

British Politics



Faculty Contact Information

Name:

Email:

Office Hour information:

Course Information

Course Description

The overall objective of the course is to provide the students in a systematic fashion with a basic understanding of the system of government and the political process in Britain as well as the socio-historical processes that have shaped modern Britain. These processes include the Monarchy, Parliament, political parties, the Prime Minister, political ideology, and political culture. Throughout the course, comparisons with American politics and society are made as a point of reference to provide a student with a better framework for understanding British politics.

Course Goals

This is an introductory course on contemporary British politics, and therefore requires no previous political science requirement. The objective of the course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the system of government and the political process in Britain, as well as the socio-historical processes that have shaped modern Britain. These include the constitution, Parliament, political parties, the Prime Minister, the legal system, and foreign policy.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Knowledge of the social and economic contexts of British politics
2. Exposure to British political culture, governmental institutions, elections, the legal system, and the media
3. First-hand experience in conducting independent research
4. The ability to undertake comparative analysis of the British and American political systems

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Essay	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Presentation	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Final Exam	40%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
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[Brief Assessment Overview](#)

Assessment 1: Essay

Due:

Students write an essay between 2,000-2,200 words on a topic discussed in class and detailed on MyStudy. You will lose marks for not writing the appropriate number of words. Footnotes/references and a full bibliography are mandatory. References to encyclopedic websites like Wikipedia are not permitted. Students who use sites of this nature will fail the assignment.

For your topic you can choose from the following options OR agree with the course tutor a different topic.

1. To what extent does the “Special Relationship” remain a central part of British foreign policy?
2. Does the United Kingdom have a constitution? Discuss using relevant examples.
3. Compare and contrast the powers of the British Prime Minister and the President of the United States.
4. To what extent is the judiciary capable of challenging executive decision-making in the United Kingdom? Use specific examples to support your argument.
5. What limitations do the House of Commons face in controlling the power of the Executive?

Assessment 2: Presentation

Due:

Students give a 10–15-minute presentation on a topic agreed with the course tutor that is relevant to the issues covered in this class. Students will also field questions from peers. Students are encouraged to use presentation tools such as PowerPoint.

Assessment 3: Final Exam

Due: Due date

Students sit a final examination in which they answer two essay questions. You will be given five questions from which you will select and respond to two. One of the class sessions will include a revision workshop to help you prepare for the exam.

[Grading](#)

Grade	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
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A (93- 100%) A- (90-92%)	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%)	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%)	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences; imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to integrate quotations appropriately	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of cultural impact with few examples
D (60-69%)	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact

F (0-59%)	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact
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Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.

- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

Jones, B., Norton, P. and Hertner, I. (2021) *Politics UK*. 10th edition. London, Routledge.

On a daily basis, students are also required to read relevant articles in quality dailies, such as *The Times*, *The Guardian* or *The Observer*. The latter two are accessible online free of charge.

Useful current affairs magazines are the *The Economist* and *The New Statesmen* or *The Spectator*.

Students are also advised to watch television news shows, in particular on BBC 2 *Newsnight* (weekdays at 10.30pm) and *Politics live* (weekdays at 12.15) and on BBC 1 *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* (Sunday mornings at 9am) or the Channel Four News (Weekdays at 7pm).

For policy wonks the *Today* programme on Radio BBC 4 (weekdays from 6 to 9am) is a must – for everyone else it is highly recommended.

Websites to browse:

- Conservative Home - <https://conservativehome.com/columnists/>
- GuidoFawkes - <https://order-order.com/>
- Institute for Public Policy Research - <https://www.ippr.org/>
- LabourList - <https://labourlist.org/>
- PoliticoEurope - <https://www.politico.eu/>
- Politics Home - <https://www.politicshome.com/about-politicshome>
- Policy Exchange - <https://policyexchange.org.uk/>

Podcasts to listen to:

- The News Agents – <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-news-agents/id1640878689>
- Politics Weekly - <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/series/politicsweekly>

- Political Thinking - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04z203l>
- The Rest is Politics - <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-rest-is-politics/id1611374685>

Additional Resources and Readings

- Atkins, J. 'Introduction: Conflict, cooperation and the Cameron-Clegg government', *Political Quarterly*, January-March 2015, Vol. 86/1, pp. 81/84
- Byrne, Iain and Stuart Weir, 'Democratic Audit: Executive Democracy in War and Peace', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2004, Vol. 57/2, pp. 453-468.
- Dumbrell, J, "The UK-US Special Relationship: Taking the 21st century temperature", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, February 2009, Vol. 11/1, pp. 64-78
- Dodds, Anneliese, 'Why people voted to leave and what to do now: A view from the doorstep', *Political Quarterly*, July-September 2016, Vol 87/3, pp. 360--364
- Dunne, Tim, 'When the Shooting Starts: Atlanticism in British Security Strategy', *International Affairs*, 80, 5 (2004), pp. 893-909.
- Fairclough, Paul, 'The UK Supreme Court', *Politics Review*, February 2017, Vol26/3, pp 26-29
- Filipec, Ondrej, '(In)efficiency of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy: Ukraine, Brexit, Trump and beyond', *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences*, October 2017, Vol. 17/3-4, pp 279-298
- Gaskarth, Jamie; Langdon, Nicola, "The dilemma of Brexit. Hard choices in the narrow context of British foreign policy traditions", *British Politics*, June 2021, Vol. 16/2, pp. 170-186
- Grant, Alan, 'Party and Election Finance in Britain and America: A Comparative Analysis', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 71-88.
- Heffernan, Richard, 'Why the Prime Minister cannot be a President: Comparing Constitutional Imperatives in Britain and America', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 53-70.
- Hennessy, Peter, 'Rulers and Servants of the State: The Blair Style of Government 1997-2004'. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 6-16.
- Hennessy, Peter, 'Informality and Circumspection: the Blair Style of Government', *The Political Quarterly*, 2005, pp. 3-11.
- Huber, Jakob, 'EU citizens in post-Brexit UK: the case for automatic naturalization.' *Journal of European Integration*, October 2019, Vol. 41/6, pp. 801-816
- Jones, Erik, 'Debating the Transatlantic Relationship: Rhetoric and Reality', *International Affairs*, 80, 4 (2004), pp. 595-612.
- Kellner, Peter, 'Britain's Culture of Detachment', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 57/4, 2004, pp. 830-843.
- Kilheaney, Emma, 'How does May's government differ from Cameron's?' *Politics Review*, February 2017, Vol 26/3, pp. 16/17
- Martill, Benjamin; Sus, Monika, 'Post-Brexit EU/UK security cooperation: NATO, CSDP+, or French connection?', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, November 2018, Vol 20/4, pp. 846-863
- McCorkindale, Chris; McKerrell, Nick, 'Assessing the relationship between legislative and judicial supremacy in the UK: Parliament and the rule of law after Jackson', *Round Table*, August 2020, Vol. 101/4, pp. 341-352

- Oliver, Tim; Williams, Michael John, 'Special relationships in flux: Brexit and the future of the US-EU and US-UK relationships', *International Affairs*, Vol. 92/3, 2016, pp. 547-567
- Parr, John, B. 'Spatial aspects of devolution in the UK. The case of England', *Regional Science Policy & Practice*. November 2018, Vol. 10/4, pp. 335-346
- Riddell, Peter, 'Prime Ministers and Parliament', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2004, Vol. 57/4, pp. 814-829
- Russel, Meg; Cowley, Philip, 'Modes of UK Executive-Legislative Relations Revisited', *Political Quarterly*, January-March 2018, Vol. 89/1, pp. 18-28
- Shaw, Malcolm, 'The British Parliament in International Perspective', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2004, Vol. 57/4, pp. 877-889.
- Tayler, Miles, 'Brexit and the British Constitution: a long view', *Political Quarterly*, October 2019, Vol 90/4, pp. 719-726
- Theakston, Kevin, 'Prime Minister's and the Constitution: Attlee to Blair', '*Parliamentary Affairs*', Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 17-37.
- Williams, Paul, 'Who's Making British Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 5 2004, pp. 909-929.

You are strongly encouraged to read broadly and familiarise yourself with current themes pertinent to your academic subject. For guidance, you will find on MyStudy an updated list of recent scholarly publications that provide you with a comprehensive overview of developments in the academic study of British politics.

[MyStudy@FIE](#)

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

[FIE's Values in the Curriculum](#)

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

[Topics](#)

- The British Constitution
- The Prime Minister and the Cabinet
- Ministers and Civil Servants
- British Foreign Policy
- The Media and Politics
- Law, Security and the State
- Political Parties and Elections
- Parliament

Possible co-curricular activities

- A guided walking tour of Whitehall
- Visit of the Cabinet Office and meeting with the director of Government Security Communications
- Visit of the British Council and talk about Public Diplomacy
- Visit of Shelter, largest charity and campaign group on issues of housing and homelessness
- Visit and presentation at trade union UNITE
- Supreme Court
- Imperial War Museum
- Bank of England
- Museum of Cartoons
- Guest speaker to talk about foreign policy

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE

faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE's qualified and accredited counsellor is Dr Deborah Hill, who offers appointments via video call and over the phone. The first three appointments are free of charge and ongoing sessions can be arranged directly with Dr Hill. To make an appointment with Dr Hill, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk.

If you have a counsellor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.