

Step up to A-Level Politics

What will I study in this course?

A-Level Politics puts you at the heart of the action in terms of understanding the world around us. All decisions that impact daily life are political. This course will give you an insight into the ideas, institutions and organisations that regulate and control our modern lives.



UK Government

Understand where power lies in the country, what limits there are on the power of a Prime Minister, and explore the extent to which we are actually free and democratic within the UK system. You'll study the major branches of government and come to understand the relationships between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the UK government.

UK Politics

Why are things the way they are? Who has power in this country? How do we bring about change? How different are the main parties? Why don't young people seem to care about politics? All of these are pertinent questions to explore through the study of UK politics. From the very origins of democracy and the struggles to obtain the vote, through to how Boris Johnson won in December 2019, all will be explored.

US Government and Politics

Where does power lie in the US? How does it contrast with the UK? How can someone get the most votes, but not become president? The interplay between the great institutions of state will be explored and using comparative theory contrasted with their UK counterparts.

Ideologies

What is the role of the state? Are people fundamentally good? For whom should government work? Is radical change good? The answer to many of these questions, and more, form the foundation stones of the ideas that have shaped the world for centuries. We will endeavour to unravel them.

What skills will this course develop?

Politics is all about construction of a persuasive, evaluative argument. Learning to explore the competing explanations and through rigorous integration explaining a position.

This course will develop your written and spoken communication skills, it will develop your critical faculties and make you more responsive to the position of authors.

You will improve your ability to present a spoken argument, alongside the essential skills of independent research and time management, which will serve you well for the transition to undergraduate study.

Most importantly it will equip you with a political awareness and ensure you are an informed citizen within our modern democracy.

What can I go on to study?

Politics is an excellent foundation for studying Politics and International Relations at University, alongside a host of other social sciences and Humanities. By understanding clear written communication you will also have an advantage in the Sciences.

Step up to A-Level Politics

This is a menu of tasks to help you get ready to study Politics at A-Level.

Each week try to choose a balance of activities to ensure variety in your learning. Complete the learning log on the final page, alongside keeping an organised folder of any transition work that you complete.



Short video clips (less than 10 minutes)

Each of the playlists offer clips with context and content for the course. Write down any key details regarding structures or processes. Are there any issues, limitations or questions that you want answering?

UK Parliament – Teach Parliament Videos

(These videos are brilliant, and explain everything you could need to know about the UK Parliament)

<https://tinyurl.com/y8la9nk2>

Politics Unboringed

A playful take on some of the issues within UK Politics

<https://tinyurl.com/lvnzige>

A Level Politics - Ideologies

A comprehensive playlist of videos explaining the three major ideologies on the course.

<https://tinyurl.com/y8quy49f>

Crash Course US

Government and Politics

Possibly one of the best online resources for understanding US Politics.

<https://tinyurl.com/lvnzige>



Longer videos

These videos will get you thinking even more deeply about British Government and Politics. Write down key information that you found significant, alongside any subsequent questions that these videos may have spawned.

Inside the Commons

(An excellent documentary series explaining the workings of the House, the first episode is linked)

<https://vimeo.com/146333961>

The Making of Modern Britain

(The historical, and political development of Britain)

<https://tinyurl.com/yat583x6>

UK Political Documentaries

(A collection of assorted documentaries on the UK political scene historically)

<https://tinyurl.com/ydequjcb>



Radio programmes and podcasts

There are a huge array of political radio programmes and podcasts available. If you do not have a podcast app, or cannot sign in to BBC Sounds, this would be your first thing to remedy. Below are a few stretching and informative programmes for you to enjoy and make notes from.

BBC Politics Podcasts

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/category/factual-politics>

The A Level Politics Show

<https://anchor.fm/nick-de-souza>

BBC – Any Questions?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qgvj>

Political Thinking With Nick Robinson

<https://player.fm/series/series-1445139>

US Political Podcasts

<https://player.fm/featured/politics>

BBC Radio 4 – 6:30pm on Fridays.

The Now Show or *The News Quiz* takes a satirical swipe at the weeks new.



Questions to consider

The questions below are designed to get you thinking more broadly about the big issues in Politics. Choose a question and try discussing it with somebody else. Write 500 words exploring different possible responses and explaining your own opinion.

What is the best way to run a country?

Does money equal power?

Are elections fair?

Are people fundamentally selfish, or good?

What does equality really mean in society?

What role does the media play in influencing what we think, and how we vote?



Twitter is your friend

Twitter is Politics as it happens. Following the right people, a good indication is to look at who political journalists follow, and follow them too. <https://twitter.com/bbclaurak> is a very good place to start.



Read a quality newspaper at least once a week

Politics is ever changing, but also far easier to understand the more you know about it. Thus, as a minimum you should be reading a good broadsheet newspaper at least once a week. You might also consider a magazine like *The Economist* (which usually has a great student subscription rate) or *Private Eye*.



Books & Other Longer Reads

These books and longer reads are excellent introductions to the study of Politics. They are all available to buy and download as e-books, some of them are free!

Politics for Beginners

Usborne Books

The Politics Book

DK Publishing

Ideology: A very short introduction

Michael Freeden

A Brief Summary of UK Government

(PDF downloadable from the school site)

How it Works

<https://tinyurl.com/ybayxddd>

British Politics: A very short introduction

Tony Wright



TV programmes and films

Lots of TV programmes and films have used Politics, indeed political dramas are their own sub-genre. Below are some examples of regular TV, comedy and drama shows alongside films that are set within this context and support your understanding of how things work.

House of Cards

Yes Minister/ Yes Prime Minister

Veep

The Thick of It

The West Wing

Alpha House

Vice

Prime Minister's Questions

BBC Parliament also has a number of great documentaries with its archive

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tv/bbcparliament/a-z>

Independent learning log

Use this log to keep a record of your preparation work. You can also upload your notes to the Step up to A-Level Religious Studies Google Classroom.

[illegible]