



SIXTH FORM

# Government & Politics

Edexcel  
AS 8GP01/A2 9GP01



## WHY CHOOSE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS?

If you are interested in current affairs and the world around you, then this could be the course for you. If you are of a curious disposition, asking 'why' questions, are concerned about global warming, gender inequalities, racism, wonder why the UK has been fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, are concerned about the level of UK debt, or about the rising levels of inequality and poverty in the UK, no matter what your viewpoint, then you will probably enjoy politics.

## HOW USEFUL WILL IT BE?

Politics is a popular subject which combines well with subjects such as Law, Sociology and in particular History.

Politics is a valued and respected qualification for a wide range of Higher Education courses and careers in professions as diverse as Law, Personnel Management, Politics, Marketing, Finance, Journalism or the Civil Service. Politics, like History, has traditionally been perceived to be a high calibre academic subject and will be seen as such by the Ivy League universities when considering your suitability for their courses.

## WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO DO TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

Students will be expected to stay up to date with current affairs and keep a 'news diary' of key events in politics. Likewise they will be expected to regularly watch political programmes, such as The Andrew Marr Show, Dispatches, Newsnight and read various political magazines, from *The New Statesman* to *Private Eye*, to thus immerse themselves in discussions about politics. Students are also encouraged to read the books in the library from contemporary political thinkers such as Monbiot, Klein or Chomsky.

## WHAT WILL YOU STUDY ON THE COURSE IN YEAR 12 – THE AS LEVEL?

Students study for their Unit 1 exam in January and Unit 2 exam in June. Both units are worth 50% of the AS level.

**Unit 1** is about how democracy works and fails to work in the UK. Students explore four themes:

**Democracy in the UK:** what is democracy? Types of democracy; falling participation rates in democracy.

**Pressure groups:** types, methods they use, who they represent. Are they democratic? Do they work?

**Elections in the UK:** which systems are used? Are they fair? What other system could be used?

**UK political parties:** what are they? What do they stand for? etc.

**Unit 2** is about how the UK is governed. This unit introduces students to the major governmental processes within the UK. It encourages them to develop a critical understanding of the role and effectiveness of key institutions, and of the relationship amongst them in the context of multi-level governance. Four themes are explored in relation to this:



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**The UK constitution:** what is it? Is it fit for purpose? Are MP's made to be accountable?

**Parliament:** is it an effective legislative and scrutinizing chamber? Does it check the power of the executive?

**The PM and the executive:** does the PM have too much power?

**Civil liberties in the UK:** do judges protect us from poor policing/authoritarian government? Are our liberties adequately protected in law?

### **HOW IS THE AS LEVEL ASSESSED?**

Students sit Unit 1 in January and Unit 2 in May/June. Both exams are 1 hour and 20 minutes in length. In each exam, they answer two questions from the four themes. Students will also answer shorter questions (five and 10 minute questions) and longer essay questions over the course of the two papers.

### **WHAT WILL YOU STUDY ON THE COURSE IN YEAR 13 - THE A2 LEVEL?**

Students study Political Ideologies in Year 13 for exams in January and June.

In **Unit 3** students study the four main political ideologies which have been influential for the longest time in the UK/western world: Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Anarchism.

In **Unit 4** students explore more recent ideological developments, the newer ideologies of Nationalism, Feminism, Multiculturalism and Ecologism.

For both units, students have to understand how these ideologies have developed, what their core beliefs are, what the rival traditions within each ideology are, the assumptions, evidence, and core debates about the ideology, as well as looking at its impact on politics in the UK and the world.

### **HOW IS THE A2 LEVEL ASSESSED?**

Students sit Unit 3 in January and Unit 4 in June. Both exams are 1 hour and 30 minutes in length. In each exam, students will answer three shorter 15-minute questions from a choice of five and one extended essay (45 minutes of writing) from a choice of three in both papers.

### **HOW MUCH TIME WILL YOU HAVE TO SPEND ON PRIVATE STUDY/RESEARCH?**

AS Level: at least 4 hours per week

A2 Level: at least 5 hours per week

