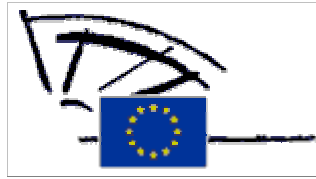




POLITICS DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK



What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

You do not need to have studied *Government and Politics* at *GCSE* in order to take an *AS* or *Advanced GCE* course in the subject. It is more important that you should have a lively and enquiring mind, an interest in politics and current affairs, a desire to explore new ideas and an ability to communicate your ideas effectively.

What will I learn on this *Advanced GCE* course?

How to develop a critical awareness of the nature of politics and the relationship between political ideas, institutions and processes; What the structures of authority and power are within the political system of the United Kingdom, and how these may differ from those of other political systems; What the rights and responsibilities of individuals are in order to encourage participation by citizens within society; How to develop personal effectiveness through a critical awareness of political events and issues, an empathetic understanding of the main political viewpoints and the skills required to argue a case with relevance and coherence; A clear understanding of the theories, motives and values that underpin political processes and governmental decision-making and the role of institutions in resolving conflicts and allocating scarce resources.

What kind of student is this course suitable for?

This course will appeal to you if you: enjoy debating current affairs and politics generally; have a keen appreciation of the need to participate in the decision-making process; like doing a subject that affects your everyday life; like doing a subject that offers the opportunity to progress to a career in politics; want to keep your options open - Politics can be a useful choice for a wide range of careers and can be combined with a wide range of science, social science and humanities subjects.

What examinations will I have to take to get my qualification?

AS is short for *Advanced Subsidiary*. This is the first half of the *Advanced GCE* course. It is a stepping-stone to the full *Advanced GCE* qualification. You can take just the *AS* on its own, if you and your teacher agree that this is best for you. You can even decide at the end of the *AS* course whether to continue to take the full *Advanced GCE* qualification. The *AS* in *Government and Politics* consists of three units of assessment based on the following content:-

AS TOPICS

UNIT 1 - PEOPLE AND POLITICS

TOPIC 1: DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Key concepts	Content explanation
<p>DEMOCRACY LEGITIMACY REPRESENTATION DIRECT DEMOCRACY REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY LIBERAL DEMOCRACY PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION REFERENDUM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of democracy – a knowledge and understanding of the idea of democracy, of the forms that democratic governance has taken, particularly the difference between direct and representative forms of democracy and their strengths and weaknesses, and the nature of liberal democracy. • Democracy in the UK – a knowledge and understanding of the main features of democracy in the UK; an awareness of both the strengths of the UK democratic system and why it has been criticised, including reasons for and the extent of the 'participation/legitimacy crisis' in UK politics; how far the UK system conforms to liberal democratic principles; and the implications of developments such as devolution and EU membership. • Enhancing democracy – a knowledge and understanding of reforms of the UK democratic system that would extend participation and strengthen accountability, such as the wider use of referendums, lowering the voting age, compulsory voting and digital democracy and an assessment of their implications and possible benefits.

TOPIC 2: PARTY POLICIES AND IDEAS

Key concepts	Content explanation
<p>POLITICAL PARTY LEFT/RIGHT LIBERALISM CONSERVATISM SOCIALISM FACTIONALISM CONSENSUS POLITICS ADVERSARY POLITICS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of political parties – a knowledge and understanding of political parties, of their distinctive features and of their key functions within the political system. • Traditions and policies of parties – a knowledge and understanding of the central ideas, traditions and policies of the major UK political parties, and the development of party policies in recent years and of factors that influence ideological and policy development, including policy and ideological differences within parties. (Although extended questions will not be set solely on political traditions, they may be set on sub-traditions such as 'new' Labour or 'Thatcherism'.) • Comparing party policies and ideas – a knowledge and understanding of similarities and contrasts between the ideas and policies of the major parties and of the ideological relationship between and amongst them.

TOPIC 3: ELECTIONS

Key concepts	Content explanation
<p>ELECTION MAJORITARIAN REPRESENTATION MANDATE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION ELECTORAL REFORM PARTY SYSTEM STRONG GOVERNMENT STABLE GOVERNMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections and democracy — a knowledge and understanding of how and why elections promote democracy, and of the limitations of this democratic role. • Elections in the UK — a knowledge and understanding of the workings of the voting systems used for elections to the House of Commons, to devolved bodies and local authorities, and to the European Parliament, and an awareness of their implications for party representation and government. • Debating electoral systems — a knowledge and understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the UK electoral systems and, in particular, of the benefits or otherwise of changing the Westminster electoral system. (<i>Extended questions will not be set on particular electoral systems, except for the simple plurality system.</i>)

TOPIC 4: PRESSURE GROUPS

Key concepts	Content explanation
<p>PRESSURE GROUP SECTIONAL/PROMOTIONAL GROUPS INSIDER/OUTSIDER GROUPS PLURALISM ELITISM FUNCTIONAL REPRESENTATION PLURALIST DEMOCRACY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of pressure groups — a knowledge and understanding of the features and functions of pressure groups; of how and the extent to which they differ from political parties; and an awareness of the different kinds of pressure groups. • Pressure group power — a knowledge and understanding of how pressure groups exert influence and of the extent of their influence, and an awareness of the distribution of power amongst pressure groups, including the factors that influence this. • Pressure groups and democracy — a knowledge and understanding of the relationship between pressure groups and democracy and, in particular, of the extent to which they promote political participation and responsive government.

UNIT 2:- GOVERNING THE UK

TOPIC 1:- THE CONSTITUTION

Key concepts	Content explanation
CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTIONALISM CODIFIED/UNCODIFIED CONSTITUTION UNITARY/FEDERAL CONSTITUTION PARLIAMENTARY SOVEREIGNTY POOLED SOVEREIGNTY DEVOLUTION QUASI-FEDERALISM ELECTIVE DICTATORSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of the constitution — a knowledge and understanding of the features of a constitution and of the benefits of constitutional government, including the differences between codified and uncodified constitutions, and an understanding of the nature, sources and key features of the UK constitution. • Sovereignty and the constitution — a knowledge and understanding of debates about the location of sovereignty within the UK constitutional system, particularly in relation to the significance of European Union membership and devolution. • Reforming the constitution — a knowledge and understanding of key reforms to the constitution since 1997, such as devolution and Lords reform, and an awareness of their advantages and disadvantages; and an understanding of ongoing debate about constitutional reform, including the possible introduction of a 'written' constitution.

TOPIC 2: - PARLIAMENT

Key concepts	Content explanation
PARLIAMENT WESTMINSTER MODEL REPRESENTATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT FUSION/SEPARATION OF POWERS BICAMERALISM ACCOUNTABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislatures and executives — a knowledge and understanding of the different relationships between legislatures and executives in parliamentary and presidential systems of government, and an awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of each. • Role of Parliament — a knowledge and understanding of the composition, role and powers of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and an awareness of the functions of Parliament and how effectively it discharges them, including an awareness of the relationship of Parliament to the European Union and devolved assemblies. (A detailed knowledge of the workings of Parliament is not necessary.) • Reforming Parliament — a knowledge and understanding of recent and proposed reforms of Parliament, including an awareness of their implications and alleged benefits or drawbacks.

TOPIC 3:- PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Key concepts	Content explanation
CABINET GOVERNMENT CORE EXECUTIVE PRIME MINISTERIAL GOVERNMENT PRESIDENTIALISM POLITICAL LEADERSHIP COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY	<p>Role of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – a knowledge and understanding of the role of the Prime Minister and Cabinet within the context of the core executive and the conventions of collective and individual responsibility. (<i>Separate questions will not be set on the civil service.</i>)</p> <p>Powers of the Prime Minister – a knowledge and understanding of the sources of prime ministerial power and of key constraints on the Prime Minister, including external factors that affect executive policy making.</p> <p>Prime ministerial leadership – a knowledge and understanding of the leadership style adopted by Prime Ministers and of the changing relationship between Prime Ministers and their parties, cabinet and Parliament, including debates about the presidentialisation of UK politics.</p>

TOPIC 4:- JUDGES AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Key concepts	Content explanation
JUDICIARY JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE JUDICIAL NEUTRALITY CIVIL LIBERTY/CIVIL LIBERTIES RULE OF LAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the judiciary – a knowledge and understanding of the role and significance of the judiciary in promoting rule-based governance. • Power and influence of judges – a knowledge and understanding of the relationship between the judiciary and other branches of government, and of the extent to which judges can check the power of the executive and the legislature. • Civil liberties and individual rights – a knowledge and understanding of the impact of the courts on the issues of civil liberties and individual rights including the implications of the Human Rights Act and possible reforms such as the introduction of a supreme court and a constitutional bill of rights, and of the relationship between the judiciary, the European courts and EU law

A2 TOPICS

UNIT 3 - REPRESENTATIVE PROCESSES IN THE USA

TOPIC 1: ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Key concepts	Content explanation
PRIMARY AND CAUCUS ELECTIONS PROPOSITIONS PARTISANSHIP INVISIBLE PRIMARIES NATIONAL PARTY CONVENTIONS PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS MID-TERM ELECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the electoral mechanisms used in the US system and of their significance. • An awareness of the factors that explain the outcomes of recent presidential and congressional elections, including voting behaviour in recent elections and campaign finance.

TOPIC 2: POLITICAL PARTIES

Key concepts	Content explanation
PARTY DECLINE/RENEWAL TWO-PARTY SYSTEM CONSERVATIVE LIBERALISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the ideologies, theories and traditions of the Democrats and Republicans, of conflicts and tendencies within each party, and of their coalitions of supporters. • A knowledge of the US party system, of the distribution of power within parties, and of the changing significance of parties as a means of organising the electorate and as channels of political access. • A knowledge of minor parties, their impact and obstacles to participation.

TOPIC 3: PRESSURE GROUPS

Key concepts	Content explanation
PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS PRIVATE INTEREST GROUPS LOBBYING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the different categories of groups within the US system and of how they operate. • A knowledge of the policy significance of organised groups and interests, of their resources and tactics, and of debates about their impact upon democracy. • A knowledge of how they operate to influence specified branches of federal government as well as exploiting the electoral process to enhance their influence.

TOPIC 4: RACIAL AND ETHNIC POLITICS

Key concepts	Content explanation
CIVIL RIGHTS MULTICULTURALISM/ MULTIRACIALISM BLACK NATIONALISM ETHNIC COALITIONS AND CONFLICTS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="512 360 1348 510">• A knowledge of racial and ethnic diversity in the USA, of key issues in minority politics, including forms of minority political activism, the extent of minority representation and an evaluation of the policies to diminish racial division.

UNIT 4 - GOVERNING THE USA

TOPIC 1: THE CONSTITUTION

Key concepts	Content explanation
SEPARATION OF POWERS CHECKS AND BALANCES CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the nature and principles of the US Constitution. • An awareness of the constitutional framework within which US institutions operate and of the relationship between the Constitution and practical politics. Constitutional rights and an evaluation of their effectiveness

TOPIC 2: CONGRESS

Key concepts	Content explanation
REPRESENTATION GOVERNMENT GRIDLOCK THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM OF CONGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the structure and workings of Congress, of the distribution of power within Congress, and of debates about the adequacy of its representative role. • A knowledge of factors influencing the relationship between Congress and the presidency, and an ability to discuss the policy significance and institutional effectiveness of Congress. • An awareness of the extent and significance of party allegiance.

TOPIC 3: PRESIDENCY

Key concepts	Content explanation
PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (EXOP) CABINET FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY NEW FEDERALISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the formal and informal sources of presidential power and of the relationships between the presidency and other institutions. • An awareness of the factors that affect the role of the presidency and an ability to evaluate the capacity to provide leadership of the presidency and of recent presidents

TOPIC 4: SUPREME COURT

Key concepts	Content explanation
JUDICIAL REVIEW JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE DUE PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the composition and role of the Supreme Court. • A knowledge of the process for appointing Federal judges and of debates about the political significance of the Supreme Court and its impact on public policy in the USA.