

Introduction to Political Science and International Relations

Code: 101519
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
East Asian Studies	FB	1

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

There are no specific prerequisites to enroll in this course. However, students are expected to have a basic knowledge of and interest in politics and international relations. A regular habit of reading news and analytical articles from diverse perspectives is highly recommended. Students should also possess basic computer skills and a sufficient command of English (e.g., B2 level of the CEFR) in order to follow the classes and understand written and audiovisual materials in that language.

Objectives and Contextualisation

This is a foundational course designed to help students develop analytical skills applicable to political science, political theory, and international relations. It aims to equip students with basic analytical tools that enable them to situate the key debates and issues of their area of specialisation-East Asia-within a broader theoretical and global political context.

Throughout the semester, the course will focus on the development and application of basic concepts and approaches in political theory and science to understand and analyse political processes, structures, actors, and discourses. Students will also be introduced to major debates and theoretical frameworks that have helped shape and interpret international reality.

By the end of the course, students are expected to:

- have acquired foundational knowledge of political science and international relations;
- be able to read and understand academic literature in English related to political science and international relations, identifying core ideas and arguments;
- produce written work such as analytical texts, policy briefs, and proposals that meet standard academic and professional conventions in terms of content, structure, and referencing;
- enhance their capacity for critical thinking, particularly regarding the interpretation of contemporary political behaviours, events, dilemmas, transformations, and contradictions.

Competences

- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Ensuring the quality of one's own work.
- Having interpersonal skills.
- Knowing and understanding the structures, agents, institutions and organizations that shape the political processes and international relations in connection with Asia.
- Knowing and using the information and communication technology resources (ICT) in order to collect, produce, analyse and present information related to the East Asian Studies.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Students must be flexible and capable of adapting to new circumstances.

Learning Outcomes

1. Assessing the obtained results in the information search process in order to update the knowledge about political sciences.
2. Demonstrating knowledge of key concepts and theoretical frameworks of the political sciences.
3. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
4. Developing self-learning strategies.
5. Ensuring the quality of one's own work.
6. Having interpersonal skills.
7. Identifying and describing the main structures, agents, institutions and bodies of the political and international systems.
8. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
9. Students must be flexible and capable of adapting to new circumstances.
10. Using different tools for specific purposes in the field of political sciences.
11. Using the basic terminology of the political sciences.

Content

Part 1: The Foundations of Politics

- What is power?
- What is the state?
- Overview of major traditions in political philosophy
- Political regimes: concepts and classification
 - Dictatorships
 - Democracy, polyarchy, and global trends

Part 2: Political Institutions

- Separation of powers: legislative, executive, and judiciary
- Functional distribution of power
 - Origins and roles of parliaments
 - Legislative functions
 - Bicameralism vs. unicameralism

- Forms of government: parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential systems
- Territorial distribution of power

Part 3: Political Interaction and Participation

- Individual and collective political participation
- Political parties, elections, and electoral systems
 - Electoral systems and their consequences
 - Electoral processes
- Political communication and agenda-setting
- Interest groups and lobbying

Part 4: What Do Political Systems Do?

- Easton's model of the political system
- Political economy
- System breakdowns and political violence

Part 5: Introduction to International Relations

- The international system: structure and key concepts
- National interest and power in international politics
- Evolution of international relations as a discipline
- Theoretical perspectives on war and peace:
 - Realism
 - Liberalism
 - Constructivism

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Exercises	9.5	0.38	2, 3, 8, 9, 6, 11, 5
Lectures	40	1.6	2, 7, 11
Type: Supervised			
Individual work, guided reading assignments and tutorials	18	0.72	1, 2, 4, 3, 7, 8, 9, 6, 10, 11, 5
Type: Autonomous			
Reading and documentation	71	2.84	4, 10

To achieve the established objectives, this subject combines lectures with cooperative and collaborative work in class, as well as individual study. The subject's essential content will be introduced in lectures and further developed through reading assignments and classroom activities. Whenever possible, the course follows a discovery-based approach that encourages students to engage actively with key questions and concepts, rather than relying solely on deductive instruction. Students will be encouraged to use the Moodle virtual classroom as a shared space for exchanging information related to the course (announcements, debates, materials, complementary resources, etc.).

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Content development assignment, individual or groupwork	30%	4	0.16	1, 2, 4, 3, 7, 8, 9, 6, 10, 11, 5
Evaluation tests (2 tests)	70% (35% x 2)	7.5	0.3	2, 4, 3, 7, 11, 5

Continuous assessment

Students must provide evidence of their progress by completing various tasks and tests. These activities are detailed in the table at the end of this section of the Study Guide.

Review

When publishing final marks prior to recording them on students' transcripts, the lecturer will provide written notification of a date and time for reviewing assessment activities. Students must arrange reviews in agreement with the lecturer.

Missed/failed assessment activities

Students may retake assessment activities they have failed or compensate for any they have missed, provided that those they have actually performed account for a minimum of 66.6% (two thirds) of the subject's final mark and that they have a weighted average mark of at least 3.5.

The lecturer will inform students of the procedure involved, in writing, when publishing final marks prior to recording them on transcripts. The lecturer may set one assignment per failed or missed assessment activity or a single assignment to cover a number of such activities. Under no circumstances may an assessment activity worth 100% of the final mark be retaken or compensated for.

Classification as "not assessable"

In the event of the assessment activities a student has performed accounting for just 25% or less of the subject's final mark, their work will be classified as "not assessable" on their transcript.

Misconduct in assessment activities

Students who engage in misconduct (plagiarism, copying, personation, etc.) in an assessment activity will receive a mark of "0" for the activity in question. In the case of misconduct in more than one assessment activity, the student involved will be given a final mark of "0" for the subject. Assessment activities in which irregularities have occurred (e.g. plagiarism, copying, impersonation) are excluded from resitting.

Single assessment

This subject may be assessed under the single assessment system in accordance with the terms established in the academic regulations of the UAB and the assessment criteria of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting.

Students must make an online request within the period established by the faculty and send a copy to the teacher responsible for the subject, for the record.

Single assessment will be carried out in person on one day during week 16 or 17 of the semester. The Academic Management Office will publish the exact date and time on the faculty website.

On the day of the single assessment, teaching staff will ask the student for identification, which should be presented as a valid identification document with a recent photograph (student card, DNI/NIE or passport).

Single assessment activities

The final grade for the subject will be calculated according to the following percentages:

- Multiple choice test. The student will be given a series of multiple-choice questions with only one correct answer. Points will be deducted for incorrect answers. This exam accounts for 35% of the final grade.
- Essay exam. The student will be asked to develop a topic or question in writing, choosing between two alternatives. This exam accounts for 35% of the final grade.
- Oral presentation. The student will deliver a short oral presentation in class during the exam session. The topic will be assigned by the professor at the beginning of the session, and the student will have some time to prepare before presenting. The presentation should demonstrate the student's ability to explain and apply key course concepts clearly and effectively. This activity accounts for 30% of the final grade.

Grade revision and resit procedures for the subject are the same as those for continual assessment. See the section above in this study guide.

More

information:

<http://www.uab.cat/web/study-abroad/undergraduate/academic-information/evaluation/what-is-it-about-13456700>

Bibliography

Recommended bibliography

- Roskin, M.G., R.L. Cord, J.A. Medeiros, & W.S. Jones. *Political Science: An Introduction*. New York: Pearson, 2016.
- Caminal, Miquel (ed.), *Manual de Ciència Política*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2005.
- Castillo Iglesias, J. International relations system and theories. Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), 2019. <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/289867>

Other reference resources

- Ball, Terence & Richard Bellamy (eds.), *Historia del pensamiento político del siglo XX*. Madrid: Akal, 2013.
- Baylis, John, Steve Smith, & Patricia Owens (eds.) *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. 7a edició, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Caminal, Miquel (ed.), *Manual de Ciència Política*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2005.

- Del Arenal, Celestino, *Introducción a las relaciones internacionales*. 4a edición, Madrid: Tecnos, 2007.
- Eccleshall, Robert, *et al.* (eds.). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Goodin, Robert E. (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Kelly Paul & Rod Dacombe (eds). *El Libro de la Política*. Tres Cantos: Akal, DL 2014.
- Kelly Paul & Rod Dacombe (eds.) *The Politics Book. Big Ideas Simply Explained*. London: DK Publishing, 2013.
- Mellón, Joan Antón (ed.), *Ideologías y movimientos políticos contemporáneos*. Barcelona: Ariel, 2006.
- Simon, Robert L. (ed.), *The Blackwell guide to social and political philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, John Wiley & Sons, 2008. Available online:
<https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.are.uab.cat/doi/book/10.1002/9780470756621>
- Vallès, Josep M., & S. Martí Puig. *Ciencia política: un manual*. Updated edition. Barcelona: Ariel, 2020.

Software

No specific software will be used.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(TE) Theory	1	English	second semester	morning-mixed