



## **POLS 3450 BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

**COURSE TUTOR: Dr Nicholas D J Baldwin**

The purpose of the course is to give a broad introduction to the origins, development, structure and workings of the British system of Government and of British politics.

### **Course Outline**

1. The Historical Context of British Government and Politics
2. The British Constitution: Real or Imaginary?
3. The Monarchy: Strength through Weakness?
4. Parliament - The House of Commons: Executive Scrutineer?
5. Parliament - The House of Lords: Watchdog, Poodle or incontinent Labrador?
6. The Prime Minister and Cabinet Government: First among Equals?
7. The Civil Service: Britain's Ruling Class?
8. Devolved Government: From Unitary State to Union State?
9. Local Government: Force or Farce?
10. The Changing Role of the State: Enabling not Providing?
11. The Role and Power of the Courts – domestic and international
12. Britain, the European Union and Brexit
13. The Social Context of British Politics
14. Elections, Voting Behaviour and Public Opinion
15. Political Parties and Pressure Groups
16. Power and the British Political System

The course requirement for each student will be an assessed essay to be handed in **no later than 4.00pm on Thursday Week 6** which will account for 25% of the final grade.

In addition, students are expected as a matter of course to present tutorials, to participate in tutorial discussions and to demonstrate some interest in the subject. Consequently, class work (consisting of general attendance and participation, 5 tutorial presentations, a class Parliamentary-style debate and the Parliament trip [circumstances permitting, it is hoped that the course will be supplemented by a trip to Parliament to meet Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords to discuss with them issues raised during the course], will count for an additional 35% of the final grade. It is your responsibility to attend all classes in the course. **Please note:** Failure to attend class can result in low grades and a loss of credit.

In addition, the course consists of a final three-hour essay-based (4 essays) examination which will count for the remaining 40% of the final grade.

Teaching is by lecture - including a number by visiting speakers and the use of video presentation(s) - and tutorial.

**Learning outcomes:**

The main thrust of the different methods of assessment used is to evaluate what students know, understand and can do.

On completion of the course, students will be expected to have gained:

- knowledge of the subject matter;
- an understanding of the subject matter;
- an appreciation of the nuances of the subject matter;
- an awareness of the need to be logical when dealing with material;
- an awareness of the need to be concise when dealing with material;
- an awareness of the need to be analytical when dealing with material;
- an awareness of the need to support arguments by reason and relevant evidence.

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Please Note: Any student with documented medical, psychological or learning disabilities, who feels that they may need in-class academic adjustments, reasonable modifications, and/or auxiliary aids and services while taking this course, should first contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) on their home campus to discuss specific needs. FDU Florham Campus students should contact the Director of Disability Support Services at 973-443-8079. FDU Metropolitan Campus students should contact the Associate Provost at 201-692-2477. Once the academic adjustments, modifications, or auxiliary aids and services are approved by DSS, the College Dean and the Faculty concerned will be notified.

**READING LIST:**

**Recommended Background Reading**

1. FN Forman & NDJ Baldwin, Mastering British Politics (5<sup>th</sup> edition) 320.42 FOR
2. Philip Norton, The British Polity (5<sup>th</sup> edition) 320.42 NOR
3. Philip Norton, Governing Britain 328.42 NOR
4. Bill Jones, Philip Norton and Isabelle Hertner (Eds), Politics UK (10<sup>th</sup> edition) 320.42 JON
5. Mark Garnett, Peter Dorey & Philip Lynch, Exploring British Politics (5<sup>th</sup> edition) 320.42GAR
6. Richard Heffernan et al (eds), Developments in British Politics 10 320.42 HEF

**General – Recent Political History**

1. Andrew Marr, A History of Modern Britain 942 MAR
2. Norman Lowe, Mastering Modern British History (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) 942 LOW
3. Nick Tiratsoo (ed.), From Blitz to Blair: Britain since 1939 329.9423TIR
4. Peter Clarke, Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-1990 942 CLA
5. Gavin Esler, How Britain Ends 942 ESL

**General – The European Context including Brexit**

- David Charter, Europe: In or Out 341.185 CHA
- David Charter, What has the EU ever done for us? 341.185 CHA
- Harold Clarke et al, Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union 341.185 CLA
- Nick Clegg, How to stop Brexit 341.185 CLE
- Ian Dunt, Brexit: What the Hell Happens Now? 341.185 DUN
- Geoffrey Evans and Anand Menon, Brexit and British Politics 341.185 EVA
- Jason Farrell and Paul Goldsmith, How to Lose a Referendum 341.185 FAR
- Ian Kearns, Collapse: Europe after the European Union 341.185 KEA
- Denis MacShane, Brexit: How Britain left Europe 341.185 MAC
- Denis MacShane, Brexit, No Exit 341.185 MAC
- Craig Oliver, Unleashing Demons 341.185 OLI
- Fintan O’Toole, Heroic Failure: Brexit and the Politics of Pain 341.185 OTO
- David Reynolds, Island Stories: Britain and its History in the Age of Brexit 942 REY
- Tim Ross and Tom McTague, Betting the House 324.42 ROS
- Tim Shipman, All Out War 341.185 SHI
- Brendan Simms, Britain’s Europe: A Thousand Years of Conflict & Cooperation 341.185 SIM
- Graham Taylor, Understanding Brexit 341.185 TAY
- Hugo Young, This Blessed Plot 341.184 YOU

**General Reading List**

This is a selective bibliography. It is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. It should be employed solely as a guide to possible reading.

Walter Bagehot <u>The English Constitution</u>	342.42 BAG
The Independent <u>Guide to the UK Constitution</u>	328.42IND
Dennis Kavanagh <u>British Politics: Continuities and Change</u>	320.42 KAV
RM Punnett <u>British Government and Politics</u>	354.42 PUN
P Bromhead <u>Britain's Developing Constitution</u>	342.42 BRO
I Gilmour <u>The Body Politic</u>	354.42 GIL
ECS Wade & AW Bradley <u>Constitution and Administrative Law</u>	342.42 WAD
P Norton <u>The Constitution in Flux</u>	342.42 NOR
Ferdinand Mount <u>The British Constitution Now</u>	342.42 MOU
J Harvey & L Bather <u>The British Constitution</u>	342.42 HAR
Keith Sutherland <u>The Rape of the Constitution</u>	342.42 SUT
Anthony King <u>The British Constituion</u>	342.42 KIN
P Hennessy <u>The Hidden Wiring: Unearthing the British Constitution</u>	342.42 HEN
Nicholas Bamforth <u>Public Law in an Multi-Layered Constitution</u>	342.42 BAM
Vernon Bogdanor <u>The Coalition and the Constitution</u>	342.42 BOG
Vernon Bogdanor <u>The British Constitution in the Twentieth Century</u>	342.42 BOG
Vrnotn Bogdanor <u>The New British Constitution</u>	342.42 BOG
Robert Hazell <u>Constitutional Futures Revisited</u>	342.42 HAZ
Peter Leyland <u>The Constitution of the United Kingdom</u>	342.42 LEY
Lord Nolan <u>The Making and Remaking of the British Constitution</u>	342.42 NOL
House of Lords, House of Commons <u>Conventions of the UK Parliament - Report of Session 2005-06 Vol 1</u>	328.42 HMSO OS
F N Forman <u>Constitutional Change in the United Kingdom</u>	342.42 FOR
Andrew Blick, <u>The Codes of the Constitution</u>	342.42 BLI
Peter Leyland, <u>The Constitution of the United Kingdom</u> (3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.)	342.42 LEY
Peter Riddell <u>Parliament Under Pressure</u>	328.42 RID
John Morrison <u>Reforming Britain – New Labour, New Constitution?</u>	329.9423 MOR
Robert Blackburn <u>Towards a Constitutional Bill of Rights for the United Kingdom</u> - <u>Commentary &amp; Documents</u>	342.42 BLA
Jeffrey Jowell, Dawn Oliver & Colm O’Cinneide, <u>The Changing Constitution</u> (8 <sup>th</sup> Ed)	342.42 JOW
Anthony Seldon & Mike Finn, <u>The Coalition Effect 2010-2015</u>	354.42 SEL
Joshua Rozenberg <u>Trial of Strength – The Battle Between Ministers &amp; Judges Over Who Makes The Laws</u>	342.42 ROZ
David Starkey <u>The Monarchy of England Vol. 1 – The Beginnings</u>	321.7 STA
Tom Nairn <u>The Enchanted Glass: Britain and its Monarchy</u>	321.7 NAI
Vernon Bogdanor <u>The Monarchy and the Constitution</u>	321.7 BOG
Robert Hardman <u>Monarchy – The Royal Family at Work</u>	321.7 HAR
F Hardie <u>The Political Influence of the British Monarchy</u>	321.7 HAR
R.Hazell & B.Morris <u>The Queen at 90: The Changing Role of the Monarchy and Future Challenges</u> (Available at: <a href="https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/sites/constitution-unit/files/170.pdf">https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/sites/constitution-unit/files/170.pdf</a> )	321.7 HAZ
John Cannon <u>British Monarchy</u>	321.7 CAN
William Shawcross <u>Queen and Country</u>	321.7 SHA
Jeremy Paxman <u>On Royalty</u>	321.7 PAX

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Reading list continued ...

Philip Murphy <u>Monarchy and the End of Empire</u>	321.7 MUR
NDJ Baldwin (ed) <u>Parliament in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</u>	328.42 BAL
Robert Rogers & Rhodri Walters <u>How Parliament Works</u> (6 <sup>th</sup> edition)	328.42 ROG
P Norton (ed) <u>Parliament in the 1980s</u>	328.42 NOR
Philip Norton <u>Parliament in British Politics</u>	328.42 NOR
Michael Rush <u>Parliamentary Participation in the 19<sup>th</sup> &amp; 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries</u>	328.42 RUS
Phillip Norton <u>The Individual Member in the British House of Commons</u>	328.42 NOR
<u>Strengthening Parliament</u>	
D Oliver (ed) <u>The Law and Parliament</u>	343 OLI
M Rush <u>Parliament and the Public</u>	328.42 RUS
David Beetham <u>Parliament and Democracy in the Twent-First Century</u>	328.42 BEE
<u>– a Guide to Good Practice</u>	
A Horne & A Le Sueur, <u>Parliament: Legislation and Accountability</u>	328.42 HOR
G Drewry (ed) <u>The New Select Committees</u>	328.42 DRE
Alex Brazier <u>Systematic Scrutiny: Reforming the Select Committees</u>	328.42 BRA
House of Commons <u>Departmental Select Committee 30 Years of Scrutiny</u>	328.42 HOU
Hannah White, <u>Select Committees under Scrutiny</u>	328.42 WHI
Martin Linton <u>The House of Commons</u>	328.42 LIN
P Norton <u>The Commons in Perspective</u>	328.42 NOR
Philip Norton <u>Parliament in British Politics</u>	328.42 NOR
M Ryle & P G Richards (ed) <u>The Commons under Scrutiny</u>	328.42 RYL
Tim Renton <u>Chief Whip – People, Power &amp; Patronage in Westminster</u>	328.42 REN
House of Lords <u>Parliament &amp; The Legislative Process – Volume 1 Report</u>	328.42 HOL OS
Meg Russell and Daniel Gover, <u>Legislation at Westminster</u>	328.42 RUS
Michael Rush <u>Opening Up the Usual Channels</u>	328.42 RUS
Parliament <u>The House of Lords – A Brief Guide</u>	328.42 HOU
House of Lords <u>House of Lords: A Guide to Business</u>	328.42 HOU
Philip Cowley <u>The Rebels How Blair Misled His Majority</u>	328.42 COW
Mark Shephard <u>UK Parliamentary Scrutiny &amp; Oversight of the ‘War on Terror’</u>	328.42 SHE
D Shell <u>The House of Lords</u>	328.42 SHE
NDJ Baldwin <u>The House of Lords: A Study in Evolutionary Adaptability</u>	328.42 BAL OS
EA Smith <u>The House of Lords - in British Politics &amp; Society 1815-1911</u>	328.42 SMI
William Wyndham <u>Peers in Parliament Reformed</u>	328.42 WYN
<u>Reform of the House of Lords: A Consultation Paper</u>	328.42 REF OS
Meg Russell, <u>The Contemporary House of Lords</u>	328.42 RUS
Meg Russell <u>Reforming the House of Lords: - Lessons from Overseas</u>	328.42RUS
House of Lords <u>A House for the Future:</u>	
<u>- Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords</u>	328.42HOU
Nicholas Baldwin <u>Reforming the Second Chamber</u>	328.42 BAL OS
Emma Crewe <u>Lords of Parliament – Manners, Rituals and Politics</u>	328.42 CRE
Philip Norton <u>Party Cohesion in the British House of Lords</u>	328.42 NOR OS
Philip Norton, <u>Reform of the House of Lords</u>	328.42 NOR
Alexandra Kelso <u>Connecting the Parts to the Whole: Parliament &amp; House of Lords Reform 1997-2004</u>	328.42 KEL
Kenneth Clarke, Robin Cook, Paul Tyler, Tony Wright, George Young	
<u>Reforming the House of Lords – Breaking the Deadlock</u>	328.42 CLA OS

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Reading list continued ...

Meg Russell, Maria Sciara <u>The House of Lords in 2006: Negotiating a Stronger Second Chamber</u>	328.42 RUS OS
Chris Ballinger, <u>The House of Lords 1911-2011 A Century of Non-Reform</u>	328.42 BAL
Peter Hennessey <u>The Prime Minister</u>	354.4203 HEN
D Shell & R Hodder-Williams <u>Churchill to Major:</u> <u>The British Prime Ministership since 1945</u>	354.4203 SHE
Steve Richards, <i>The Prime Ministers: Reflections on Leadership from Wilson to May</i>	354.4203 RIC
F W G Benemy <u>The Elected Monarch</u> <u>- The Development of the Power of the Prime Minister</u>	354.4203 BEN
A King (ed) <u>The British Prime Minister</u>	354.4203 KIN
Graham Thomas <u>Prime Minister &amp; Cabinet Today</u>	354.4203 THO
Dennis Kavanagh <u>The Powers Behind The Prime Minister</u> <u>The Hidden Influence of No.10</u>	354.4203KAV
James Naughtie <u>The Accidental American – Tony Blair &amp; The Presidency</u>	329.9423 NAU
M Rush <u>The Cabinet and Policy Formation</u>	354.4205 RUS
H Wilson <u>The Governance of Britain</u>	354.42 WIL
JP Mackintosh <u>The British Cabinet</u>	354.4205 MAC
S James <u>British Cabinet Government</u>	354.4205 JAM
M Burch & I Holliday <u>The British Cabinet System</u>	354.4205 BUR
P Gordon Walker <u>The Cabinet</u>	354.4205 WAL
R Crossman <u>Inside View</u>	354.4203 CRO
Sir Ivor Jennings <u>Cabinet Government</u>	354.42 JEN
P Hennessy <u>Cabinet</u>	354.4205 HEN
P Hennessy <u>Whitehall</u>	354.42 HEN
<a href="http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/cabinet-draft-manual.pdf">http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/cabinet-draft-manual.pdf</a>	
Peter Riddell, <i>15 Minutes of Power: The Uncertain Life of British Ministers</i>	354.42 RID
W G Runciman <u>Hutton &amp; Butler – Lifting the Lid on the Workings of Power</u>	327.42 RUN
P Kellner & Lord Crowther-Hunt <u>The Civil Servants:</u> <u>An Inquiry into Britain's Ruling Class</u>	351.1 KEL
Jock Bruce-Gardyne <u>Ministers &amp; Mandarins – Inside The Whitehall Village</u>	351.1 GAR
H Young & A Sloman <u>No Minister: An Inquiry into the Civil Service</u>	351.1 YOU
R Rose <u>Ministers and Ministries</u>	354.42 ROS
G Kaufman <u>How to be a Minister</u>	354.42 KAU
Tim Coates & Scott Light <u>The Hutton Inquiry, 2003</u>	327.42 COA
B Thompson <u>Under the Scott-light</u>	354.42 THO
D Lipsey <u>The Secret Treasury – How Britain's Economy is Really Run</u>	354.42062LIP
Nicholas Henderson <u>Mandarin: The Diaries of Nicholas Henderson</u>	351.1 HEN
John Dickie <u>The New Mandarins – How British Foreign Policy Works</u>	327.42 DIC
R Pyper <u>The British Civil Service</u>	351.1 PYP
G Drewry & T Butcher <u>The Civil Service Today</u>	351.1 DRE
Michael Barber <u>Instruction to Deliver</u>	329.9423 BAR
Guy Lodge, Ben Rodgers <u>Whitehall's Black Box</u>	354.42 LOD
G Peele <u>Governing the UK</u>	354.42 PEE
F F Ridley & David Wilson <u>The Quango Debate</u>	354.42 RID
Robert Hazell <u>The State &amp; The Nations:</u> <u>The First Year of Devolution in the United Kingdom</u>	328.42 HAZ
Alan Trench <u>The State of the Nations – The Second Year of Devolution</u>	328.42 TRE
Alan Trench <u>Has Devolution Made a Difference – The State of the Nations 2004</u>	328.42 TRE
Alan Trench <u>The Dynamics of Devolution – The State of the Nations 2005</u>	328.42 TRE
Robert Hazell, Richard Rawlings <u>Devolution, Law Making and the Constitution</u>	328.42 HAZ
Vernon Bogdanor <u>Devolution in The United Kingdom</u>	328.42 BOG

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Reading list continued ...

James Mitchell, <u>Devolution in the UK</u>	328.42 MIT
Michael O'Neill, <u>Devolution and British Politics</u>	328.42 ONE
David Laws <u>22 Days in May: The Birth of the Lib Dem-Conservative Coalition</u>	354.42 LAW
Rob Wilson <u>5 Days to Power: The Journey to Coalition Britain</u>	354.42 WIL
John Stewart <u>Modernising British Local Government</u> - <u>An Assessment of Labour's Reform Programme</u>	352 STE
D Wilson & C Game <u>Local Government in the United Kingdom</u> (3 <sup>rd</sup> edition)	352 WIL
M Cross & D Mallen <u>Local Government and Politics</u>	352 CRO
T Byrne <u>Local Government in Britain</u>	352 BYR
J D Derbyshire <u>An Introduction to Public Administration</u>	352 DER
William Niccol <u>Understanding the European Union</u>	341.184 NIC
Jo Shaw <u>Law of the European Union</u> (3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.)	341.184 SHA
B Jones (ed) <u>Political Issues in Britain Today</u>	320.42 JON
Martin Harrop <u>Elections &amp; Voters – A Comparative Introduction</u>	324.42 HAR
David Farrell <u>Electoral Systems – A Comparative Introduction</u>	324.42 FAR
L Dick <u>Elections in Britain Today: A Guide for Voters &amp; Students</u>	324.42LEO
A Heath, R Jowell & J Curtice <u>How Britain Votes</u>	324.42 HEA
P. Cowley, <u>Sex, Lies and the Ballot Box</u>	324.42 COW
Hansard Society <u>Commission on Electoral Reform</u>	324.42 HAN
The Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System – HMSO	324.42 HMSO
The Governance of Britain <u>Review of Voting Systems:</u> <u>The Experience of New Voting Systems in the United Kingdom Since 1997</u>	324.42 GOV
Michael Pinto-Duschinsky <u>Send the Rascals Packing:</u> <u>Defects of Proportional Representation &amp; The Virtues of the Westminster Model</u>	324.42PIN
The Rt. Hon. Peter Mandelson <u>Make Votes Count</u>	324.42 MAN
Martin Lincott <u>Making Votes Count – The Case for Electoral Reform</u>	324.42 LIN
Electoral Commission <u>Election 2001 – The Official Results</u>	324.42 ELE
David Butler & Dennis Kavanagh <u>The British General Election of 2001</u>	324.42 BUT
Dick Leonard & Roger Mortimore <u>Elections in Britain, A Voter's Guide</u>	324.42 LEO
D Broughton <u>Public Opinion Polling &amp; Politics in Britain</u>	324.24 BRO
Hansard Society <u>Public Opinion: Sounding Out the Public</u>	324.42HAN
Nick Moon <u>Opinion Polls: History, Theory &amp; Practice</u>	324.42 MOO
Robert Worcester <u>British Public Opinion:</u> <u>- A Guide to The History &amp; Methodology of Political Opinion Polling</u>	324.42WOR
Roger Awan-Scully, <u>The End of British Party Politics</u>	329.942 AWA
John Lees <u>Political Parties in Modern Britain</u>	329.942LEE
Robert McKenzie <u>British Political Parties</u> <u>- The Distribution of Power within the Conservative &amp; Labour Parties</u>	329.942McK
David Simpson <u>Pressure Groups</u>	328.368 SIM
W N Coxall <u>Parties and Pressure Groups</u>	328.368 COX
M Davies <u>The Politics of Pressure</u>	328.368 DAV
P Whitehead <u>The Writing on the Wall</u>	320 42 WHI
Wroxton <u>Papers in Politics</u>	320.42 WRO
S James <u>British Government - A Reader in the Policy Making</u>	354.42 JAM
HMSO <u>Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction</u> <u>- Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors</u>	327.42 HMSO
Anthony Sampson <u>Who Runs This Place ? The Anatomy of Britain in The 21<sup>st</sup> Century</u>	327.42 SAM

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**Other available sources include:**

BBC Documentary *The Diamond Queen* (presented by Andrew Marr)  
On DVD available from Reception

**The News:**

Students are advised to keep up with current political developments by watching the news and occasional current affairs programmes on television and looking at appropriate websites (for example: [www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)), as well as listening to the news on the radio (eg BBC Radion4).

**Web Sites - especially:**

Parliament: [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

Institute for Government: [www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk)

BBC site: Democracy Live: [www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive](http://www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive)

General Election Study: [www.britishelectionstudy.com](http://www.britishelectionstudy.com)

See listings at the end of specific chapters in: FN Forman & NDJ Baldwin Mastering British Politics (5<sup>th</sup> Edition).

**WEEK 1**            General Introduction & Historical Background

**WEEKS 2 -14**    Subject Lectures – including with guest speakers

**Tutorial Topics:**

**WEEK 3: The Constitution / The Monarchy**

- (a) The British Constitution. What is it?
- (b) The Monarchy: Strength through Weakness?

**WEEK 5: Parliament**

- (a) The House of Commons
- (b) The House of Lords.

What are the functions and powers/influence of Parliament [viz-a-viz the Executive]?

**WEEK 7: Central Government:**

- (a) Prime Minister & Cabinet;
  - (b) Ministers & the Civil Service.
- Where does power reside?

**WEEK 9: Government beyond the Centre**

- (a) Devolved Government;
  - (b) Local Government;
  - (c) Executive Agencies, QUANGOS, Public Corporations, Regulatory Authorities;
  - (d) The Courts (national and international).
- Power dispersed?

**WEEK 11: The Public**

- (a) Elections;
  - (b) Referenda;
  - (c) Opinion Polls;
  - (d) Political Parties;
  - (e) Pressure Groups.
- The Public Voice - seen but never heard?

***WEEK 12: Visit to the Houses of Parliament (provisional)***

**WEEK 14: Power and the British Political System**

Parliamentary-style debate  
Final class session - all students to meet together.

**WEEK 15            EXAMINATION**

**Essay Questions** Essay to be handed in no later than 4.00pm Thursday WEEK 6.

Choose EITHER

1. "In Britain because there is no written constitution only a collection of customs, practices and laws which have no special status, it can justly be said that no constitution exists." Discuss.

OR

2. "The Queen reigns but she does not rule" Is this a valid assertion?

## NOTES ON PREPARING ESSAYS

1. Essays should be legible and written on paper on which the lines are widely spaced.
2. Ample margins should be left for comments.
3. Your own name should be written at the top of the essay, you should clearly state which question you are answering, and pages should be consecutively numbered.
4. Essays should be in the region of 2000 words in length.
5. The source of quotations and of important factual assertions should be indicated by footnotes/endnotes giving the author, title, publisher and date of publication of the relevant book or article AND a 'Works Cited' listing should be provided (attached to the essay).
6. A 'Bibliography' - a list of books and articles consulted - should be provided (attached to the essay).
8. Do not personalize your essay (No 'I think this' or 'I think that') and do not be 'journalistic' in your phrasing; be 'academic'.
9. General advice can be summarised under two simple headings:

(a) Be logical.

Logic is of vital importance. Your essay should have a beginning, a middle and an end. You must: **address the question as set** and : **answer the question as set**. The arguments in the essay should be developed in a clear analytical sequence, with each point supported by reasons and relevant evidence. A series of general assertions cuts little ice, while a mere collection of factual statements is boring. You should make it a rule never to put down a fact unless it is relevant to the argument you are developing, but you must support your arguments with facts. Always remember: **unsubstantiated arguments lack force**.

**in short: an essay should consist of:**

- **an introduction**
- **the body of argument**
- **a conclusion**

**your introduction**

**should address the question as set**

- **you should show that you understand the premise of the questions as set**
- **you should show that you understand what is involved in answering the question as set.**
- **you should explain/outline how you are going to go about answering the question as set.**

**in the body of your essay**

**you must set about answering the question as set**

**consequently:**

- **you do so step by step, point by point, in the format of the way you outlined in your introduction.**
- **you must analyse the issues/arguments involved.**
- **in all of this you must use factual material (examples) to back up and support what you are saying (always remember that unsubstantiated arguments lack force).**
- **your conclusion should refer back to the specifics of the question as set and draw on the arguments you have outlined in the body of your answer.**

- (b) Be concise.

Your arguments will be much more effective if they are expressed concisely.

A question is likely to be a proposition – simply an idea put forward for consideration/discussion. Students should neither take it for granted that it is ‘right’ nor feel that they should agree with it.

What is required in answer is cogently to argue all sides, in essence discussing the topic and what is involved ‘in the round’, considering the arguments – both for and against – that are involved, and then come to a substantiated conclusion. An effective answer will proffer sufficient examples of points made, including up-to-date illustration.

If you take this approach and are both logical and concise you will be well on the way towards developing a good style. You should be self-conscious about your choice of words and about punctuation and the length of sentences. You should read your essays over to make sure you are satisfied with the substance and rhythm of the language.

*Please note:*

*Failure to follow this stipulated approach will result in your essay receiving an automatic fail.*

#### **IN ADDITON: REMEMBER**

1. Unless prior consent has been obtained from the Dean, and in the absence of reasonable explanation, work not handed in by the required time and date of submission is designated a fail.
2. Plagiarism - basically copying the work of others and passing it off as your own - ensures an automatic fail.

**Examples of examination essay questions**

1. "Unless a country can produce a Constitution in visible form, there is none"  
Discuss this in the context of Britain.
2. "The position of the Monarch in Britain today can be summed up as one of strength through weakness." Is this a valid assertion?
3. "The function of the House of Commons is to serve as a body of scrutiny and influence." To what extent is this so, and how well does the House of Commons perform such functions?
4. "The composition of the House of Lords prevents it from making a significant contribution to the legislative process." Discuss.
5. "Cabinet Government no longer exists in Britain: it has been replaced by Prime Ministerial Government." Outline the arguments for and against this assertion. Where does the balance lie?
6. "Civil Servants are servants of the Crown. For all practical purposes the Crown in this context means ... the Government of the day. The Civil Service as such has no constitutional personality or responsibility separate from the duly elected Government. The determination of policy is the responsibility of the Minister ... in the determination of policy the Civil Servant has no constitutional responsibility or role distinct from that of the Minister." What is the relationship between Ministers and Mandarins?
7. "The privatisation of Government has not only ensured that the role of the State has changed from that of provider to that of enabler, but also has ensured that accountability is a thing of the past." Discuss.
8. Compare and contrast the roles and powers of the devolved legislatures and executives in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. To what extent has devolution altered the British Constitution?
9. Local Government can do only what Central Government wants it to do. Because of this, local autonomy is a farce." Is such a view justified?
10. What have been the constitutional, legal, political and administrative implications of Britain's membership of - and subsequent withdrawal from - the European Union?
11. What is the constitutional position of the courts? What does this mean in practice?
12. On what grounds can the 'First Past the Post' electoral system be criticized? On what grounds can it be defended? Where do alternative systems fit in with this debate?
13. Political Parties are at the very centre of British Government and Politics. Discuss.
14. What is public opinion and how does it manifest itself? What influence does public opinion - both 'general' and 'organised' - have within the British political process?

## **Glossary of Terms**

More extensive coverage and definitions can be found in Erskine May Parliamentary Practice, or Wilding and Laundry An Encyclopaedia of Parliament - see Reference section in the Library.

### **THE MONARCH**

Head of State and theoretical Head of the Executive. Parliament cannot legislate without the assent of the Crown, though the Monarch only attends in person at the beginning of each session to read the speech from the Throne.

Current Monarch: Queen Elizabeth II (1952/3 - )

### **PARLIAMENT**

Originally the word meant 'a talk' (parler F.). The British Parliament consists of the Sovereign, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Together they exercise the legislative function of government.

### **CABINET**

The executive organ of Government; consists of usually 20-24 senior members of the governing party (or coalition), called Ministers, and presided over by the Prime Minister. Ministers are answerable to Parliament, where they are either an elected Member of the House of Commons or a Member of the House of Lords.

### **THE PRIME MINISTER**

The most senior minister, and (usually) the leader of the largest party in the House of Commons.

Current Prime Minister: Boris Johnson (2019- )

### **HOUSE OF COMMONS**

The elected House. Each member (an MP) represents a constituency. There are currently 650 Members of the House of Commons.

### **HOUSE OF LORDS**

Consists of 92 Hereditary Peers (elected by these individuals from amongst the ranks of those Hereditary Peers *not* members of the House of Lords), Life Peers and Lords Spiritual (Bishops). As of September 2021 there were 833 members eligible to take part in the work of the House.

### **THE EXECUTIVE**

Those involved or concerned with making decisions and ensuring that they are carried out. In this context namely The Government of the day and the Civil Service.

### **CIVIL SERVICE**

The Bureaucracy. Those who work in government departments responsible for the administration of policy. Sometimes referred to as 'Whitehall', from its geographical location in London.

### **THE GOVERNMENT**

Comprises the Cabinet plus Junior Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Whips, and numbers about 110-120 persons; all are members of the majority party – or coalition of parties – in Parliament.

### **THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION**

Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition - the largest minority party in The House of Commons. The 'Leader of the Opposition' is the leader of the largest minority party.

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### **MP**

Abbreviation for Member of Parliament (Member of the House of Commons).

### **BACKBENCHER**

An MP holding neither an office in the Government nor belonging to the inner council (front bench) of the Official Opposition Party.

### **FRONT BENCH**

The two benches nearest the Table in the House of Commons. They are occupied on one side by Government Ministers and on the other side by the principal members of the official Opposition.

### **HANSARD**

A colloquial term for the official report of the debates in the two Houses of Parliament.

### **SPEAKER**

The non-partisan Chair of the House of Commons - an elected Member of Parliament, who in turn is elected by MPs to preside over the House.

Current Speaker: Sir Lindsay Hoyle (4 November 2019 - )

### **DIVISION**

i.e. the House divides, or a vote is taken.

### **ACTS OF PARLIAMENT**

Bills passed by one House of Parliament, agreed to by the other - either without amendment or with amendment to which the first House has agreed - and assented to by the Monarch. Referred to as Statutes.

### **A GENERAL ELECTION**

The electoral contest held every five years to elect a new Parliament (House of Commons). The most recent General Election took place on Thursday 12 December 2019. Under the terms of the Fixed Term Parliament Act of 2011, the next General Election is not scheduled to take place until Thursday 12 December 2024.

However, in 2021 the Government introduced legislation to abolish the Fixed Term Parliament Act and to return the position to what it had been prior to the passage of the Act.

### **A BY-ELECTION**

A by-election is held to fill a vacancy in the House of Commons arising from the death or resignation of a Member.

### **CONSTITUENCY**

England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are divided into electoral units, called constituencies, each of which elects, by a simple majority ballot, a Member of Parliament. (Currently there are 650.)

### **POLITICAL PARTIES**

There are two main national parties with representation in the current House of Commons: the **Conservative Party** – usually described as being on the center/right of the political spectrum;

the **Labour Party** – usually described as being on the center/left of the political spectrum;

and two smaller parties represented in the House of Commons:

the **Liberal Democrat Party** – Pro-European and usually described as being in the center of the political spectrum;

the **Green Party** – environmentalist and usually described as being on the left of the political spectrum;

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There are also various sub-UK parties:

Scotland – the SNP (**Scottish National Party**);

Wales – **Plaid Cymru** (Welsh Nationalist);

Northern Ireland – various Unionist parties (for example the **DUP**) and Nationalist parties (for example **Sinn Fein**) as well as the non-aligned **Alliance Party**.

There are also a number of parties who do not have representation in the House of Commons, including: The **Brexit Party** – Anti-the European Union and established to ensure that the UK left the Union; it was subsequently re-named **Reform UK**.

**UKIP** (the United Kingdom Independence Party) – Anti-European Union, anti-immigration and usually described as being on the right of the political spectrum.

### **DELEGATED LEGISLATION (SECONDARY LEGISLATION)**

Delegated - or secondary - legislation allows the Government to make changes to a law without needing to go through the process of a completely new act of Parliament.

This can occur when primary legislation (an act of Parliament) specifies that changes to the law may be delegated to ministers in certain circumstances in future.

Delegated legislation may allow ministers to make technical changes to the law, like altering the level of a fine, but it can also sanction broader changes like fleshing out an act with greater detail.

Its main purpose is to avoid overloading the parliamentary timetable.

Statutory Instruments (SIs) form the majority of delegated legislation, but other types include regulatory reform orders and human rights orders.

Ministers currently enact about 3,500 SIs each year.

### **HENRY VIII CLAUSES**

The Government sometimes adds a provision to a Bill which enables the Government to repeal or amend it after it has become an Act of Parliament. The provision enables the amendment of primary legislation using delegated (or secondary) legislation. Such provisions are known as "Henry VIII clauses". The House of Lords Select Committee on the Scrutiny of Delegated Powers in its first report of 1992-93 defined a Henry VIII clause as: a provision in a Bill which enables primary legislation to be amended or repealed by subordinate legislation, with or without further Parliamentary scrutiny. [HL 57 1992-93, para 10] The clauses were so named from the Statute of Proclamations 1539, which gave King Henry VIII power to legislate by proclamation.

### **JUDICIAL REVIEW**

Judicial review is a type of court proceeding in which a judge reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body.

In other words, judicial reviews are a challenge to the way in which a decision has been made, rather than the rights and wrongs of the conclusion reached.

It is not really concerned with the conclusions of that process and whether those were 'right', as long as the right procedures have been followed. The court will not substitute what it thinks is the 'correct' decision.

This may mean that the public body will be able to make the same decision again, so long as it does so in a lawful way.

Examples of the types of decision which may fall within the range of judicial review include:

- Decisions of local authorities in the exercise of their duties to provide various welfare benefits and special education for children in need of such education;
- Certain decisions of the immigration authorities and Immigration Appellate Authority;
- Decisions of regulatory bodies;
- Decisions relating to prisoner's rights.