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college

Inspiring minds.
Shaping futures.

POLITICS

COURSE GUIDE 2017

“Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it, misdiagnosing it, and then misapplying the wrong remedies.”

MICHAEL PALIN

Politics

Exam Board AQA

What will the course involve?

You will study the following modules:

Paper 1 – Government and Politics of the UK. This includes the following areas of study: Political Participation and Voting Behaviour; Electoral Systems; Political Parties; Pressure Groups and Protest movements; The British Constitution; Parliament; The Core Executive (Government); Multi-level Governance (including Devolution and Brexit from the European Union!).

In year 1 (Lower 6th) the focus is very much on the UK and our political system, but we will also do some work on the government and politics of the USA too. Students are also introduced to politics in the wider political and social context, within which we explore the effect of social class, gender, ethnicity etc on the political system.

Paper 2 - The Government and Politics of the USA. In this unit the areas of study are: The Constitutional Framework of US Government; The Legislative Branch of Government - US Congress; The Executive Branch of Government - The Office of President; The Judicial Branch of Government - The Supreme Court. In addition, we study American Elections, Parties, Pressure Groups and Voting Behaviour too. We also explore the synoptic relationship between the US and UK forms of government, including political ideology in some depth.

Please note that Paper 2 and its study areas are split over the end of the first year and the beginning of the second year.

Paper 3 – Political Ideas and Beliefs. The areas of study include: Liberalism; Conservatism; Socialism; Fascism; Feminism; Anarchism; Environmentalism and Multiculturalism.

This year the emphasis is still on acquiring political knowledge, but equal emphasis is now devoted to the development of more sophisticated critical evaluation skills. Our studies will have a more international flavour, with obvious emphasis on the USA (paper 2) and our "special relationship" with them.

Our students say...

The thing I enjoy most about Carmel is the level of independence you get. You have the freedom to flourish in your chosen subjects and to achieve.

The level of support given by tutors is definitely one of the highlights of studying here as there is plenty of help available to you from your tutors should you need it. Politics is a subject that is really interactive; we practice speaking and debating skills as well as developing our critical thinking. I went on a trip to the Houses of Parliament with this subject and had the opportunity to watch the House of Commons and House of Lords debate which really brought the subject to life. After I leave Carmel I hope to go on to Liverpool University to study either Sociology or Philosophy with the aim of gaining a PHD in my chosen field.



Joshua Hibbert
Cowley International College

Studying:
Politics, Philosophy & Religion,
Sociology



Students enjoy the annual trip to London

How will I be taught?

The teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom is very wide-ranging and consists of PowerPoint presentations, handouts, exam question practice, group quizzes, watching relevant DVDs, student presentations, the analysis of quality newspaper stories, using websites and research activities, discussion and debates, and textbook based activities. Students will also be issued with a textbook for home study and homework purposes.

In addition you will have all of the facilities available to you in our Library, which includes additional textbooks, use of computers for politics websites, political journals, DVDs, and quality newspapers.

Indeed the nature of this topic is such that 'compulsory' viewing of selected TV programmes about politics is an absolute necessity to keep abreast of contemporary political issues, for example 'Sunday Politics' on BBC1.

There will also be plenty of opportunity to research your own particular political interests and issues, and to present your findings to the class initiating discussion and debate too!

How will I be assessed?

You will sit three exams at the end of the second year in the summer. The exams are two hours duration each and have equal weighting. Mock exams will be taken at the end of the first year too.

You will also be marked regularly on mostly written assignments and given a progress grade with which you will be able to monitor yourself. This will be reviewed on a regular basis between you and your tutor. As an individual student you are only judged against your individual minimum expected grade (MEG) and this determines your rate of progress on the course.

What will this course prepare me for?

The course will prepare you for continued study at university degree level and various possible career pathways thereafter. The study of Politics is very useful for a number of careers and is a well-established subject at the most prestigious universities in the UK.

What is the department like?

The Politics department works very closely with all Social Sciences departments in the college. We have access to computers and all rooms are equipped with multi-media projectors and interactive white boards. Course textbooks are complemented by our own college library and their numerous politics texts too. The department has an innovative and dynamic approach, which promotes the pursuit of excellence in all of the teaching and learning elements of the course. The department also actively attempts to cater for all learning styles with up-to-date teaching methods and resources.

Finally, the department will encourage a healthy sense of humour in its work too, with the odd touch of satire!

Outside the Capitol Building, Washington



Our students say...

I enjoy the atmosphere at Carmel and how friendly everyone is. I feel very comfortable asking for any help from my subject tutors, personal tutor or peers in class.

I would recommend the course to anyone if they have a real interest in the subject and they like a challenge. I recently went on a trip to listen to some lectures about Politics to help me with my understanding. The lecture was held by the people who run the exam board so it helped with my exam knowledge and will hopefully increase my chances of a better grade. Since studying Politics at Carmel my self-confidence has really grown; everyone is so friendly and I don't feel judged in class which makes me feel confident when answering questions. This is especially true during our class debates, everyone can voice their opinion and have fun at the same time.



Sarah Boardman
Rainford High

Studying:

Politics, Biology, Chemistry, Maths

A visit from Lord Storey



Our students say...

I have really enjoyed studying Politics as this subject allows me to have a greater understanding of current affairs as well as our society.

I chose this subject as I wanted to study something new and I also wanted to become more informed on political issues in the UK. Since studying Politics, I feel that I have become more confident in my ability to express my own opinions and arguments in both essays and class discussions. I also find that Politics complements my other subjects well as it helps to improve your essay writing skills particularly with writing in a clear and concise way. I would recommend this subject to anyone who likes to follow current affairs, or anyone who wants to improve their knowledge of UK politics and political issues which affect the UK.



Ruth Murphy
De La Salle

Studying:

Politics, English Literature,
French, History



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What support will I receive?

There will be the opportunity to book regular support/extension tutorials, with email back up and regular communication with your tutor. You will also be encouraged to actively develop and contribute to the development of course materials and resources.

There will also be relevant DVDs for you to watch on your own or with fellow students as part of your wider study and research commitments. You will be guided to relevant websites and encouraged to discover additional ones too! The information and materials on politics continue to grow at an amazing rate.

What other opportunities will the study of Politics offer me?

We invite visiting speakers into the classroom to talk with students. These visitors have included ex-local MP Dave Watts, European MPs, Officers from the local council, and even ex-Government Minister, Andy Burnham. The annual trip to London in the first year is a great opportunity for you to visit Parliament and the US Embassy. As we also study US Politics, in the second year there is the possibility of a trip to Washington DC and other East Coast cities.

In addition, there are local trips to the Slavery Museum in Liverpool, and to relevant lectures at the Philharmonic Hall and Edge Hill University. As part of the Enrichment Programme, students can get involved in the Mock United Nations General Assembly (MUNGA) which takes place at Liverpool Town Hall every November.

Finally, students are also encouraged to take an interest in Carmel's Student Council body, which is elected on an annual basis and works on behalf of all the students at Carmel.

How successful are Carmel's Politics students?

		A*-B	A*-C	Overall Pass Rate
2013	AS	31%	63%	91%
	A2	59%	77%	100%
2014	AS	50%	71%	92%
	A2	50%	67%	100%
2015	AS	21%	44%	81%
	A2	71%	83%	100%
2016	AS	35%	54%	81%
	A2	43%	76%	100%

What are the entry requirements for this course?

You will need **GCSE grade 5 in English Language** plus a **GCSE grade B in one other essay based subject.**

Meet the Tutor

Mike McLoughlin MA
Head of Department and AQA
Examiner for Politics

More Information

You can find further information on the AQA Exam Board website: www.aqa.org.uk Another useful resource: www.bbc.co.uk/politics