

## 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

## 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:**

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

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

	<b>Relevance</b>  Questions are interpreted correctly;  Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout;  Discussion is focused on topic of the questions;  Irrelevant content and discussion are not included	<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>  Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately;  Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight;  There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module	<b>Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning</b>  Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning;  Originality in argument;  Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions;  Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom	<b>Scholarship and Style</b>  Conclusions are well justified and complete;  Facts reported and statements made are accurate;  Writing is clear and fluent;  All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style;  All work is the student's own
<b>A</b> 93-100%	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Excellent and thorough thesis development	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading	Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and original critical insight;  Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified;  Accurate and thorough referencing
<b>A-</b> 90-92%	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Very strong thesis	Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading	Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight;  Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified;  Accurate referencing

<b>B+</b> 87-89%	Appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Good thesis throughout	Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading	Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence;  Shows critical insight;  Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified;  Accurate referencing
<b>B</b> 83-86%	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Thesis is clear	Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading	Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence;  Shows critical insight;  Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language;  Conclusions are justified;  Accurate referencing
<b>B-</b> 80-82%	Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Thesis is underdeveloped but clear	Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading	Sound analytical skills;  Sound evaluation of data;  Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;  Conclusions are coherent;  Sound use of referencing conventions
<b>C+</b> 77-79%	Some appropriate interpretation and relevant;	Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading	Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills;  Some evaluation of data;	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;

	Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity		Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive;  Identifies experiential connections	Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported;  Sound use of referencing conventions
<b>C</b> 73-76%	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material;  Thesis lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood;  Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills;  Some evaluation of data;  Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive;  Identifies experiential connections	Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;  Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported;  Sound use of referencing conventions
<b>C-</b> 70-72%	Limited interpretation and relevance;  Thesis is inconsistent	Weak understanding of evidence;  Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills;  Some evaluation of data;  Lacks critical judgement;  Little integration experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency;  Weak use of appropriate language;  Weak justification for conclusions;  Adequate use of referencing conventions
<b>D</b> 60-69%	Limited interpretation and relevance;  Lacks thesis	Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading	Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight;  Little integration of experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency;  No justification for conclusions;  Inaccurate use of referencing
<b>F</b>	Significant misinterpretation	Lacks understanding of evidence and	Lacks analytical skills, lacks	Poorly written with little fluency;

0-59%	and irrelevant material	inappropriate or no wider reading	evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement;  Lacks integration of experiential learning	No justification for conclusions;  Poor referencing;  Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI
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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 in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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*, Juli-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](http://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 offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counsellor, simply email [studentlife@fie.org.uk](mailto: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.