

## Latin American University of Science and Technology School of International Relations

Course name	Costa Rican Political System
Course code	12-2001
Credits	4
Entry requirements	N/A
Modality	Virtual
Nature	Theoretical-practical
Duration and frequency	Quarter, equal to fifteen class weeks
Schedule	Monday, 6:30-9:30pm
Classroom/Lab	N/A
Instructor	Óscar Gutiérrez <a href="mailto:ogutierrezf080@ulacit.ed.cr">ogutierrezf080@ulacit.ed.cr</a>
Administrative Instructions	This course requires an intensive use of the Internet and the electronic databases for research (EBSCO), which makes it necessary for students to have access to this tool from their home.

### **PURPOSE OF THE COURSE**

How are decisions made in society? How can democratic values shape public policy? What is the role of citizens in government? Why are politics relevant to economic activities and entrepreneurship?

This course examines the formal and informal institutions of the Costa Rican state and government in order to understand how they interact to form public policy. This facilitates a permanent critical assessment of the political system and the role each agent plays in the shaping of democracy and life in society. The government is a complex body that transforms input from different sources into policies, norms, programs and declarations. We will examine the constitutional basis of governance, the different branches of government, the influence of the media and other private actors, political parties and interest groups in Costa Rican politics.

### **COMPETENCES**

Traditional education is based on content, but ULACIT uses a curriculum model based on competences, which means that students will develop the ability to think and react as experts in their discipline, and not only to understand its conceptual or theoretical framework. The table specifies the disciplinary and general competences as well as the performance criteria that will be developed.

Competences	Subcompetences	Performance criteria
DISCIPLINARY COMPETENCE		
Disciplinary Competence:	The student will be able to:	The student masters learning activities competences such as:

# COURSE SYLLABUS

<p>Analyze the impact of economic systems, government decisions, and the economic interaction of individuals as part of the comprehensive development of societies.</p>	<p>Determine the performance achieved by the economic development model adopted by a country or region.</p>	<p>Participating in class debates and discussions critically, with peers and the professor, showing the study of the models and economic systems used by different nations to promote their socioeconomic development. Reading various articles from specialized economics magazines, demonstrating the assessment of development or economic stagnation trends in a country, due to government decisions.</p>
		<p>Creating a comparative analysis between systems or economic models, having identified the occurrence of the economic development philosophies of different countries with opposing ideologies. Within case studies, analyzing the behavior of economic phenomena and their impact on the economy of a country or region, and its consequences on the population and financial markets.</p>
	<p>Assess the implications of a historical crisis or economic recession, as part of the development of a country or region.</p>	<p>Gathering data and historical documents about a crisis or economic recession that affected a specific country or region. Identifying the main events, policies, or actions taken by a government or corporations to cause a crisis or economic recession. Doing a historical study on the impact of a crisis or economic recession, showing analysis of the causes and consequences. Presenting the results of the historical study of the economic phenomenon, before their peers and professor.</p>
<p>GENERAL COMPETENCES</p>		

Innovation	Innovation competence involves the capacity to think in an open, critical and purposeful manner; to experience and reflect; inquire; synthesize and reorganize information; generate new ideas; manage change; take risks and anticipate consequences; use technology; act independently and collaborate with others, among others.	It uses technology to conduct research, organize, evaluate and communicate information through case analysis and resolution.  Use creative thinking in proposing solutions to the problems they face in everyday life by simulating scenarios.
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship competence involves the ability to plan systematically, show initiative, geared towards quality, implement problem solving skills, influence, reach agreements, communicate, manage information and other resources, show self-confidence and assertiveness, among others.	Choose the best option according to the context using the information from the readings in the discussions and simulations.
Integrity	Integrity competence involves the capacity to sponsor and apply high moral and ethical principles, respect others, and be consistent with their own values in difficult situations, among others.	Collaborate and interact with others effectively and respectfully in class discussions around the conflicts and challenges of intercultural communication.  Consider and respect other forms of life and cultural patterns that are explored through readings and individual research.

## **PLAN OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

In ULACIT, the learning experience is designed around generative topics, capable of provoking polemic and which demand that the pupils raise their own arguments. The topics are broken down in spirals of investigation, or questions, which are related to each other in order to have a deeper understanding of the topic. In the future, if the students are curious about something, they will have to look for the answers themselves. The real art of the education is to be able to present the correct questions, interacting with the students and helping them in their discovery process. Every teacher's objective is to motivate the curiosity of the students, which is the emotional incentive that will allow them to want to learn more along their lives.

### **Topic 1. Political Systems**

- What is a political system?
- Elements of the Political System
- Principles of legitimacy and effectiveness
- Its usefulness as a category of analysis of political reality and dynamics.

## **Topic 2. Democracy**

- Democracy. Characteristics of a democratic regime.
- Representation and representativeness
- Political legitimacy.
- Democracy, conflict and political power.
- Political parties as a way of political power legitimation.

## **Topic 3. Government systems and electoral systems**

- Types of government systems
- Political parties and political leadership
- The electoral system

## **Topic 4. Origin of the Costa Rican political system**

- Periods of democratic transition in Costa Rica.
- The authoritarian republican regime (1821- end of the XIX Century).
- Evolution and constitutional instability
- The beginning of the transition to democracy (end of the XIX Century – 1975)

## **Topic 5. The long evolution of Costa Rican democracy**

- First period: liberalization of the authoritarian republican regime (finales del S. XIX – 1919)
- Second period: political inclusion of new players (1919-1948)
- Third period: polyarchic establishment (1949-1975)

## **Topic 6. The immediate roots of the current political system**

- The formula of democratic stability of Costa Rica (1975-to the end of the XX Century).
- A political system in deep transformation: rapid social and economic changes.
- Slow, conflicting and inconclusive economic reforms.
- The convulsed Central American context.
- The rearrangement of political forces inside the Government.

## **Topic 7. Political parties' system**

- The electoral system that emerged in the 40s
- Types of elections and circumscriptions.
- The right to participate as candidate.
- Electoral formula.
- The scrutiny.

## **Topic 8. The current state of the Costa Rican political system**

- Weakening of bipartidism and emergence of new political parties. Attenuated multipartidism?
- The difficulties to make decisions in the Executive and Legislative and the role of Judicial Power (Constitutional Court) and the controlling bodies.
- Citizen discontent

## **Topic 9. The Costa Rican political system facing the bicentennial**

- What are the perspectives of the Costa Rican political system facing the bicentennial?
- Issues of ungovernability or of political leadership quality?
- What is required to strengthen and further Costa Rican democracy in the short, medium and long term?
- The hope of citizen participation.

## **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

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### **Teaching methodology**

To ensure that the course is compatible with the needs, interests and styles of learning of all the participants, we use the methodology of "reversed classroom", or "flipped classroom": the assignments that need minor cognitive effort (remembering and understanding) are done by the students out of the classroom, and those who need major cognitive effort, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation, are done in different scenarios in the classrooms.

The course provides materials such as readings, videos, narrated presentations and others, via the online learning platform of ULACIT (i.e. *Blackboard*). Students before coming to class are expected to prepare their participation in class, and study the theory at home. The sessions are reserved to practice, reflection and discussion. They revolve around questions, controversies and issues of real business life. With this active, reflective and participative methodology, students are expected to develop inquiry, research and analytical skills. Moreover, they are expected to develop a deep understanding of the subject, participating in the construction of knowledge shared with other students, teachers and other members of society.

### **Learning resources**

The course has the following educational resources to continually support the teaching-learning process:

- Classrooms-enabled computers, projection equipment and Internet access.
- Online education platform: Blackboard (Bb).
- Document Camera.
- Recording equipment and sound amplification.
- Virtual Library: EBSCO, from which you can access full-text articles.
- Clickers, wireless personal response systems.
- Computer labs with Internet access and applications for research.
- Articulate Presenter, a tool that converts PowerPoint presentations to Flash and can integrate interactions, animations and narrations synchronized.

### **Bibliography**

Required texts:

- Alfaro, S. (2011). *Política y partidos políticos*. San José, C.R.: EUNED.
- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6ta. Ed.)*. Washington, D. C.: APA.
- Constitución Política de la República de Costa Rica.

Ley General de la Administración Pública, República de Costa Rica.  
Código Municipal, República de Costa Rica.

## EVALUATION

The course is graded according to the following assessment chart:

Activity	%
Class Participation	15%
Reading Checks	15%
Moxie Project Opinion Article Allusive Image. Audiovisual product.	20%
Weekly Events and News Analysis	35%
Case Study	10%
Course evaluation (CEPA)	5%
Total	100%

### Class participation: 15%

Students are expected to come to class on time and prepare the corresponding tasks every week. For instance, students must read the assigned required readings before coming to any session. Reading verifications will be carried every week by means of individual questions. Students are expected to understand the issues covered by each reading, do the reading schemes, write down doubts, and carry further research before coming to any session. During the sessions, students should be participating and collaborating with other students in a respectful manner, whether by voicing their questions and concerns, answering questions, and/or working on the assigned tasks. If the student is consistently distracted and not paying attention in class, marks will be deducted. If the student is absent, he/she loses the 1% for the week.

### Rubric for class participation

Criteria	Met (1)	Not met (0)
Punctuality	Arrives on time to class and stays in the classroom for the entire session period.	Arrives late to class and does not stay in the classroom for the entire session period.
Preparation	Comes prepared to class, having schematized the readings and raised doubts.	Does not come prepared to class, does not schematize the readings or raise doubts.
Values	Behaves in a respectful manner.	Does not behave in a respectful manner.
Participation	Contributes to the class raising comments that encourage discussion.	Participates only when requested by the teacher or does not get involved at all.

# COURSE SYLLABUS



Collaboration	Cooperates with others, showing leadership, ethics, negotiation and initiative skills.	Does not demonstrate leadership, ethics, negotiation and initiative skills.
TOTAL	The total is calculated based on 5 points	

## Reading Checks: 15%

Students are required to answer comprehension questions based on the readings and class lectures. Reading checks will consist of multiple choice questions that have to be answered in a limited time.

## Weekly Events and News Analysis: 35% (At least 7 interventions, 5% each)

In the online learning environment, the professor will facilitate a weekly discussion to analyze relevant political events occurred in the previous week and their implications for the Political System. Students will be required to present solid evidence-based analysis and conclusions. Throughout the quarter, each student must have at least 5 graded participations. These weekly interventions will be graded according to the following rubric:

Criteria	4	3	2	1
1. Evidences the research conducting to solid data and reliable information.				
2. The report shows a thorough analysis of assigned reading and previous class discussions.				
3. Makes innovative contributions, questioning previous hypotheses.				
4. Student shows a progression of ideas, concepts and critical remarks.				
TOTAL (CALCULATED BASED ON 20 POINTS)				

## Case Study: 10%

Divided into groups, students will assess different cases from Costa Rican politics in order to apply conceptual and empirical evidence to support their analysis. Results from case studies will be shared with classmates and discussion will follow. It is graded according to the following rubric:

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1
1. Evidence of preparation: organized structure, presentation/discussion flows well, students are able to identify different components to political systems according to previous knowledge.					
2. Content: students presented accurate & relevant information, appeared knowledgeable about the case study assigned and the topic discussed, offered conceptual framework for dealing with the problems identified in the case studies					
4. Delivery: clear and logical organization, effective introduction and conclusion, creativity, oral communication skills.					
5. Discussion: students initiate and maintain class discussion concerning assigned case studies, use of visual aids, good use of time, involve classmates and build knowledge together.					
Total (Calculated based on 25 points)					

## Moxie Project: 20%

From 2020 and on, ULACIT will have its own Web channel, called Moxie, produced by students, in alliance with Delfino.cr. The purpose of this channel is to provide students with a space to generate and disseminate their ideas. It also serves as a showcase to exhibit students' academic projects nationwide.

It's called Moxie - which in urban English means having the ability to face difficulties with intelligence, boldness and courage - in honor of our students, whose "moxie" characterizes them.

If there were printed student publications in the past, now these initiatives are transferred to the digital space, which allows our students to experiment, not only with digital publishing, but with audiovisual production, graphic design, digital marketing and web technology, among others.

This course contributes to the written and audiovisual content of the Moxie Channel. Students are expected to write an article of 3000 characters or 550 words about problems or dilemmas defined by the professor in the previously selected courses.

The project consists of three products, namely: article text, allusive image, and video for deepening the content. The three components constitute the contribution, so only those contributions that are complete can be qualified.

The final product will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

### EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR MOXIE PROJECT 20%

Criteria	Description of Criteria	1 Meets	0.5 Incomplete	0 Fails
A. Length and structure	The article has an extension of 3000 characters without spaces (or 550 words), distributed in four paragraphs (1 introductory paragraph, 2 development paragraphs, 1 conclusion paragraph).	1	0,50	0
B. Title	It has a title that suggests the topic and provokes the interest of the reader	1	0,50	0
C. Introductory paragraph is well written (paragraph 1)	The author draws the reader's attention by using one of the following resources: tells an anecdote, presents a fact, makes a metaphor, asks provocative question, evokes a famous image, scene or phrase	1	0,50	0
	Locates in the geographic, political or social context the subject that it addresses.	1	0,50	0
	Let the reader know: Why it is important to address the problem or the dilemma. The originality of the perspective with which it deals.	1	0,50	0

	It says explicitly, clearly and forcefully what his/her position is about it.			
D. Development of author's position (paragraph 2 and 3)	In the first paragraph of the development, the author presents the evidence (statistical data, proven facts, definitions ...) that supports his/her position and makes it clear why it is adequate to respond to the problem or dilemma and why it should be accepted by the reader.	1	0,50	0
	In the second paragraph of the development, the author anticipates the questions that readers could ask about his/her position regarding the problem or dilemma. Therefore, the student says what those possible arguments could be against and declares to what extent they could be right or true, and how in spite of that his/her position remains valid.	1	0,50	0
F. Conclusion (Paragraph 4)	The conclusion is clear in addressing how the evidence provided is the basis for maintaining the author's position-solution and why readers should accept it.	1	0,50	0
	It suggests that the solution you propose: is an effective and feasible plan, which does not offer significant or unforeseen inconveniences, or justifies that the balance is favorable to the advantages, in relation to the disadvantages, or suggests results or consequences, or states that no solution is perfect, but the one it offers is the best.	1	0,50	0
G. The development meets criteria of style and form.	The reading of the article is fluid because ideas relate to each other, making good use of transitional words and phrases, as well as a correct punctuation.	1	0,50	0
	The author gives reason for the origin of outside ideas and data with which he supports his position, following the APA	1	0,50	0

	standards (references in the text and list of references)			
	The source of the data you use is solid and primary when available.	1	0,50	0
	Uses professional vocabulary, not colloquial.	1	0,50	0
	Reflects succinct writing, expressing what is necessary to say with the least number of words.	1	0,50	0
	The writing has no spelling or grammar mistakes (incongruities between person, gender and number)	1	0,50	0
H. Image	The image is a photograph, graphic or illustration, directly related to the content of the article, capable of communicating the emotion and message.	1	0,50	0
	The original image is attached in a separate high resolution file in PNG or JPG format at 72 dpi.	1	0,50	0
	The image has characteristics of composition, depth of field and lighting, which facilitate its visualization and interpretation.	1	0,50	0
I. Audiovisual	The audiovisual is a video, an original audio podcast or a slideck created by the student of no more than 8 minutes with clarity in sound and image (if it is a video), oriented directly to deepen the content of the article.	1	0,50	0
	The format of the audio and video files is MP4, without compression, 16-32 bits, with a resolution of 1,920 X 1,080 HD pixels (using H264 or H265 compressor). WAV files are recommended, when possible.	1	0,50	0
<b>TOTAL</b>				
This product has three components: the article, the image and the video. The absence of one of the three, excludes the contribution being assessed, and results in the complete loss of the assigned score.				

## Course assessment (CEPA): 5%

As an integral activity of the course, the student will have the opportunity of assessing its

different components: the didactic competencies of the professor, the quality of the materials, the educational environment, the competencies of the ULACIT graduate, the effective use of Blackboard, the assessment system, the level of challenge and requirement. Also, as a central element of Teaching for Understanding (TfU), the education model that ULACIT privileges, the student will have a space with the CEPA to reflect on his/her own performance (self-assessment) and that of his/her classmates (co-assessment). This intellectual exercise allows the student to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses, and to perform actions to continuously improve his/her processes of knowledge construction. When assessing his/her classmates, the student assumes an active role as a member of a learning community, committed with the educational task. Because it is about a self-reflection space within the course and due to the value it has for academic decision making, it is awarded a value of 5% within the final grade of the course. In order to earn this evaluative category, the student is expected to take his/her time, analyzing responsibly each question and answering the questionnaire in full.

## **COLLABORATIVE PROJECT CONTRACT**

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The collaborative project is a way of articulating the work activities of a human group around a set of goals, objectives and results to be achieved. This implies an active interdependence between the members of a group that share and assume a work mission. As a learning methodology for ULACIT students, collaborative projects value interaction, collaboration and solidarity among members, as well as negotiation skills to reach agreements and face potential conflicts.

Among the characteristics of a collaborative project is the smooth communication channels, based on relationships of trust and mutual support. It focuses on the goals set in a climate of trust and reciprocal support among its members, where the movements are synergistic. Therefore, the ultimate goal of a collaborative project is to obtain results with greater impact, where the whole is greater than the contribution of each member. In this way, as part of the process of creativity and innovation in education, for each collaborative project students must create, negotiate and draw up a work contract among the members of the group.

No evaluable collaborative project can be started until all the members of the group have signed the work contract. On the BLACKBOARD platform students can find a guide to formulate their own contract.

## **INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES**

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### **Academic Honesty Policy**

ULACIT aims for the highest and most rigorous standards of academic life. In this course you are expected to avoid dishonest conducts such as fraud or plagiarism. Fraud constitutes making up data, forge bibliography, use projects done by another person, and obtain unauthorized help to do your course work. Plagiarism includes copying textually from another source into your document; it includes phrases, sentences, paragraphs obtained on the Internet, book or any other sources without the appropriate reference. Paraphrasing without references is also considered plagiarism. Whether the fraud or plagiarism is performed voluntarily or involuntarily, in an individual or group work, it will cause you to fail the course immediately. In case the student is found guilty of fraud or plagiarism on a second course, the student will be expelled from the institution.

### **English integration Level**

ULACIT is a bilingual university. Therefore, the degrees that include English-taught courses use Spanish and English language resources, depending on the location of the course in the

curriculum. In the courses marked with the word "English" on the academic offering, students can submit their projects and other assignments in English. The courses in bilingual careers are completely taught in English. In the bachelor and postgraduate degrees, reading English literature is compulsory, although the courses may incorporate additional readings in Spanish.

## **Creating a culture of respect**

In ULACIT, we set high expectations for conduct of members of the university community. Therefore, we emphasize the value of mutual respect and expect everyone to treat others as they want to be treated. We define respect as the consideration and appreciation we can show others without exceptions, so do not tolerate disruptive actions such as:

- Tardiness to class or early leave.
- Constantly disrupting the class, rising from their seat.
- Eating and drinking in the classroom.
- Attending phone calls during the class period.
- Packing your belongings before the teacher has completed the lesson.
- Falling asleep in the classroom.
- Reading newspapers.
- Using mobile devices for purposes other than those of the class, promoting distractions.
- Coming unprepared to class.
- Making negative or taunting comments about their classmates and/or the teacher.
- Talking out of turn.
- Showing unwillingness to listen to others.
- Using vulgar language on campus.

We ask teachers to take corrective measures to ensure a respectful coexistence environment conducive to learning and habits of respect, fundamental to the comprehensive and professional training of students. At the beginning of each period, students should consult with their faculty for specific regulations and sanctions that could be implemented.

## **Attention to diversity**

The curricular approach at ULACIT focuses on the development of competences through the completion of projects, allowing students to fulfill the academic requirements based on their own learning styles, abilities, and individual interests. The primary responsibility of learning is placed on the student; the instructor is responsible for setting course expectations from start, offering the required support to satisfy them, and awarding a level of flexibility that allows each student to choose how he or she will fulfill the course goals and work at his own pace in the completion of the projects assigned. Furthermore, the instructor will provide the required learning materials, along with continuous feedback using the rubrics designed for each project. The feedback is of a qualitative as well as quantitative nature. The use of technological tools and collaborative work allows the professor to tailor the educational process to the abilities of each student. If you have any additional special educational needs, please contact [diversidad@ulacit.ac.cr](mailto:diversidad@ulacit.ac.cr)

## **Claims**

ULACIT safeguards your rights as a student and guarantees due process in cases of claims regarding grades, for which it must follow the process established by the Regulation of

Student System, available on the website of ULACIT, Vice President of Student Services, Student Regulations, chapter 16.

Check that the qualifications posted in your academic record are the correct ones. To do this, you will receive in your mail account @ulacit.ed.cr the report card from the previous period in Week 1. If the grade is not the correct one, contact the course instructor, who within 3 business days must justify your grading. If no response is given by the teacher, or the justification does not satisfy you, address the complaint to the Dean along with the response of the teacher. The issue should be resolved within 3 business days and exhaust administrative regulations.

Claims regarding qualifications can only be reviewed during the next academic period, so it is very important to assume responsibility of the strict control of your own qualifications.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Reading and Contents
1	Introduction, Syllabus and Presentation.
2	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 1 (p1-p16) Elements of the Political System: Institutions, Actors, Time, Space Principles of the Political System: Legitimacy and Efficacy Political Constitution of Costa Rica
3	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 1 (p16-p28) Political Regimes: authoritarian, totalitarian, demoliberal. Democracy, Poliarchy, Oligarchy. Conditions for the "Democratic Rule" p24. Political Constitution of Costa Rica
4	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 1 (p29-p46) Material Elements of Political Power. Ideological Elements of Political Power: Legitimacy. p33 Leadership and Legitimacy. Political Parties and legitimacy. Political Constitution of Costa Rica (25, 26, 29, 96, 98)
5	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 2 (p55-p74) Political Systems: Presidential, Parliamentary, Direct, Semi-Presidential. Electoral Systems and Legitimacy.
6	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 2 (p75-p96) Costa Rican Electoral System: "Amparo Electoral" p75
7	Electoral Rights: elect and be elected. Electoral Code: Art. 205 *Electoral Formula*
8	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 3 (p99-p117) Political Parties and Representation. Types of Parties and Evolution p112-p113 Left and Right p114-p117 Political Constitution of Costa Rica
9	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 3 (p117-p147) Political Parties and their Functions. p121 Political Party Systems. p127 Political Party Indicators. p129
10	Direct Political Participation: Referendum, Plebiscito. Political Constitution of Costa Rica
11	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 3 (p148-p156) Non Electoral Political Participation. Unions, Media, Religious Organizations, Civil Society. Political Constitution of Costa Rica
12	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 4 (p167-p219) Evolution of the Costa Rican Party System
13	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 4 (p167-p219) Evolution of the Costa Rican Party System
14	Gender Parity Norms and Affirmative Action. Participation of Minorities. Political

# COURSE SYLLABUS



	Constitution of Costa Rica
15	Politica y Partidos Politicos. Sergio Alfaro Salas, 2011. Chapter 4 (p219-p222) Political Party Financial Norms. Political Constitution of Costa Rica