

Course Outline
POLS 111
Introduction to Political Science
3 Credit Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

Introduction to Political Science

Covers basic interests, concepts and methods of Political Science, intended for majors in the field; discusses the political aspects of human values and behavior, the structures and functions of various types of national governments, and relations among nations, including strategies for their study.

Prerequisite: (RDNG 052 or LVR 2); (ENGL 052 or LVE 2); (MATH 081 or LVM 1)

Overall Course Objectives (Learning Objectives)

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Explain the meaning of “politics,” “government” and a “political system”;
2. Explain and analyze the fundamental philosophical values underlying politics;
3. Identify and assess the contributions of several classic political philosophers;
4. Describe and analyze the evolution of the modern nation state;
5. Explain and assess the importance and major elements of the concept of the “political environment”;
6. Explain and analyze the ideas of “interest articulation” and “interest aggregation”;
7. Describe and evaluate the various forms and functions of representative assemblies and executives;
8. Describe and evaluate the various systems of administrative bureaucracies and judicial systems;
9. Describe and analyze the basic elements of the political systems of modern constitutional democracies modern post-communist states, authoritarian states and developing nations;
10. Describe and evaluate the nature of international politics and determine the major actors in this system;
11. Identify and assess the major factors which contribute to a nation’s power;
12. Identify and evaluate the major goals and techniques of foreign policy;
13. Describe and evaluate the workings of the international economic system;
14. Identify and analyze the major causes of conflict between nations;
15. Describe and evaluate diplomacy, international law and international organizations.

Major Topics

1. The study of Political Science: origins, development and contemporary approaches
2. Political Philosophy: The Normative Values of Politics

- (a) Perennial questions: essential human nature, equality, forms of government, political obligation, liberty, morality, etc.
 - (b) Classic political philosophers: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Bentham, Mill, Marx, etc.
3. Comparative Government and Politics: Politics Within Nations
Structures and functions of national political systems
- (a) Comparative approaches to the study of national political systems
 - (b) The political environment: the material environment and political culture
 - (c) Political participation: interest groups, parties and elections
 - (d) Policy-making: Representative assemblies and governmental executive
 - (e) Policy application: Administrative bureaucracies and judicial systems
 - (f) Policy outputs and outcomes
- Contemporary national political systems
- (a) Constitutional democracies: e.g., the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan.
 - (b) Transitional post-Communist systems: e.g., Russia.
 - (c) Modern authoritarian systems: e.g., China.
 - (d) Developing nations: e.g., India, Nigeria, Mexico, Brazil.
4. International Politics: Politics Among Nations
- (a) The nature of the global political system
 - (b) Principal actors: nation-states, sub-national units, transnational entities
 - (c) The elements of national power in the world arena
 - (d) The international economic system: rich nations, developing nations, poor nations
 - (e) Making and executing foreign policy: institutions and processes
 - (f) Sources of international conflict
 - (g) The control of conflict: diplomacy, international law, & international organizations

Course Requirements

Students will be expected to demonstrate learning through:

1. Three extensive in-class examinations, including analytical essay questions;
2. Participation—individually and in groups--in in-class discussion of the issues and problems presented by the Course;
3. Additional exercises, individual and group, written and oral, in class and outside class (e.g., quizzes, reports, term papers) at the instructor's discretion, including at least one exercise requiring the collection of data through the Internet.

Other Course Information

1. This course satisfies a General Education requirement in the Social and Behavioral Sciences as a Cultural-Historical course, and is especially recommended for students who are considering a major in Political Science.
2. Regular attendance and participation in class is a requirement for this course.
3. Students will be expected to have regular access to required reading material and such additional material as an instructor may assign.

4. The instructor, at his/her discretion, may arrange for guest lecturers, audio/video presentations, and/or attention to current events as a part of the Course content;
5. The instructor will be available to assist students through regular office hours, telephone, and in some cases voice mail and Internet email.

5/25/00