

# A-level Government and Politics

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### Overview

Studying this subject will develop your understanding of structures of authority and power, how political systems differ, and enable you to interpret, evaluate and comment on the nature of politics and government. You will develop a range of transferable analytical, debating and communication skills.

### Key Facts

Start Dates:

- 5 April 2021 (Brighton only)
- 6 September 2021
- 3 January 2022

Colleges:

- Bournemouth
- Brighton
- London
- Oxford

Entry level:

- Academic: Completed 10 years of schooling (GCSE or equivalent)
- English: IELTS 5.5 or equivalent

Minimum age:

- 16

Length:

- 2 Academic Years (3 terms)
- We also offer an entry from Year 12.

Lessons:

- Average 7 hours per week for each A-level subject (plus homework and private study)

Class size:

- 4-10

## Learning outcomes

- Gain UK national university entrance qualification
- Raise English to university level
- Develop study skills required at degree level
- Develop specialist subject expertise

## Course content and structure

The following syllabus outline is based on Edexcel exam board content. Please note that exam boards may vary from college to college.

### Year 1

Democracy in the context of the UK

- Direct democracy and representative democracy
- Participation

A wider franchise

- History of UK franchise extension
- Barriers to the franchise

Group Politics

- Pressure groups
- Other organisations and groups: think tanks, lobbyists and corporations

Rights in context

- Historical development of rights in the UK

Political parties

- Introduction to UK political parties
- Political party funding
- Established political parties: The Conservative Party, The Labour Party, The Liberal Democrats
- Emerging and minor UK political parties
- The current UK party system — a multi-party

Electoral systems

- Elections and democracy
- First Past the Post Voting system

- Other electoral systems used in the UK
- Referendums in the UK

### Voting behaviour and the role of the media in politics

- How the UK votes by region, class, gender
- The role of the media

### UK Government: The Constitution

- Nature and history of the UK Constitution
- Constitutional change since 1997 — the Labour Party
- Constitutional change since 1997
- Conservative Party 2010 - 7
- Devolution in England
- Devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Debates on further constitutional reform

### Parliament

- The structure and role of the Commons and the Lords
- Functions of Parliament
- Powers of the Commons and Lords
- Effectiveness of Parliament

### The PM and the Executive Branch

- The structure, role, and powers of the executive
- The concept of ministerial responsibility
- The PM and the Cabinet
- The Supreme Court

### The EU

- The aims, role and impact of the European Union (EU) on UK government
- The location of sovereignty in the UK political system
- Core Political Ideas: Liberalism, Conservatism, Nationalism, Socialism

## Year 2

### The US Constitution

- The nature of the US Constitution
- The principles of the US Constitution

### US federalism

- The main characteristics of federalism
- Interpretations and debates around the US Constitution and federalism

## Democracy and participation: electoral systems

- Presidential elections
- The main processes to elect a US president
- The importance of incumbency on a president seeking a second term
- Interpretations and debates of US democracy
- Campaign finance
- The key ideas and principles of the Democratic and Republican parties
- The distribution of power and changing significance of the parties
- Coalition of supporters for each party
- Interest groups in the USA

## US presidency

- Formal sources of presidential power as outlined in the US Constitution
- Informal sources of presidential power and their use
- Interpretations of the US presidency

## US Supreme Court and civil rights

- The nature and role of the Supreme Court
- The appointment process
- The Supreme Court and public policy
- The protection of civil liberties and rights
- Race and rights in contemporary US politics

## US Congress

- The structure of Congress
- The distribution of powers within Congress
- The functions of Congress

## Typical A-level subject combinations with Government and Politics

- Government and Politics, Geography and Maths
- Government and Politics, Geography and History
- Government and Politics, Economics and Maths

## Sample enrichment activities

- Houses of Parliament trip
- Current Affairs and News Club
- History film Club
  
- Trinity Arts awards

- Debating Society

## Sample academic calendar (2021-2022)

### Year 1

#### September

- 6th: term starts
- Student induction

#### October

- 28th - 22nd: half term
- Progress tests

#### November

- University fairs and talks

#### December

- 10th: term ends
- End of term exams

#### January

- 3rd: term starts

#### February

- 10th - 11st: half term
- Progress tests
- University fairs

#### March

- End of term exams
- 18th: term ends

#### April

- 4th: term starts

#### May

- Progress tests

#### June

- Exams
- 10th: term ends

## Year 2

### September

- 5th Sept: term starts

### October

- 17th – 21st: half term
- 15th October: UCAS deadline (Medicine)
- Progress tests

### November

- University fairs and talks

### December

- 9th: term ends
- End of term exams

### January

- 2nd: term starts
- 15th January: UCAS deadline (other subjects)

### February

- 9th – 10th: half term
- Progress tests

### March

- 17th: term ends
- Mock exams

### April

- 3rd: term starts
- Progress tests

### May

- Final exams

### June

- 9th June: term ends

## Recommended reading

Below is a list of books which may help you prepare for your studies prior to arrival. Please note that additional books, and online resources such as websites and journals will be shared once you begin your course.

- UK Government and Politics for AS/A Level by P. Lynch
- Essentials of UK Politics by Andrew Heywood
- US Government and Politics for A Level by Anthony J. Bennett

## Degree progression

An A-level in Government and Politics provides an excellent background for careers in law, journalism, the caring professions, teaching, and a range of management and business areas. Example degree courses which generally require or accept Politics A-level include:

- Economics
- History
- International Relations
- Journalism
  
- Law
- Politics
- Social Policy

## Sample alumni progression

Elda Lauka

- Politics/Economics/Maths
- University of York (Politics with International Relations)

Anar Gyulyumov

- Politics/Economics/Maths
- University of York (Philosophy, Politics and Economics)

Lidingrong Huang

- Politics/Economics/Maths
- University of York (Economics)