FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

2ND SEMESTER 2019

ASSIGNMENT 2

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE
ITP521S
Course Name: Introduction to Political Science

Course Code: ITP521S

Department: Social sciences

Course Duration: One Semester

NQF Level and Credit: Level 7; 15 Credits

Students are strongly advised to visit the eLearning MOODLE site in order to have access to course materials, course outlines and PowerPoint presentations.

Moodle Enrollment Key: itp521s

Marker-tutor Details

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Ms N.N. Puleinge would like to use this opportunity to thank all Introduction to Political Science students for submitting Assignment 2. The overall performance was good comparing to the first assignment. The highest score in Assignment 2 was 82%.

The following are common mistakes identified during marking:

- Most of the materials/sources listed under the reference page do not feature anywhere in the body of assignment.
- Some students did not use neither the American Psychological Association (APA) nor Harvard referencing style.
Some assignments do not contain a table of contents, introduction, Conclusion or Reference page.

Practical and relevant examples were not provided by many students; therefore, general information about the topic was presented.

ASSIGNMENT 2 (MEMO)

THE CONCEPT OF A DEMOCRACY:

A basic principle of democracy is majority rule and the protection of individual and minority rights, which, although seemingly contradictory, are the very foundation of democratic government. According to May, majority rule is the only reasonable decision rule that is “fair”, that is, and that does not privilege voters by letting some votes count for more or privilege an alternative by requiring fewer votes for its passing. Stated more formally, majority rule is the only binary decision rule that has properties like fairness; decisiveness. Majority rule is a means of organizing government and deciding public issues without taking away the basic rights and freedoms of minority groups or individuals. Minorities, by virtue of their religion, ethnic background, geographic location, income level or as the losers in elections – are guaranteed basic human rights that no government or majority should remove.

With their rights guaranteed, minorities can contribute to their country’s democratic institutions. Because a majority can win a vote under majority rule, it has been commonly argued that majority rule can lead to a tyranny of the majority. The concept of democracy, in its pure and its practical forms, does indeed mean ‘majority rule’. Moreover, it does not mean that individuals enjoy certain rights against the State which will trump the will of the majority. It is submitted that individuals enjoy no rights that trump the will of the majority. The reason for this assertion lies in the genesis of the individual rights themselves. It is true that there are certain individual rights that are considered inalienable and which can bring the State to account. However, it is vital to recognize that those rights themselves, their status and application are born out of the foundation and fundamental processes of majority rule. In sum therefore, there are individual rights capable of ‘trumping’ state powers, but those rights are themselves born of the democratic process and therefore ultimately subordinate to that overarching mechanism, concept and power.
Introduction to Democracy

The word “democracy” comes from the Greek word *demos*, which means “common people” and *Kratos*, which means strength. The term “democracy” first appeared in ancient Greek political and philosophical thought in the city-state of Athens during the classical antiquity. It was found in 508–507 BC by the Athenians and it was led by Cleisthenes. Cleisthenes is also known as “the father of Athenian democracy”. Democracy is a system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body, such as a parliament. It is also known as “rule of the majority”. The power can’t be inherited in democracy. People elect their leaders. Representatives stand in an election and the citizen’s vote for their representative. The representative with the greatest number of votes gets the power.

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF DEMOCRACY ARE AS FOLLOW:

1. **Equality:**

   The democratic societies emphasize the principle that all the people are equal and all the individual valued equally, have equal opportunity, have equal rights and have equal prestige without any discrimination on the bases of casts, creed, sex, religion, ethnic group. In a democracy individual and groups still maintain right to have different culture, personalities, belief and languages.

2. **Accountability:**

   In a democracy elected and appointed officials must be accountable to the people. They are responsible for their action. Officials must make decision and perform their duties according to the will and wishes of people not for themselves.

3. **Citizen participation:**

   One of the most important elements of democracy is citizen participation government. As participation is key role of citizens in a democracy. It is not only their duty. The citizen participation may take many forms including running for election, voting in elections, debating issues, civic meeting, becoming unformatted paying taxes, being member of private voluntary organization, form an association, criticize
the government. The participation of citizen is one essential element of democracy as participation brings better democracy.

4. Rule of law:

In democracy no one is above the law, not even elected president. It means that everyone must obey the law and be held accountable if they violate it. If anyone violate it, then culprit will be punished by law. Thus, democracy insists equally, fairly and consistently enforce.

5. Political Tolerance:

Democratic societies are politically tolerant. This means that while most people rule in democracy, the right of minorities must be protected. People whose are not in power must be allowed to speech out. Minorities are sometimes referred to as “the opposition” because they may have ideas that are different from those majority. The individual citizen must also learn to be tolerant of each other.

A democratic society is composed of people from different cultures, religions, racial and ethnic groups who have viewpoint different majority of population. A democratic society is enriched by diversity. If the majority deny rights to and destroy their opposition, then they may also destroy democracy.

6. Transparency:

For government to accountable, the people must aware of what is happening in the country. This referred to as transparency in government. A transparent government holds public meeting and allow citizens to attend. In a democracy, the press and people can get information about what decisions are being made by whom and why.

7. Economic freedom:

People in a democracy must have some form of economic freedom. The private ownership of property and business allowed by government and people are allowed to choose their own work and lab our union. The role that government should play in the economy is open to debate, but it is generally accepted that free markets should exist in a democracy and the state should not totally control the
economy. Some argue that state should play stronger role in countries where great inequalities of exist due to past discrimination.

8. Multi-party system:

In order to have multiparty system, then one party must participate in elections and play a role in government. A multiparty system provides government with different view of point on issues. It allows for opposition to the party that wins election. A multiparty system provides voters with a choice of candidates, parties and the policies to vote for. Historically, when a country has only one party, the result has been dictatorship.

9. Regular free, fair election:

The regular free and fair election is one of the important elements of democracy. Human rights are most essential part of human rights. One-way citizens of the country express their will is by electing official to represent them in government.

10. Accepting the result of election:

In democratic government there are both winner and lesser, Ruling party and opposition party. The loser or opposition party in election believes so strongly that their party is the best one that they refuse to accept the result for election. It may even result in violence which is also against democracy.

11. Human rights:

Both human rights and democracy are interrelated. All democracies strive to respect and protect the human rights of the citizens. The main aim of human rights is to promote the respect of human dignity. The democracy emphasizes the value of every human being.

The democratic government ensures human rights like freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, right to religion, right to equality, right to education. In a democracy, no is above law democracy insist fairly law.
Many democratic governments also choose to have bill of rights to protect the people against abuse of power. The bill of rights is list of rights and freedoms guaranteed to all people in the country. When a bill of rights becomes a part of country constitution, the court has the power to enforce these rights. It limits the power of government and has duties on individual and the organization.

12. Control of the abuse of power:

Corruption is most common abuse of power. Corruption when government officials use the public funds for their own benefit. To check this corruption abuse of power, democratic, government to have independent court to limit abuse of power.

NOTE: Relevant and practical examples should be provided throughout the discussion.

DEMOCRACY IS FACED WITH THE FOLLOWING CHALLENGES:

Corruption and Inefficiency

In many democratic countries, the political leaders, officers, tend to be corrupt, dishonest and inefficient. They ask for the bribe. This results in lack of trust of the citizens. This affects the working of democracy in the country very badly.

Role of Anti-Social Elements

The role of anti-social elements arises during the elections. A lot of people are forced or bribed to vote for a candidate or party. Rigging also takes place during elections.

Growing Economic and Social Inequalities among People

There is a lot of socioeconomic inequalities amongst the people. Although all the citizens have the right to vote and fight elections only rich people have a chance to win the election.
Communalism

During elections, many voters give weight to the caste and religion of the candidate. Political parties also keep in mind the caste or religion of a person while distributing tickets for the election. Representatives elected based on caste or religion work for the welfare of the people belonging only to their caste or religion.

**NOTE:** Relevant examples are required.

**END OF MEMO**