

**ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY – DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC FINANCE
COURSE SYLLABUS**

Course Code	Course Title	Course Type	ECTS Credits	Prerequisite Information	Date of Preparation
PSPA101	Introduction to Politics I	Compulsory	5	—	September 2026
Instructor of the Course & E-Mail Address	Dr. Kemal Ufuk kemalufuk@aybu.edu.tr kemalufuk@gmail.com (Please use this address for a faster response)				
Office Hours & Office Room	Mondays, 13:00–14:00 & Thursdays, 12:00–13:00 (or by appointment via e-mail) Block B, Room 351				
Course Content and Objectives	A short note before we begin: This syllabus tries to stay around the B1 level of English. I cannot promise this for every sentence, but I kept the grammar and the words as simple as possible. The aim is clear content, not academic style. If you cannot understand, you cannot learn. And if I cannot explain, I cannot teach. Politics is an integrated part of our lives. It shapes many of the rules, decisions, and institutions that organize society. Many events we experience in our daily lives are connected to politics. For example, economic problems can be influenced by political decisions. Scientific research depends on the choices of political institutions and public priorities. Legal decisions are made within political and institutional systems. Even some of the most basic aspects of our lives are connected to political decisions. For example, let us say that your name is “Ayşe”. Your name became officially “Ayşe” because public authorities accepted your family’s decision and recorded it when you were born. Also, your great-grandfather is officially considered “dead” because an institution recorded his death. Similar political and institutional decisions affect other parts of our daily lives that we believe are ‘natural’: enrolling in a school, driving a car, getting married, receiving social security, opening a bank account, and many more. You have to receive a permit before doing any of these, and this permit was designed by politics. These examples show that politics is not something that happens only in parliaments, elections, or political parties. Politics is also about who makes decisions, who has the power to make them, which rules and institutions shape those decisions, and how people can influence them. We are born into this political world before we are old enough to understand what politics means. In times of peace and stability, we may not notice politics very much. During a crisis, however, political decisions can become impossible to ignore. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 is a clear example: political decisions affected where people could go, how they could work, and how they could interact with others. Just remember your days during lockdowns, when students literally begged political authorities to reopen the schools. Therefore, this course looks at politics in both stable and difficult times. We will examine the ideas, decisions, experiences, and struggles of people who have shaped the political world we live in today. These people include thinkers, leaders, and ordinary citizens from different times and places. They were not always right, and their decisions were not always successful. But their successes and mistakes can help us understand how political life works. Throughout this course, we will focus on three central questions: 1. What is politics? 2. How does political power work? 3. How can people influence political power? These three questions can also be summarized in one larger question: Who has political power, how is it organized, and how can we influence it? By the end of this course, you will be able to develop a foundational but critical understanding of politics through political science. The course is designed to help you move beyond memorizing political events, institutions, and concepts and begin to think about how political life works and why it works that way.				
Textbook(s)	You will be responsible for two coursebooks in this course: Andrew Heywood’s <i>Politics</i>, and Maurice Duverger’s <i>The Idea of Politics</i>. You will not be expected to read these books from beginning to end. Instead, you will read selected pages from them each week. The required pages will be listed in the weekly course plan. In some weeks, you will also meet a historical figure through a short selection from their work. In other weeks, you may read a contemporary text or visit a website. All required readings and other materials will be provided to you. You are responsible only for the materials listed in the weekly course plan.				

	Heywood, A. (2019). <i>Politics</i> (5th ed.). Red Globe Press. Duverger, M. (1970). <i>The idea of politics: The uses of power in society</i> (2nd ed., R. North & R. Murphy, Trans.). Gateway Edition.	
Teaching Methods and Techniques	Teaching does not have to be a one-way process. You can also become active participants by asking questions, sharing ideas, and discussing the course material. For this reason, you are expected to read the main texts before class. This will allow us to spend part of our class time discussing important questions and ideas rather than only listening to a lecture. The aim is to make the ideas discussed in class memorable—and perhaps even to make them “live rent-free” in your minds for years, speaking with the Gen-Z jargon. This course is lecture-based, with mini-discussions. Attendance is mandatory and will be recorded weekly in the Student Information System (<i>OBS — Öğrenci Bilgi Sistemi</i>). There will be two exams in this course: one midterm exam (40%) and one final exam (60%). The format of both exams will be the same and will be explained in detail during the first week of class. You are strongly encouraged to attend the first class on 24 September 2026 at 13:00 in Classroom 2 (B-372). The exam format will be as follows: 25 multiple-choice questions, with 5 choices each. Each question is worth 4 points, for a total of 100 points. - One bonus essay question. The answer must be at least 50 words and is worth 12 bonus points. - The total score is calculated out of 112 points ($25 \times 4 + 12$). - The maximum course grade for the exam is still 100. - Each exam will last one hour. - A glossary (<i>sözlükçe</i>) will be provided at the end of the exam paper. - Multiple-choice questions will be based on the selected readings from Heywood (2019) and Duverger (1970), as well as the main points covered in class. - The bonus essay questions will be based on the short texts assigned as pre-class reading. You are always welcome to contact the instructor if you have questions or feel confused about the course.	
Course Learning Outcomes	LO1	Identifies the main actors, institutions, and processes that shape political life (Main weeks: 3–5, 9–14. Supporting weeks: 1, 2, 6, 7).
	LO2	Understands the basic concepts of political science, including the state, power, authority, legitimacy, political regimes, democracy, political participation, representation, political parties, interest groups, public opinion, and elections (Main weeks: 2–7. Supporting weeks: 9–14).
	LO3	Explains how political demands move through political institutions and mechanisms (Main week: 9. Supporting weeks: 3–5, 10–12).
	LO4	Recognizes the relationship between political decisions and everyday social, economic, legal, and cultural life (Main weeks: 1–3, 6, 9, 12–13. Supporting weeks: 4–7, 10–11, 14).
	LO5	Distinguishes between different forms of political participation, representation, organization, and influence (Main weeks: 10–12, 14. Supporting weeks: 6–7, 9, 13).
	LO6	Examines how political power and political opportunities may be distributed unequally among individuals and groups (Main weeks: 4, 7, 11–12. Supporting weeks: 5–6, 9–10, 13–14).
	LO7	Reads basic political, legal, historical, and cultural texts as sources for understanding political life (Weeks: 1–14).
	LO8	Connects theoretical concepts with examples from Türkiye and the broader world (Weeks: 1–14).
	LO9	Questions political events and institutions rather than accepting them as fixed or self-explanatory (Main weeks: 3–14. Supporting weeks: 1–2).
	LO10	Develops the habit of asking how and why political processes produce particular results (Main weeks: 3–14. Supporting weeks: 1–2).

Program Outcomes Contributed by the Course	Program Outcomes (PO)								
	PO1	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the basic concepts of public finance and the theoretical and practical aspects of the field.							
	PO2	Uses quantitative and qualitative scientific research methods to connect theory and practice in addressing current public finance and economic problems.							
	PO3	Relates the basic concepts and knowledge of public finance to other disciplines and demonstrates interdisciplinary analytical thinking skills.							
	PO4	Demonstrates sufficient knowledge of public finance, law, economics, business, and accounting to meet the needs of both the public and private sectors.							
	PO5	Transforms theoretical knowledge and practical applications in public finance into concrete activities and projects through effective teamwork and shares the results with relevant stakeholders.							
	PO6	Takes initiative and responsibility in theoretical and practical work related to public finance; plans and carries out these processes independently and effectively.							
	PO7	Acts with an awareness of social, scientific, and professional ethical values and remains open to change and innovation in personal and professional development.							
Contribution of the Course to Field Instruction	PO8	Conducts academic and professional work in public finance based on free thought, social responsibility, and universal and ecological ethical values.							
	The course helps Public Finance students understand the political side of public decisions. It introduces basic political concepts and institutions. It shows how political power, interests, participation, and representation can affect public decisions and policies. The course also helps students see the links between political, social, and economic issues. It provides a useful background for further study in public finance and related fields.								
	Course Learning Outcomes (LO)/Contribution to Program Outcomes (PO)								
	Contribution Level: 0: None 1: Very Low 2: Low 3: Medium 4: High 5: Very High								
		PO1	PO2	PO3	PO4	PO5	PO6	PO7	PO8
	LO1	4	1	4	4	1	1	1	2
	LO2	5	1	4	5	1	1	1	2
	LO3	5	2	5	5	1	2	2	3
	LO4	5	1	5	5	1	2	2	3
	LO5	5	1	5	4	1	2	2	3
LO6	5	1	5	5	1	2	3	4	
LO7	3	2	4	4	1	1	3	4	
LO8	4	2	4	4	1	2	3	4	
LO9	4	2	5	4	1	2	4	5	
LO10	5	2	5	5	1	2	4	5	
Topics Covered in the Course	Week 1	Introduction to the Course and Review of the Syllabus Think before class: Why do older people keep complaining about the youth? Read before class: Hesiod – <i>Works and Days</i> (8th Century BCE), Lines 103–199. Course reading: Syllabus of the Course (2026-2027 Fall Semester)							
	Week 2	Science, Politics, and Political Science Think before class: Can we conduct an experiment on Donald Trump’s mind in a laboratory? Why or why not? Read before class: Aristotle – <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (4th Century BCE), 1140b30–1142a30. Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 1–12).							
	Week 3	State and the Sources of Its Might Think before class: Why is FIFA (<i>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</i>) not a state, and what prevents it from becoming one? Read before class: Plato – <i>Republic</i> (4th Century BCE), 369a–371e. Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 56–59).							
	Week 4	Political Power, Authority, and Legitimacy Think before class: After Selim I (<i>Yavuz</i>) conquered the Mamluk Sultanate, why did people in Egypt accept Ottoman rule? Read before class: Machiavelli – <i>Prince</i> (1513), Chapter 17. Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 79–82).							
	Week 5	Political Regimes and Forms of Government Think before class: What is the difference between a king, a president, and a prime minister? Read before class: Montesquieu – <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i> (1748), Book II, selected parts. Course reading: Duverger (1970: pp. 88–95).							

	Week 6	Democracy: Its Benefits and Problems Think before class: Why does democracy sound like a good thing? Read before class: Abraham Lincoln – <i>The Gettysburg Address</i> (19 November 1863) Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 90–95).	
	Week 7	The Roots and Consequences of Sociopolitical Stratification Think before class: Why is it difficult for a factory worker to become the US president? Read before class: Marx & Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848), Chapter I, selected parts. Course reading: Duverger (1970: pp. 51–67).	
	Week 8	Midterm Examination Responsibilities (Weeks 1–7 only): a. All selected readings from Heywood (2019) and Duverger (1970). b. All lectures in the class. c. Extra readings are only required for the bonus (optional) question. d. Extra readings cover weeks 1–7 only.	
	Week 9	Political Mechanisms in Different Political Systems: The Odyssey of a Political Demand Think before class: Why do students never like visiting the Student Administration Office? Read before class I: Khan, G. (1990). A petition to the Fāṭimid caliph al-‘Āmir. <i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i> , 122(1), 44-54 (12th Century’s text, only the translation of the petition). Read before class II: Suleiman I – <i>Answer to Francis I’s Petition</i> (1526), First Letter. Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 109–113).	
	Week 10	Political Engagement and Political Representation Think before class: Why do people protest against the government? Why do the governments hate it? Read before class: Olympe de Gouges – <i>Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen</i> (1791), Preamble. Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 218–224, 460–462, 471).	
	Week 11	Political Representation and Political Parties Think before class: Why does Türkiye have almost 200 political parties? Read before class: <i>Law on Political Parties</i> (Türkiye), Law No. 2820, Chapter III, Part I (Revenues of Parties). Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 244–266).	
	Week 12	Political Interests, Civil Society, and Interest Groups Think before class: Why does TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) exist? Read before class: “Our Agreement with the Department of War”, <i>OpenAI</i> (28 February 2026) https://openai.com/index/our-agreement-with-the-department-of-war/ (This page will automatically translate the text to your own language). Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 269–286).	
	Week 13	Public Opinion, Media, and Political Behavior Think before class: Why are people so frequently exposed to political poll results in the media? See before class: “Türkiye: Election polls, vote shares, and current poll numbers” on <i>PolitPro</i> (https://politpro.eu/tr/turkiye)* Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 201–213). * Please spend some time here. Check everything you find here without subscribing to its paid service.	
	Week 14	Elections and Types of Elections Think before class: Why do people bother waiting in a voting queue on election day? Read before class: Maurice Duverger – <i>Janus: Les Deux Faces de l’Occident</i> (1972), Introduction, selected parts. Course reading: Heywood (2019: pp. 224–242).	
	Week 15	A General Review & A Bridge to PSPA102 Think before class: Which parts we did not discuss about politics in this section of the course? Watch before class: Santiago “Bou” Grasso and Patricio Plaza – <i>El Empleo</i> (Spanish) (2008)* * <i>El Empleo</i> literally means “[the] employment” in Spanish. This is a very short animation with no dialogue or written text; meaning, it is not in Spanish—its directors are from Spanish-speaking part of the world: Argentina. It only uses everyday sounds we produce or hear. For this reason, you can watch it anywhere, even without sound.	
	Week 16	Final Examination Responsibilities (All weeks for this semester): a. All selected readings from Heywood (2019) and Duverger (1970). b. All lectures in the class. c. Extra readings are only required for the bonus (optional) question. d. Extra readings cover weeks 9, 10, 11, and 14 only.	
Course Evaluation Criteria	In-Term Studies	Quantity	Percentage %
	Mid-terms	1	40%
	Quizzes	-	-

	Assignments	-	-	
	Attendance	10 out of 14 class weeks	-	
	Practice	-	-	
	Project	-	-	
	Final examination	1	60%	
	Total		100%	
Disability Policy	If you have a documented disability (e.g., visual, hearing, or physical impairment, etc.) that may influence your performance in this course, it is recommended to meet with the <i>Engelsiz AYBU</i> (https://aybu.edu.tr/engelsiz/content_list-327-yildirim-beyazit-universitesi-engelsiz-universite-birimi-yonergesi.html) to arrange for reasonable conditions (such as accommodation, etc.) to ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all the requirements of this course. You may also contact the local authority of the Faculty of Political Sciences. You should communicate your needs to the course instructor as soon as possible to ensure that any course needs concerning exams, lecture materials, etc. are met.			
Artificial Intelligence Tools Usage Policy	In this course, generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools should be used as supplementary aids to support learning, in accordance with the principles of academic integrity. AI tools may be freely used to understand course materials and generate ideas (brainstorming). However, submitting content generated directly by AI without proper attribution will be considered a violation of academic integrity. AI-generated content may not be submitted as the final product; students must critically review, evaluate, and revise such content in their own words.			