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Introduction
Politics is a fascinating subject to study at degree level. Indeed it has never been more popular with the number of students studying politics increasing in recent years. It will equip students with key transferable skills and you should become attractive to a wide range of employers on graduating from university.

The purpose of this booklet is to introduce you to the ways in which politics is studied in the UK and the sorts of skills you will acquire by studying politics. It provides up-to-date information of all Politics Departments in the UK so that you can choose the department and degree that is right for you.

After reading this booklet we hope that you will apply to study politics. It is important to highlight that you can apply to study politics without having previously studied the subject at school.
What is politics?
Politics is of vital importance to all of us in our daily lives. It concerns fundamental choices about the ways in which societies are organised and the way we are governed. It also concerns the way nation-states relate to one another internationally.

It is impossible to turn on your TV without reference to politics. With new ways of communicating and providing information more and more people are becoming politically engaged, especially through social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Politics is not just the concern of politicians. It is about big issues such as the environment and human rights. We have recently witnessed the outbreak of political protest in parts of the world such as the Middle East and closer to home we have witnessed lively student protests regarding the increase of tuition fees. Political engagement can change lives and encourage changes in government in the UK and elsewhere.
"At university I switched from biochemistry to politics and economics, and later did a part-time masters in politics. It changed my life: I went to work for the Liberal Democrats, in party HQ and in Parliament, then for a think-tank and now I’m a special adviser to one of our ministers. I’ve spent my life working for a cause, trying to change the world. What could be better?"

Duncan Brack
Special Adviser to Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change
“Studying politics gave me not just an understanding of political institutions and processes relevant to everyday life and work, but also provided me with the critical tools needed to devise the ideas and strategies which are a key part of successful public and media relations”.

Chris Calland
Senior Account Manager, PLMR
Why study politics?
Part of the excitement and the challenge of studying politics is the fact that it is always changing. Domestic and world events often take us by surprise and the speed with which major political developments occur increases with new technology.

One reason why students are attracted to the study of politics is that it allows you to explore your own views and be challenged by the views of others. The teaching and learning environment in politics is a particularly stimulating one.

With the cost of university study increasing dramatically you, as a prospective student, will want to know that your degree will not only be intellectually rewarding but will also lead to a successful career once you complete your studies. Politics provides you with a diverse set of key skills that will be highly attractive to employers.

"Studying politics taught me to rigorously analyse problems and to understand the big picture but not lose focus of the small details. These skills have been very useful in my career."

Karan Chadda
Client Development Manager, Populus
Courses
You will be able to choose from a wide range of programmes of study – different emphases exist within different departments, with some specialising more in political theory or international politics. There are also a large number of joint degree courses available, which means you could choose to study politics alongside a course you have previously studied and enjoyed. In a number of universities you will be able to study politics in combination with subjects such as history, economics, sociology, geography, philosophy, business studies, communication and media studies and so on. Ideally you should attend open days and visit days to make an informed choice.

“Studying politics increased my interest in and understanding of the national and international political process. Crucially, it also helped me to secure work at Westminster that resulted in a career I love in public affairs”.

Laura Williams
Public Affairs Officer, Cancer Research UK
The academic study of politics includes three broad areas:

**Political Theory** looks at the major ideas and concepts and the philosophies that have been developed to show how societies should be organised. It includes discussion of the work of major political philosophers from the earliest civilisations to the present day and a range of ideologies.

**Political Institutions** involves the study of political systems in each country and comparatively. You will examine the structures of government and the ways in which legislatures and the judiciary are organised and decisions are made and laws upheld.

**International Relations** concerns the ways in which nation-states interact with one another and the reasons why countries go to war and how they resolve their differences. It also includes a discussion of international institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union.

**Teaching and Learning Strategies**
There will be considerable choice over the structure of your degree. First year modules are intended as a broad introduction to the subject. There are more advanced modules in the second and third year. The balance between core and optional modules varies from programme to programme as does the number of modules you may elect to do in other subjects. A dissertation – a long independent research project – is available on either a compulsory or an optional basis in your final year. You will also be able to register on a full-time or a part-time basis. You will experience a wide range of learning environments including traditional lectures and seminars and newer approaches such as political blogs, wikis and role play.

**Assessment** – you will face a wide range of assessment strategies as part of your politics degree ranging from more traditional practices such as examinations and essays through to in-class presentations and on-line discussion forums.
Topics

**British Politics**
Not surprisingly British politics is a feature of all politics degrees in the UK. There has arguably never been as fascinating a time in recent years to study British politics. In 2010 the first Coalition government since the end of the Second World War was formed. It has proved to be very controversial with public protest over tuition fees and public expenditure cuts. There has been, and continues to be, significant constitutional change.

**European Politics**
British politics is linked closely to that of the European Union and other European nations. Many Politics Departments have a range of modules available in various aspects of European politics, which has been subject to major political since in recent years.

**US Politics**
Modules in US Politics remain incredibly popular with students, with events such as Bush’s ‘War on Terror’ and the election of Obama in 2009 having major implications in the US and internationally and being of continued fascination for those interested in politics.

**Comparative politics**
Several politics departments will offer a choice of modules in other parts of the world, including the Middle East and African politics, where issues of democratisation, terrorism and development will be considered.

“Working at Liberty has given me a unique insight into how the political system operates, and the huge impact politics has on people’s everyday lives.”

Shami Chakrabarti
CBE, Director of Liberty
International politics
In addition to studying politics in terms of established and emerging nation-states, politics can also be considered as the relationships between states and the increasingly significant role of international institutions and the impact of 'globalisation'.

Security studies
An increasingly important branch of political enquiry is that of security studies given the rise of global terrorism and environmental security issues.

Public policy
How is policy made? How do decision-makers decide between different policy options? What are the causes of policy failure and how can they be avoided? These are the questions of concern to public policy analysts at a local, national and international level.

Political Economy
An increasing concern of political enquiry is that of political economy – the ways in which the economy is organised, relations between states, markets and civil society and the range of proposals that have been put forward to change economic structures at a national and global level.

Political Ideologies
Political action is shaped by our beliefs. Such beliefs can be classified as political ideologies – both established ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism and newer ideologies such as feminism and environmentalism.

Political Philosophy
Throughout the ages philosophers have wrestled with key issues such as what the relationship between freedom and order should be, the legitimacy of political rule, social justice and the most appropriate way to understand human nature.

Methods
Politics involves not only the study of content, but also the application of methods. Most politics degrees will have an emphasis on not just what is studied, but also how to study it. Qualitative and quantitative methods will be studied and practical guidance offered as to how to study politics effectively.
Skills

In choosing to do a degree in politics you will develop a wide range of subject specific and wider transferable skills, making you attractive to potential employers.

Analysis/critical awareness — politics is about the analysis of complex and often contradictory data and being able to construct and defend arguments derived from such data. You will be able to articulate and defend your arguments in the face of criticism.

Communication — you will be able to communicate effectively in writing and verbally as the result of studying politics. You will be required to write essays and reports and to make class presentations and contribute to discussions. You will become more confident in your ability to communicate by studying politics.

Information technology — you will be able to develop this vital skill in today’s world. You will use information technology to gather, interrogate and present data. Some politics modules involve the analysis of statistical data using relevant software packages.

Work experience and placements — several politics departments offer placements in Parliament, the devolved assemblies, the European Parliament, pressure groups, local government and so forth, allowing you to gain direct experience of working in a political environment testing you theoretical knowledge of politics and adding significantly to your employability.

Further Study

Obtaining a degree in politics does not necessarily mean the end of your studies. Most Universities offer postgraduate politics provision including MA/MSc taught postgraduate qualifications and MPhil/PhD higher degrees by research. These postgraduate qualifications will allow you to specialise in areas you have found most interesting during your undergraduate study.

A postgraduate qualification in politics is essential to become a university lecturer and an advantage in applying for jobs with the civil service or think -tanks.

Postgraduate qualifications are also available to allow you to enter a specific type of work, such as Postgraduate Certificate of Education to allow you to teach politics and related subjects in schools and colleges of further education.
Careers

A wide range of career opportunities will be open to students with politics degrees.

Most obviously a degree in politics will allow you to seek employment in a range of politically related environments including the civil service, local government, the European Commission, working with an MP or MEP, in the headquarters of one the leading political parties, pressure groups and think tanks. Politics is a highly attractive qualification for entering education as you will be able to teach core subjects such as citizenship at primary and secondary level or politics at A-Level. A popular route for politics graduates is to work for the print or broadcast media.

However, a degree in politics does not exclude you from pursuing a career that is not directly related to what you have studied. Politics, as stated earlier, allows you to acquire a range of key skills and attributes that will be highly prized by employers in management, marketing, public relations, retail, accountancy, banking etc. Many politics students find work in these careers highly rewarding, allowing them to develop the skills they have acquired in new and challenging circumstances.

“My degree in Politics helped me understand some of the basics of diplomacy, communication and persuasion – all of which are key skills I use every day in my current career. I thoroughly enjoyed studying politics and I would recommend it to anyone.”

Donna Boam
Group Public Affairs Manager, RSA
Where can you study?

Aberdeen
Department of Politics and International Relations
www.abdn.ac.uk/pir/

Aberystwyth
Department of International Politics
www.aber.ac.uk/interpol/en

Bangor
School of Social Sciences
www.bangor.ac.uk/so/

Bath
European Studies and Modern Languages
www.bath.ac.uk/esml/

Belfast
Queen’s University Belfast
School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy
www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPoliticsInternationalStudiesandPhilosophy/

Ulster
School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy
www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/policy/

Birmingham
Aston
School of Languages and Social Sciences
www1.aston.ac.uk/lss/

Birmingham
Centre for Russian and East European Studies
www.eri.bham.ac.uk/

Birmingham
Department of Political Science and International Studies
www.polsis.bham.ac.uk/

Birmingham
Institute of Local Government Studies
www.inlogov.bham.ac.uk/

Birmingham City
School of Social Sciences
www.bcu.ac.uk/elssschool-of-social-sciences

Blackburn College
School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
www.blackburn.ac.uk/BA_socialSciences.html

Bradford
Department of Peace Studies
www.brad.ac.uk/peace/index.php

Brighton
School of Humanities
http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/study/humanities

Bristol
School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies
www.bristol.ac.uk/politics/

Brunel
Division of Politics and History
www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/sssdpts/politics.aspx

Buckingham
Department of Economics and International Studies
www.buckingham.ac.uk/courses/politics-and-international/undergraduate

Cambridge
Department of Politics and International Studies
www.polis.cam.ac.uk/index.html

Cardiff
Cardiff
Politics Department, School of European Studies
www.cardiff.ac.uk/euros/

University of Wales
Institute Cardiff
Cardiff School of Education, Department of Humanities
www3.uwic.ac.uk/English/education/Pages/home.aspx

Central Lancashire
School of Education and Social Science
www.uclan.ac.uk/ahss/education_social_sciences/index.php

Chester
Department of Social Studies and Counselling
www.chester.ac.uk/undergraduate/politics

Coventry
Faculty of Business, Environment and Society
wwwp.coventry.ac.uk/cu/bes/

Dundee
Politics and International Relations, School of Humanities
www.dundee.ac.uk/politics/

Durham
School of Government and International Affairs, Department of Politics
www.dur.ac.uk/sgia/

East Anglia
School of Political Social and International Studies
www.uea.ac.uk/psi/

Edinburgh
Department of Politics and International Relations
www.pol.ed.ac.uk/
Essex
Department of Government
http://www.essex.ac.uk/government/

Exeter
Department of Politics
http://huss.exeter.ac.uk/politics/index.php

Glamorgan
Department of Social Sciences
http://hass.glam.ac.uk/

Glasgow
Glasgow
Department of Politics
www.gla.ac.uk/departments/politics/

Glasgow Caledonian
Department of Social Sciences, Politics Subject Group
www.gcal.ac.uk

Greenwich
School of Humanities, Division of Politics
www.gre.ac.uk/schools/humanities/departments/hpp/politics

Hertfordshire
School of Law
www.herts.ac.uk/gsa_courses/LLB-Hons-Government-and-Politics.cfm

Huddersfield
School of Human and Health Sciences
www2.hud.ac.uk/hhs/pis/index.php

Hull
Department of Politics and International Studies
www.hull.ac.uk/pas/

Keele
SPIRE: Politics, International Relations and Philosophy
www.keele.ac.uk/depts/spire/

Kent
Canterbury Christ Church
Politics and International Relations Framework
www.canterbury.ac.uk/politics

Kent
School of Politics and International Relations
www.kent.ac.uk/politics/

Kingston
Department of History, Politics, International Relations and Human Rights
http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/schools/social-science/

Lancaster
Lancaster Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion
www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/politics/

Leeds
Leeds
School of Politics and International Studies
www.polis.leeds.ac.uk/

Leeds Metropolitan
School of Social Sciences
www.lmu.ac.uk/as/sss

Leicester
De Montfort
Department of Public Policy
www.dmu.ac.uk/faculties/business_and_law/business/public_policy/index.jsp

Continued overleaf >>
Where can you study?

London (continued)

London Metropolitan
Faculty of Law, Governance and International Relations
www.londonmet.ac.uk/depts/lgir/

London South Bank
Department of Social and Policy Studies
www.lsbu.ac.uk/ahssps/

Westminster
Department of Politics and International Relations
www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/humanities/politics-and-international-relations

London (University of)

Birkbeck College
Department of Politics
www.bbk.ac.uk/polsoc/

Goldsmiths College
Department of Politics
www.gold.ac.uk/politics/

Institute for the Study of the Americas
http://americas.sas.ac.uk/

Institute of Commonwealth Studies
www.commonwealth.sas.ac.uk

King's College London
Defence Studies Department JSCSC
www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/defence/

King's College London
Department of War Studies
www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/ws

London School of Economics and Political Science
Department of International Relations
www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/intrel/

London School of Economics
and Political Science
Department of Government
www.lse.ac.uk/collections/government/

Queen Mary's
School of Politics and International Relations
www.politics.qmul.ac.uk/

Royal Holloway
Department of Politics and International Relations
www.rhul.ac.uk/politics-and-IR/

School of Oriental and African Studies
Department of Politics and International Studies
www.soas.ac.uk/politics/

School of Slavonic and East European Studies
Department of Social Sciences
www.ssees.ucl.ac.uk/social.htm

University College
Department of Political Science/School of Public Policy
www.ucl.ac.uk/spp/

Loughborough
Department of Politics, History and International Relations
www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/eu/

Manchester

Manchester
School of Social Sciences
www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/

Manchester Metropolitan
Department of Politics
www.hlss.mmu.ac.uk/polphil/

Middlesex
Political and International Studies, School of Health and Social Sciences
www.mdx.ac.uk

Newcastle

Newcastle
School of Geography, Politics and Sociology
www.ncl.ac.uk/gps/

Northumbria
Division of Politics and History
www.northumbria.ac.uk

Northampton
Department of Sociology and Politics
www.northampton.ac.uk

Nottingham

Nottingham
School of Politics and International Relations
www.nottingham.ac.uk/politics/

Nottingham Trent
Languages and International Studies
www.ntu.ac.uk

Nottingham Trent
Division of Politics and Sociology
www.ntu.ac.uk

OPEN
Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS)
www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/politics/politics.php
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