

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	Social Sciences and Humanities
Programme:	Study Abroad
FHEQ Level:	5
Course Title:	The British Parliament and Politics
Course Code:	POLS 5601
Total Hours:	120
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	0
Independent Learning Hours:	75
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the main political institutions in the United Kingdom (the monarchy, the executive, parliament, political parties and electoral systems) and to important debates in contemporary British society, such as constitutional reform, the political impact of Brexit and Britain's role in international affairs, the power of the media, gender debates and the political management of ethnic and cultural diversity. The class combines theoretical, empirical, and active-learning approaches (the course includes visits to political institutions like Parliament and the Supreme Court provided they are accessible at the time the course runs). The course is co-taught with a Member of Parliament. Some of the sessions led by the MP take place in the parliamentary estate.

Pre-requisites:

40 Credits

Aims and Objectives:

- To help students develop a critical understanding of British political institutions, political parties and main political debates and how these relate both to each other and to wider questions in British society.
- To help students develop a critical understanding of important debates in contemporary British politics, for example constitutional issues, Brexit, migration, and the representation of ethnic minorities in political institutions.
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business and the media) which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of the British parliament, parties and politics.
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21st century.
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally.

Programme Outcomes:

A5I1

B5I

C5I

D5I

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrates a critical engagement with theories and concepts used to analyse and explain British political institutions, practices and systems.
- Demonstrates a critical and theoretical engagement with core problems and issues in British politics (i.e. constitutional reform, relations with the EU, the political influence of the media, gender politics, multiculturalism, immigration, political participation).
- Completes assigned work with a degree of autonomy, clarity, technical competence, capacity for self-evaluation and critical thinking appropriate for a 5000-level course.
- Demonstrates a range of well-developed skills that are relevant to the workplace including the ability to plan and manage for changing contexts, audiences and levels of complexity.

Indicative Content:

- UK political institutions
- UK parliamentary norms and practices
- UK party system and party politics
- Elections and electoral politics in the UK
- Debates about national identities
- Key debates in British politics
- Key debates in political science in a British context

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes prepared.

Indicative Texts:

Jones, B., Norton, P. and Hertner, I. (2021) *Politics UK*. 10th edn. London: Longman.

Webb, P. and Bale, T. (2021) *The modern British Party System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heffernan, R., Hay, C., Cowley, P. and Philip, M. (2016) *Developments in British Politics 10*. London: Palgrave.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
First Edition	November 2024	
Course description Update	February 2025	