

Course Outline

Course number	RBE268					
Course title	Contemporary US Politics					
Credit points	3 ECTS (2 CP)					
Total hours	30					
Lecture hours	20					
Seminar and other hours	10					
Course level	Bachelor					
Prerequisites	None					
Category	Mandatory		Restricted elective	X	Free elective	

COURSE RESPONSIBLE

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Daunis Auers	PhD	Associate Professor

COURSE TEACHERS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Daunis Auers	PhD	Associate Professor

COURSE ABSTRACT

This course will provide an overview of politics, government and society in the USA. The lectures and seminars will particularly focus on how the contemporary USA compares and contrasts with other liberal democracies in modern Europe and will identify key areas of *American exceptionalism*. The course will cover the US political system – Congress, President, Supreme Court, political parties, interest groups and federalism – as well as the major policy areas and controversial issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course has the following intended learning outcomes:

- Students will understand the workings of the US political system and how it differs to European liberal democracies.
- Students will familiarise themselves with key analytical and statistical resources in both Europe and the USA.

GRADING CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting
Exam	40%
Course paper	30%
Active participation in seminars	20%

COURSE PLAN – MAIN SUBJECTS

No.	Main subjects	Planned hours
1	History of the USA and American exceptionalism	4
2	Political Institutions	6
3	Political actors	8
4	Government policies	6
5	Contemporary issues	6

COURSE PLAN – SESSIONS

Session	Session subjects and readings	Lecture/seminar
1	Introduction to the course. Knowledge test. American exceptionalism	Lecture
2	History of the USA	Lecture
3	Constitution, Congress and the presidency	Lecture
4	How are US presidents elected?	Seminar
5	Courts and the Federal System	Lecture
6	Political parties	Lecture
7	Interest groups and lobbyists	Lecture
8	Case study of an interest group – The Israel lobby	Seminar
9	The media and politics – TV, radio, newspapers and social media	Seminar
10	The US Economy	Lecture
11	A comparison of the welfare state in the US and the EU	Seminar
12	Foreign and defense policy in the USA	Lecture
13	Issues I: Abortion, guns, prisons	Lecture
14	Issues II: Minorities, multiculturalism and religion	Lecture
15	“Americans are from Mars, Europeans from Venus.” Discuss	Seminar

COURSE LITERATURE

No.	Author, title, publisher
1	W.Bianco & D.Canon (2013), American Politics Today. Norton. Review Chapters.
2	John Mearsheimer & Stephen M. Walt. 2006. “The Israel lobby and US Foreign Policy”. Middle East Policy, Vol XIII, 3 Fall 2006.
3	S.Huntingdon 2004. “The Hispanic Challenge”. Foreign Policy March/April
4	R.Kagan. 2002. “Power & Weakness.” Policy Review.