

POLS*3410 US Politics and Government (0.5 Credits)**Credit Weighting:** 0.5**Pre-/Co-Requisites:** Requisites:
POLS*2100 or
POLS*2300
- Must be completed
prior to taking this
course.**Restrictions:****INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION****Name:** Professor David B MacDonald**Email:** david.macdonald@uoguelph.ca**Office Location:** 508 MacKinnon Hall
Political Science Department**GENERAL DETAILS**

This course involves a treatment of the basic principles and institutions of national government and politics in the United States as well as the making and execution of public policy at the national and state levels. The first half of the course focuses on domestic institutions and policy while the second half focuses on foreign policy. The United States is a fascinating country, worthy of detailed study. The US still has the world's largest economy and military, and is a hub of cultural and technological innovation. It has the world's oldest constitution and republican system, and is the western world's most religious country. This course highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of the American model. Its foreign and domestic policies have a marked influence on Canada, from the price of housing and prescription drugs to our own political culture. US politics and society also shape our own as a model and a cautionary warning. The first half of the course deals primarily with domestic politics and American identity. The second half covers foreign policy from the Cold War to the Trump era and the upcoming 2026 midterm elections.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learn about American politics, institutions, parties, elections, foreign and domestic policies.
Enhance speaking, presentation, and group collaborative skills.
Develop strong essay writing skills.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

1. A 3,500 word essay on a choice of provided topics (40 percent)
2. A group presentation and 1,800 word report (25 percent divided equally between the two assignments)
3. An online final exam with three essay questions (35 percent).

REQUIRED READING

Paula McClain and Steven Tauber, American Government in Black and White: Diversity and Democracy (Oxford University Press, most recent edition)

George Herring, From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations Since 1776 (Oxford University Press, 2008)

Various current articles and book chapters will also be assigned.