

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (Course Code Po)

Acting Subject Leader:

Mrs F W Pryor BA(Hons)

Edexcel

Course entry requirements

GCSE Level 7 in an essay-based subject or by approval of the Head of Department.

Introduction

There can be no more appropriate or fascinating time at which to study Government and Politics than during the years in which one becomes entitled to participate fully in the political process. The subject sits at an intriguing intersection between live news events and theory: it is fast-paced, compelling and important.

The course

Throughout the two years of the course students are expected to make links between the political theory that they learn about in the classroom and the political events that are playing out on the UK and American stage. The course is split into three components: the first looks at political culture and engagement, the second at how the UK is governed including a study of political philosophy and ideas and the third examines UK governance comparatively with the USA.

In Year 12 students study the nature of politics and how people and politics interact. They will explore the emergence and development of the UK's democratic system and the similarities, differences connections and parallels between direct and indirect democracy. They will focus on the role and scope of political parties that are so central to UK contemporary politics, including the significance of the manifestos they publish at election time and their relevance to the mandate of the resulting government. In addition, students will learn about the set of rules governing politics in the UK, and the specific roles and powers of the main branches of the government: legislature, executive and judiciary and the relationship and balance of power between them while considering where sovereignty now lies within this system.

Summer Term Year 12/Autumn Term Year 13 students will begin to learn about political ideas, starting with the core principles of conservatism, liberalism and socialism and how they apply in practice to human nature, the state, society and the economy. They will investigate the divisions within each idea and their key thinkers and will have the opportunity to explore a further political idea such as anarchism. Much of second year of study will be devoted to the comparative component of the course: an examination of the UK and US systems of government. In learning about the key institutions of government of the USA and analysing the manner in which they achieve this power and exercise it over their citizens, students judge ultimately whether 'liberty and justice for all' has been achieved in the USA. Students will begin to engage in comparing and contrasting UK and US institutions of government, consequently developing a wider understanding of politics as a discipline, underpinned by the theoretical concepts of comparative politics.

The Study of Politics

Success at A level in Government and Politics demands a balance between two skills. Firstly, students must work hard to gain an understanding of the theories and rules that regulate British and American politics. Alongside this, it is vital that students keep abreast of developments in the current political climate. Lessons, therefore, tend to be largely based around discussion and debate.

The study of Government and Politics hones one's ability to think and write analytically. The subject is a good companion to History, Economics and Modern Foreign Languages.

The History and Government and Politics department organises visits to conferences at which students can hear directly from leading political scientists, journalists and politicians. Successful study visits have been run to Washington DC and New York every October since 2012 and we plan to run the trip again in October 2019.

University and Careers

Politics is a thriving subject at Borlase. A significant number of our students choose to extend their interest in the subject at university. University tutors and employers consistently state that they look for students who are able to critically engage with the world around them. Government and Politics equips students with the necessary tools to do this effectively.

(Nov 2018)