

Politics

Advanced Level

General Information

To understand Politics is to understand how and why decisions are made every day that affect every aspect of our lives. The course looks at the way in which those decisions are made by everyone; from voters to political leaders, and the way in which they are influenced by the media, political ideas and international affairs. In a fast-changing world, this course will get you thinking about issues such as why UK voters opted for Brexit, what will decide the US Presidential election, and whether the UK is really democratic.

This is an excellent subject for anyone who wants to improve their awareness of current affairs, self-confidence and persuasive skills. Politics students experience a variety of teaching and learning styles including trips, discussions and use of the Internet. It is a subject for which TV viewing is compulsory!

As part of the course we usually offer visits to Parliament, Washington DC, shadowing local MPs and invite relevant guest speakers.

How it is taught

Politics is assessed by examination only and is taught in a variety of ways.

In our classrooms the emphasis is on finding out what YOU think about the issues we are studying. We want you to be engaged in political ideas and arguments. As such, as well as teacher-led activities to understand the key elements of our topics and the exam, we'll take part in debates and discussion, present ideas to our peers, use the internet and library for research and make use of a broad range of political publications



Politics visit to Washington

Entry requirements

You are required to achieve at least a grade 4 in GCSE English.

You should also meet the general college entry requirements for Advanced Level study. Please see the current Prospectus- Advanced Programmes, entry requirements. You should have a keen interest in current affairs and contemporary issues

In this subject, particular skills and aptitudes will be required, many of which will be demonstrated by students' GCSE profiles.

Entry requirements might be changed in light of curriculum reform.

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Course content

The Politics A level has three components:

UK Government and Politics

You will look at the ways in which people participate in politics by voting, engaging with political parties, pressure group activity and through the media. You will also study the way in which the UK is governed and the way in which we are represented. This will include making laws in Parliament, and putting those laws into action through the role of the Prime Minister, Cabinet and Civil Service. We will also look at the way the law is interpreted by judges.

US Government and Politics

You look at the way in which people take part in politics in the US differs from the UK. Looking at the American electoral process, the role of US political parties, and US pressure groups, you will be able to analyse and compare the way they function with those in UK and make judgements about the extent to which they are democratic. You will also study the institutions that make up the three branches of US Government: the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court and you will be able to analyse the relationship between them in order to assess where power lies.

Political ideas

You will study a range of political ideas that have helped to define the way politics is practised and the way people think about it. As well as the core ideas that have come to define UK Politics in the last century (Conservatism, Socialism and Liberalism), you will be able to focus on a wider range of contemporary schools of political thought including feminism, environmentalism, anarchism, multiculturalism and nationalism.

Examination details

Politics is assessed by three essay-based examinations at the end of the two year course. Each exam will include a range of medium and longer extended writing responses. They will test your depth of knowledge about the topics we study and your ability to analyse and evaluate different political viewpoints and explanations.

Useful / common subject combinations

Many of the skills that the Politics course develops are similar to other humanities subjects, and include the ability to evaluate and assess evidence, defend a point of view articulately and persuasively, criticise a rival point of view sensitively and with confidence, and present ideas fluently in both written and verbal ways. Politics underpins all aspects of human endeavour and as such is a valuable subject in its own right. It combines particularly well with History, Law, Economics, Sociology, Languages, Geography, Psychology, Philosophy and Business Studies.

Careers / HE information

Some students go on to study Politics at university; at degree level there has been a significant growth in the number of students studying Political Science over the last decade. However, for many students the study of Politics at Advanced Level has given them the necessary understanding of political processes to be of value in their chosen career.