Politics

Subject Guide

Politics is the study of national and international issues to help students understand their place in the world. The issues studied are contemporary and constantly evolving and students will have flexibility to study particular areas that interest them. Students learn how to be critical consumers of a variety of media and gain an understanding of leadership, power and national interests. Students bring a broad cross-section of sympathies and opinions into Politics classes, so discussion and debate is lively, yet evidence based.

Politics Units 1 and 2 offers students the opportunity to engage with key political, social and economic issues, and to become informed citizens, voters and participants in their local, national and global communities.

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Unit focus areas

Unit 1 – Politics, power and political actors

In this unit, students are introduced to the discipline of politics by asking questions about power and conflict and what makes an issue political. They begin by locating and briefly examining a contemporary political issue or conflict to identify its political elements, such as what the conflict is about, the political actors involved and the sources and forms of power available to those actors. Students consider the concept of power by examining why and how political power is used, with special attention to the way political actors, such as states, exercise power and to the differences between democratic and non-democratic states. Students examine how power may be used by political actors in various states to achieve their interests, and they focus on a close study of a contested policy area in Australia. Finally, students investigate the range and power of global actors, who are able to use power across national and regional boundaries to achieve their interests and cooperate with other actors to solve conflicts, issues and crises.

Unit 2 – Democracy: stability and change

In this unit, students investigate the key principles of democracy, and assess the degree to which these principles are expressed, experienced and challenged, in Australia and internationally. They consider democratic principles in the Australian context and complete an in-depth study of a political issue or crisis that inherently challenges basic democratic ideas. Students also investigate the degree to which global political actors and trends can challenge, inhibit or undermine democracy, and evaluate the political significance of these challenges.

Unit focus areas continued

Unit 3 – Global cooperation and conflict

In this unit, students investigate an issue and a crisis that pose challenges to the global community. Students begin with an investigation into an issue of global scale, such as climate change, global economic instability, the issue of development or weapons of mass destruction. Students also examine the causes and consequences of a humanitarian crisis that may have begun in one state but which has crossed over into neighbouring states and requires an emergency response. This crisis must be chosen from the areas of human rights, armed conflict and the mass movement of people. They consider the causes of these issues and crises and investigate their consequences on a global level and for a variety of global actors.

Unit 4 – Power in the Indo-Pacific

In this unit, students investigate the strategic competition for power and influence in the Indo-Pacific region. They consider the interests and perspectives of global actors within the region, including the challenges to regional cooperation and stability. Building on their study of global issues and contemporary crises in Unit 3, students develop their understanding of power and national interests through an in-depth examination of one state's perspectives, interests and actions. Students must choose one state from the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia or the United States of America. Students also examine Australia's strategic interests and actions in the region and consider how Australia's responses to regional issues and crises may have contributed to political stability and/or change. They do this within the context of Australia's relationships with one Pacific Island state and two other regional states.

Pre-requisites

Students undertaking Units 1 and 2 Politics need to have completed Year 10 Humanities (or equivalent).

Students undertaking Units 3 and 4 Politics **do not need** to have completed Units 1 and 2 Politics.

Assessment

For Units 1 and 2, students complete a range of outcomes and classwork throughout each semester. There will also be an examination at the end of the academic year.

For Units 3 and 4, students complete School-Assessed Coursework (50%) subject to external moderation and a written examination (50%).