

A LEVEL POLITICS

WHAT IS POLITICS?

Politics is a lively and controversial subject, as we study what happens when individuals and groups struggle with one another to achieve their goals. Naturally where people are concerned, they do not all always agree on how this should be accomplished, often resulting in conflict.

For example, do you think we should elect our Prime Minister directly or that the Human Rights Act should be reformed? On this course, you will be asked many contentious questions on political affairs and explore how the government works. In studying this subject, you will

be developing the analytical and critical thinking skills required of many degree courses and desired by employers. So, if you like a good argument or are just interested in understanding how the UK is organised, Politics is a good choice.



WHY SHOULD I STUDY POLITICS?

You will learn:

- How to develop a critical awareness of political events and issues and the relationship between political ideas and institutions?
- In depth about the UK and USA systems.
- How democracy works in practice, or fails.
- A variety of useful skills from analytical thinking to debating, which are valued by employers and universities.

USEFUL SKILLS AND INTERESTS

- A lively and enquiring mind
- An interest in politics and current affairs
- A desire to explore new ideas
- An ability to communicate your ideas effectively
- Ability to read substantial amounts of text

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

This is a two year linear course made up of the modules below:

Module 1: UK Politics

You will study Political Participation: democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour and the media.

You will also study core political ideas: conservatism, liberalism, socialism, looking at key thinkers and how these ideologies have changed and what they believe.

Module 2: UK Government

You will study in this module UK Government: the constitution, parliament, Prime Minister and executive, relationships between the branches.

You will also focus on another political idea: one idea from the following: anarchism, feminism or nationalism

Module 3: Comparative politics: USA

In year 2, your focus is on the following areas of the US system: the US Constitution and federalism, US congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court, democracy and participation, civil rights.

You also make comparison to the knowledge gained in the first two units.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The course will be assessed at the end of the two-year course. It is 100% written examination, no coursework. There will be 3 exams, which will consist of long essays and shorter answers.

COURSE COMMITMENT

This is an academic course, which you will find challenging as well as being rewarding. You must keep up with current affairs and spend at least four hours each week reading around the subject and completing homework. You must be prepared to read more extensively than at school and undertake independent study.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

For entry on to this course you will need to meet the college standard entry requirements for Advanced Level study of 5 GCSE passes (grades 4 - 9), including a minimum of a grade 4 in English Language and preferably Maths. If English Language is below a grade 4 then you must have a grade 5 in another literary subject. As you will be required to read a wide variety of materials, make notes and write essays / structured essays during your studies in preparation for the unit examinations. It is also important that you have an interest in politics and current affairs.

COURSE COSTS

We often arrange a variety of optional course trips, for example The British Museum and Parliament in London which costs approximately £130 with an overnight stay. Textbooks are provided for the course but some students like to buy their own copies so they can add notes. These are around £20 each, although not compulsory.

ENRICHMENT

As part of enrichment, we organise talks with local MPs and in addition to this we have had the opportunity for a Q&A with a UK Supreme Court Justice, all of which elevate the student learning experience.

PROGRESSION ROUTES

A broader education is the key to success in the future; if you want to keep your options open then Politics is a good choice to make as it can lead on to a wide range of careers: Business, Economics, Law, Media, Philosophy and, of course, Politics. A Level Politics can be combined with a number of Humanities and Social Science A Level subjects, it adds variety and complements the skills of any science combinations too.

Some of the students who studied this course at Prior Pursglove College progressed on to:

- Northumbria University – Law
- Sheffield University – Politics

STUDENT COMMENTS

What our Politics students say:

“It governs your life, so it’s not only interesting but pivotal to being a conscious member of society. Society is a large machine and Politics are the lynchpin of that machine. Incredibly intriguing and allows you to be an informed member of society”

“You understand that Politics is a very important thing surrounding our way of life. If you are politically aware you understand issues and decide to try and resolve them. The subject encouraged me to be aware, as well as understanding how it works as a system”

“The course is engaging and stimulating. It allows me to indulge my passion for Politics and build upon my knowledge of the subject.”

FURTHER INFORMATION

The full course specifications can be found at www.edexcel.org.uk

If you require further information please contact Libby Kerr or Jill Drysdale

Please note that the information in this leaflet is correct at the time of publication, but circumstances may arise which cause us to revise our provision. Jan 2024