

A Level Politics

Student Handbook & Induction Booklet



A Level Politics

WHAT DOES THE COURSE AIM TO DO?

It aims to:

Provide you with a 'balanced education in politics', and 'understanding of the nature of politics, and an understanding in the context of the United Kingdom, including its local, national and European dimensions, and some aspects of comparative study of other political systems.'



You will be assessed on your ability to organise and present information, ideas and arguments clearly and logically in continuous prose using good quality English

THE SKILLS YOU WILL DEVELOP

- **Knowledge and understanding** of basic political ideas , concepts, structures and processes, the relationship between them and how they work at different levels.
- An ability to **interpret and analyse** political information in various forms and from various sources, and to **apply** a range of political ideas concepts and theories.
- An ability to **evaluate** arguments, theories, values and ideologies to explain political behaviour and suggest solutions to controversial issues.
- The skills to **organise and present an argument with relevance, clarity and coherence using good English.**

WHAT DOES THE COURSE INVOLVE?

What will you study?

Teacher	Topics Covered	Exam
Year 12:		
Miss Taylor/Mr Brice– Year 12	<u>UK Politics</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy and participation • Political parties • Electoral system • Voting behaviour and the media 	2 hours to also include Core political ideas.
Miss Taylor – Year 12 Autumn and Spring Terms	<u>UK Government</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constitution • Parliament • Prime Minister and executive • Relationships between the branches 	2 hours to also include Non-Core political ideas.
Mr de Jong – Year 13	<u>Core political ideas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservatism • Liberalism • Socialism 	2 exam papers 2 hours each to cover UK politics (including Core political ideas) and UK Government (including non-Core political ideas)
Year 13:		
Miss Taylor	<u>Global Politics:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State and Globalisation • Global Governance: Political, Economic, Human Rights and Environmental • Power and Developments • Regionalism • Liberalism and Realism <u>Non-Core political ideas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminism 	1 exam paper on Global Politics 2 hours
Yr 12 Summer term and Year 13		

HOW WILL YOU BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE?



YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE AN
INTEREST IN CURRENT AFFAIRS
AND POLITICAL ISSUES

This will involve:

- Reading a QUALITY newspaper (such as The Times, Guardian, Telegraph, Independent or their Sunday equivalent;

magazines and specific politics journals such as **Politics Review** as well as the set textbooks.

- Watching current affairs programmes such as Panorama, Despatches etc. and specific politics programmes such as 'Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg'.
- Watching the news or listening to 'Today' on Radio 4.
- Discussing and debating political issues with both fellow politics students and others
- Keeping a scrap book of press cuttings on politics and issues

Interest alone is not enough!

You will have to read widely and work hard to understand:

- The institutions and main features of the British system of government and British politics.
- How these work in theory and practice
- The way they interact their strengths and weaknesses
- The way they may change

Continuity is essential: Part-timers are of no use!

You will be given a variety of tasks:

- Reading
- Research
- Short answers
- Stimulus response questions
- Essays.

To ensure quick feedback and a planned workload it is essential that all work is completed by set deadlines.

WHICH RESOURCES WILL HELP WITH MY AS STUDIES?

The textbooks will be provided by the school, the other resources here are recommended.

Documentaries

- Adam Curtis, *The Power of Nightmares* – a comparison of neo-conservatism in the US and radical Islam.
- Adam Curtis, *Bitter Lake* – an examination of how the west's desire to control the Middle East has shown the seeds of radicalisation and political violence
- Adam Curtis, *Hypernormalisation* – Why do chaotic events seem to be increasingly frequent? Curtis looks at why the War in Syria, the migrant crisis, the Trump presidency have happened and why their causes are pretty much impossible to understand.
- Johan Norberg, *Globalisation in Good* – Norberg personal view on the impact of globalisation
- Errol Morris, *The Fog of War* – Former Secretary of State for the Defence in the US, Robert McNamara looks back at the lessons he learnt during his career. Includes McNamara's thoughts on the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan at the end of the Second World War and the American campaign in Vietnam.
- Errol Morris, *Known Unknown* – Another former Secretary of State for the Defence in the US, Donald Rumsfeld, looks back at his career. Includes his thoughts on the Iraq War. Good contrast with *The Fog of War*.
- *No Plan, No Peace: From Success to Disaster in Iraq* – made by the BBC – title says it all!

Podcasts

The BBC Global News podcast
The Guardian: Today in focus
The Intelligence from the Economist
The Rest is Politics

Websites

Foreign Office Travel Wesbite,
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> - the Foreign Office's latest take on pretty much everywhere in the world.
BISA – British International Studies Association,
<https://www.bisa.ac.uk/> - designed especially for students. There is a newsletter you can sign up to.

Subscription to the Politics Review.

<https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product/9781471890598.aspx>



Keep up to date with the news:

The Week (<http://subscription.theweek.co.uk/subscribe/>)

The Economist (<https://subscriptions.economist.com>)

The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

The Telegraph <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>

The Independent <http://www.independent.co.uk/>

The Times <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/>

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

PoliticsHome <http://www.politicshome.com/uk/>

Labour List <http://labourlist.org>

Conservative Home <http://www.conservativehome.com>

UK Government and Politics Books

- The UK constitution Anthony King Who Governs Britain? Martin Loughlin
- The British Constitution: A Very Short Introduction British Politics & History: Andrew Marr
- A History of Modern Britain Andrew Rawnsley
- The End of the Party Ben Pimlott Harold Wilson
- Boris Johnson's The Churchill Factor: How One Man Made History
- Charles Moore Margaret Thatcher: The Authorised Biography (Vol. 1)
- Dominic Sandbrook Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles
- Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974-1979,
- State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-1974
- White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties 1964-1970
- John Campbell The Iron Lady John Murray and Anthony Sampson Who Runs This Place?: The Anatomy of Britain in the 21st Century
- Jeremy Paxman published a book on the First World War and he also made a documentary based on it, Great Britain's Great War
- Jonathan Powell's memoir about the Blair government is very entertaining, The New Machiavelli

Global Politics Books

- John Andrews, *The World in Conflict* – a consideration of the big questions about war and violence. Why does it happen? What forms does it take? Where and how might future conflict happen?
- Ha Joon Chang, *25 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism* – Has the washing machine changed the world more than the internet? Does the USA have the highest standard of living in the world? Are people in poor countries more entrepreneurial than those in rich ones? Chang answers these questions and many others in a way that engages and entertains.
- Ha Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder* – Chang makes the provocative argument that developed countries are attempting to 'kick away the ladder' with which they climbed to the top, thereby preventing developing countries from adopting the policies that they themselves used.
- Amy Chua, *World on Fire* - a World Bank economist argues that the global spread of free market economics creates tension and resentment which have led to a more dangerous and divided world
- Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat* – A powerful defence of the free market as the route to global prosperity and peace. A good contrast with Amy Chua's *World on Fire*
- Richard Haas, *A World in Disarray* – an interesting insight into contemporary politics by the president of UN's Council on Foreign Relations: 'These are no ordinary times. It will not be business as usual in a world of disarray; as a result, it cannot be foreign policy as usual.'
- Henry Kissinger, *World Order* – the master of realpolitik defends a realist approach to managing world events
- Tim Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography* – an examination of how far a nation state's foreign policy is determined by its geographical location. Through a series of case studies of individual countries, Marshall considers the extent to which world leaders are prisoners of their own geography or whether they are free to determine their own foreign policy.
- Douglas Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity and Islam* – Murray views Europe as a continent bent on destroying its traditional culture through declining birth rates, acceptance of mass immigration and cultivated disgust and self hatred. Controversial.
- Tim Shipman, *All Out War: The Full Story of how Brexit Sank Britain's Political Class* – a well written account of how and why Britain voted to leave the EU.
- Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalisation and its Discontents* – the former World Bank vice president condemns the neo-liberal Washington consensus with the zeal of a convert
- Guy Verhofstadt, *Europe's Last Chance* – an endorsement of closer European integration

Current Affairs Diary

TASK: Start your current affairs diary in the summer holidays. You will continue to keep this diary throughout your time studying politics in the sixth form.

How to keep a current affairs diary:

1. Each week listen to, watch or read the news and make a list of the top three news stories. You can do this by looking at one of the internet news sites and/or spending some time each day in the school library or at home looking at a newspaper.
2. In your diary make a list of the top three stories, including a brief outline of what has happened.
3. By the end of the summer, select one of these stories and write a short editorial on it. This should include:
 - An objective explanation of the issue. How it has progressed.
 - Opinions from different viewpoints.
 - Your opinion – including where applicable alternative solutions to the problem or issue being criticised.

- Do not just copy and paste from the internet, particularly with word definitions – make sure that you really understand everything you write. This may mean that you need to do further research to develop your understanding.