

AS/A2 Level GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



Course Guide

Level 3 Two-year course

2010/11

This course is suitable for students who have a keen interest in current political issues and wish to develop their understanding of the political forces and institutions that shape our lives.

Subject introduction

You will not need to have studied Government & Politics in order to take this subject. It is more important that you have a lively and inquiring mind and that you regularly follow political issues through reading the newspapers and watching relevant TV programmes.

You will be the kind of student who:

- Enjoys debating current affairs and politics generally.
- Enjoys discussing issues that affect our everyday lives and the lives of others.
- Likes doing a subject that is about today's events and is constantly developing.
- Wants to understand more about political issues and institutions in UK and international politics.

Year 1 study outline

The AS in Government and Politics consists of two units about modern UK politics.

Unit 1 – People and Politics

This unit introduces students to the study of UK politics. The four key areas of study are:

Democracy and Political Participation – should people decide key political issues by voting on them?

Party Policies and Ideas – are there any real differences between the parties?

Elections – What impact have different electoral systems had in the UK?

Pressure Groups – how did they try to 'make poverty history'?

Unit 2 – Governing the UK

This unit introduces students to the main institutions that play a role in governing the UK. The four key areas of study are:

- The constitution – is devolution to Scotland leading to the break up of the UK?

SEE WHAT'S NEXT

- Parliament – Should the House of Lords be elected?
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet – Did we have a President Blair?
- Judges and Civil Liberties – How well do Judges protect our rights?

Year 2 study outline

The full A Level is made up of the AS units plus two more units which are studied at a higher level. The A Level in Government and Politics consists of two units on global and international politics.

Unit 3 – Structures of Global Politics

This topic provides an introduction to the key structures and systems of global politics. The four key areas of study are:

- Approaches to global politics – How has globalisation influenced international politics?
- World Order – will China become a superpower in the 21st century?
- Global Governance – What is the point of the UN?
- European Union – Should the EU keep enlarging?

Unit 4 – Global Political Issues

This topic examines key issues in recent global politics and how these issues are

dealt with at a global level. The four key areas of study are:

- Conflict, War and Terrorism – How did the events of 9/11 lead to the Iraq war?
- Poverty and Development – How effective are international attempts to reduce global poverty?
- Environmental Issues – Why is it so difficult to get agreement on action over climate change?
- Human Rights – Should states intervene in other states to stop Human Rights abuses?

Methods of study

Study is through lecture and group discussion. Students are encouraged to keep up to date with political issues in the news and class discussion and student presentations are often on relevant, current political developments. Students keep cuttings from newspapers and the analysis is used as evidence to support the study of topics. Students also gather information from the many political and newspaper websites and from the journals, such as Politics Review and the Economist, available in the LINC.

Special features

Politics students benefit from conferences and lectures given by

leading academics and prominent politicians and have appeared on the Jonathan Dimbleby, LWT current affairs programme. Other students have been selected to attend a Commonwealth Forum at the Foreign Office in London and have attended Politics Association revision conferences. Students attend the Sixth Form Conference at Westminster featuring representatives of the political parties and leading academics. Students are encouraged to participate in the Debating Society.

Subject combinations and careers

Politics can be a useful choice for a wide range of careers and can be combined with a wide range of social science and humanities subjects.

Success stories

Many students continue to Higher Education, and international politics, law, as well as combined politics courses, have been popular. Students have also found it useful for progression onto journalism courses.

Methods of assessment

AS – Two written exams. 1 hour 20 minutes each. Unit 1 consists of answering two structured questions. Unit 2 consists of answering a stimulus based question and one essay question.

A2 – Two written exams. 1 hour and 30 minutes each. Unit 3 and Unit 4 both

require students to answer three shorter questions and one essay question.