and other courts, functions of the judiciary, the courts and party politics, select caselaws

#### **Unit V: Party politics in America**

The two-party system, “third” parties, party organizations, parties and ideology, election campaigns, parties and grassroots organizations

#### **Unit VI: The states**

The fifty states, governors and state assemblies, direct democracy in the states, states and local government

#### **Unit VII: Rights and liberties in the US**

The Bill of Rights, civil and voting rights, civil liberties, the welfare state and entitlements

## Unit VIII: The media and politics

The newspapers and television networks, endorsements, cinema and political propaganda, the media and party loyalty

### Readings

#### Text books

1. Abernathy, Scott F, *American Government...Stories of a Nation—The Essentials* (London: Sage Publications, 2018)
2. Bowles, Nigel & Robert K. McMahon, *Government & Politics of the United States* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
3. Carr, Robert K., Marver H. Bernstein, Walter F. Murphy, *American Democracy* (New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., 1970)
4. Lowi, Theodore J. & Benjamin Ginsberg, *American Government: Freedom and Power* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002)
5. McKay, David H., *American Politics and Society* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2018)
6. Skidmore, Max J. & Marshall Carter Tripp, *American Government: A Brief Introduction* (New Delhi: Associated East-West Press, 1992)

#### References

1. Abraham, Henry, *Freedom and the Court: Civil Rights and Liberties in the United States* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994)
2. Balmer, Randall, *God in the White House: A History* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008)
3. Bryner, Gary and Dennis L. Thompson, *The Constitution and the Regulation of Society* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1988)
4. Burns, James MacGregor, *Presidential Leadership—JFK to Bush II—Why it Failed and How We Can Fix It* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006)
5. Bush, George W., *41: A Portrait of My Father* (London: W.H. Allen, 2014)
6. Canellos, Peter S. (ed.), *Last Lion: The Fall and Rise of Ted Kennedy* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2009)
7. Cannon, James, *Time and Chance: Gerald Ford's Appointment with History* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994)
8. Carter, Jimmy, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1995)
9. Clarke, Thurston, *The Last Campaign* (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company, 2008)
10. Clinton, Bill, *My Life* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004)
11. Cronin, Thomas E. (ed.), *Inventing the American Presidency* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1989)
12. Dallek, Robert, *Lyndon Johnson: Portrait of a President* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004)
13. De Tocqueville, Alexis, *Democracy in America* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003)

14. Drew, Elizabeth, *Showdown: The Struggle between the Gingrich Congress and the Clinton White House* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996)
15. Farrington, Joshua D., *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)
16. Fisher, Louis, *The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1993)
17. Ford, Jr., Gerald R., *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1979)
18. Gibbs, Nancy and Michael Duffy, *The Presidents Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2013)
19. Giglio, James, N., *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1991)
20. Gillon, Steven M., *The Pact: Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, and the Rivalry that Defined a Generation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008)
21. Goldman, Sheldon and Thomas P. Jahnige, *The Federal Courts as a Political System* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1985)
22. Goodwin, Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1991)
23. Graber, Doris A. and Johanna L. Dunaway, *Mass Media and American Politics* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2017)
24. Greene, John Robert, *The Presidency of George H.W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2015)
25. \_\_\_\_\_, *The Presidency of George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2021)
26. \_\_\_\_\_, *The Presidency of Gerald R. Ford* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1994)
27. Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982)
28. Hemmer, Nicole, *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)
29. Jimsey, George M., *The Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2000)
30. Johnson, Lyndon Baines, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971)
31. Kaufman, Burton I. and Scott Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2006)
32. Lempert, Michael and Michael Silverstein, *Creatures of Politics: Media, Message, and the American Presidency* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012)
33. McCoy, Donald R., *The Presidency of Harry S. Truman* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1984)
34. Morgan, Iwan, *Reagan: An American Icon* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2016)
35. Neely, Richard, *How Courts Govern America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981)

36. Neustadt, Richard E., *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990)
37. Nixon, Richard M., *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978)
38. Pach, Jr., Chester J. & Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1991)
39. Pfiffner, James P., *The Modern Presidency* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994)
40. Reagan, Ronald W., *An American Life* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1990)
41. Rosenberg, Gerald, *The Hollow Hope: How Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991)
42. Rossiter, Clinton, *Parties and Politics in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966)
43. Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993)
44. \_\_\_\_\_, *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002)
45. \_\_\_\_\_, *The Imperial Presidency* (Boston, MA & New York, NY: Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004)
46. Small, Melvin, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1999)
47. Smith, Steven S. and Christopher Deering, *Committees in Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1990)
48. Vaughn, David Bornet, *The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1994)
49. White, Theodore H., *The Making of the President 1960* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial 1961)
50. \_\_\_\_\_, *The Making of the President 1964* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial 1965)
51. \_\_\_\_\_, *The Making of the President 1968* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial 1969)
52. \_\_\_\_\_, *The Making of the President 1972* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial 1973)
53. Wolfe, Christopher, *The Rise of Modern Judicial Review* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1986)
54. Woodward, Gary C., *Center Stage: Media and the Performance of American Politics* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006)

N.B.: This reading list is not exhaustive. Articles will be supplied by the course teacher as and when required.