

POLITICS

Qualification: A-Level | Exam board: Edexcel



SUBJECT OVERVIEW

This course is designed to:

- Encourage you to obtain a balanced education in politics
- Allow you to examine key themes in political analysis
- Provide you with the opportunity to specialise in both UK and USA politics.



Politics develops your critical awareness, independent thinking and understanding of complex structures and political systems.

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YEAR ONE COURSE CONTENT

Component One: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

This section explores the nature of politics and how people engage in the political process in the UK. You will explore the emergence and development of the UK's democratic system and the similarities, differences, connections and parallels between direct and indirect democracy. You will focus on the role and scope of political parties that are so central to contemporary politics, including the significance of the manifestos they publish at election time and their relevance to the mandate of the resulting government. You will examine how electoral systems in the UK operate and how individuals and groups are influenced in their voting behaviour and political actions. This component will further examine the role of the media in contemporary politics.

Component Two: UK Government and Non-core Political Ideas

The component introduces the set of rules governing politics in the UK, the UK constitution, which is different in nature from most of the rest of the world. It further introduces you to the specific roles and powers of the different major branches of the government – legislative, executive, and judiciary – as well as the relationships and balance of power between them, and considers where sovereignty now lies within this system. You will explore the following key themes: the relative powers of the different branches of UK government; the extent to which the constitution has changed in recent years; the desirability of further change; and the current location of sovereignty within the UK political system.

This section allows you to explore one of five additional political ideas (Anarchism, Ecologism, Feminism, Multiculturalism or Nationalism). You will learn about the core ideas and principles, the effects of these ideas, the divisions within each idea and their key thinkers.

YEAR TWO COURSE CONTENT

Component Three: Comparative Politics (Government and Politics of the USA)

The USA has been considered by some to be a 'beacon of democracy'. As a world power, understanding the nature of US democracy, and the debates surrounding it, is crucial given the considerable impact that the USA has on UK, European and global politics. You will explore the US Constitution and the arguments surrounding this guiding document of US democracy. In learning about the key institutions of government in the USA and analysing the manner in which they achieve this power and exercise it over their citizens, you will judge ultimately whether 'liberty and justice for all' has been achieved in the USA.

You will be expected to highlight the debates on the nature of democracy in the USA and evaluate the extent to which it remains an issue. You will also compare and contrast politics and institutions in the US with those in the UK. This will develop a wider understanding of politics as a discipline, underpinned by the theoretical concepts of comparative politics.

WHAT DOES THIS COURSE PREPARE ME FOR?

You will be suited to this course if you are interested in contemporary politics. If you would like to learn more about how the country is run, the relationship between people and politics and how to scrutinise the political process this course is ideal for you.

Politics develops your critical awareness, independent thinking and understanding of complex structures and political systems.

If you also intend to study A-Levels in English, Law, Psychology, Sociology, Citizenship or Communication & Culture you will find this subject extremely beneficial.

ASSESSMENT

You will be required to develop independent research skills alongside those of critical analysis in order to successfully complete the course.

FULL A-LEVEL POLITICS

Component One: UK Politics

Written examination: 2 hours 33⅓% of the qualification
84 marks

Assessment overview:

Section A: One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two.

Section B: One 24-mark question from a choice of two.

Component Two: UK Government

Written examination: 2 hours 33⅓% of the qualification
84 marks

Assessment overview:

Section A: One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – Plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two.

Section B: One 24-mark question from a choice of two.

Component Three: Comparative Politics

Written examination: 2 hours 33⅓% of the qualification
84 marks

Assessment overview:

Section A: One 12-mark question from a choice of two

Section B: One compulsory 12-mark question focused on comparative theories

Section C: Two 30-mark questions from a choice of three.

Updated: October 2023