



Boston University Study Abroad London

Boston University Study Abroad London British Political Institutions CAS PO 221/IR 359 (*Core course*) Spring 2016

Instructor Information

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Course Overview

This course will introduce you to the main political institutions and actors in Britain today. It will explore the historical, social, and international contexts of British politics and detailed consideration will be given to competing ideologies and values that have shaped political developments in this country by drawing on pertinent social science approaches and concepts. We will consider Britain as a changing *liberal* (or constitutional) *democracy* and examine what the country shares and what differentiates it from other liberal democracies such as the U.S.A. and other European Union states.

Arguably this country stands as the world's oldest parliamentary order. It has an apparently incoherent set of political institutions that combine historical continuity and change, hereditary and democratic, traditional and modern institutions. Britain is heralded as a modern, free and democratic country, yet the head of state is an unelected monarch who is also the "supreme governor" of the "established" Church of England. There is a bicameral legislature, but one chamber, the House of Lords, consists of appointed and hereditary members. There are long standing *liberties* under common law, but it is only recently that human rights became an integral part of British law in the 1998 Human Rights Act. There is a constitution, but it is not codified in a single document. Elections are free, and notwithstanding recent scandals over MPs' expenses or phone-hacking and other illicit practices involving the media, police and politicians, the political system is comparatively corruption free. Nevertheless, the separation of powers and political accountability is subject to significant constraints, and the 'first past the post' electoral system is criticized for undervaluing the preferences of the citizens who do not favour one of the two main parties. A question may be kept in mind throughout this course is whether all this makes the (evolving) "Westminster" model of governance archaic and suffering from high democratic deficit and/or a flexible pluralist-democratic order that has remained comparatively robust and fit for purpose.

Britain, or the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, to give the country's full title, is a multi-national state and the consequences of this plurality have been manifold, ranging from decades of violent conflict in Northern Ireland or the rise of much more benign forms of "civic" or inclusive nationalism in Scotland and Wales to the British variant of liberal 'multi-culturalism' that has developed with the arrival of successive groups of immigrants. Many have come from the **Commonwealth** countries, an unique association of 53 states, almost all former territories of the British empire. In addition to the UK, the Queen is also the head of 15 other Commonwealth states.

From a broad comparative perspective, British polity may be considered consensual without its many religious, racial, ethnic and nationality differences translating into major political cleavages, Northern Ireland (or north of Ireland as preferred by the mainly catholic 'nationalists' who wish to see a united Ireland) excepted. Social class remains more significant in shaping mainstream political divisions, and major parties' are still primarily distinguished with reference to equality or liberty, state or market, individualism or collectivism. That said the convergence of several major developments have blurred or overlaid the differences traceable to these values. These include the end of the '**Cold War**' and (until recently) the unquestionable triumph of **neo-liberal capitalism** and consumerism, the marginalization of traditional working class and trade unions, acceleration of 'globalization', and growing importance of transnational issues such as environmental degradation, political religion, North-South divide, immigration, terrorism or indeed the ongoing global, European and British economic concerns. The combined impact of such changes has compelled the major political parties to squeeze together in the 'centre-ground' whilst striving to rebrand and differentiate themselves with overarching concepts such as Tony Blair's 'Third Way' or Ed Miliband's "One Nation" Labour or David Cameron's 'Big Society' conservatism. At the same time hitherto marginalized 'nationalist' parties and 'identity politics' have been on the rise in response to the same developments and the perceived remoteness/sameness of 'the Westminster parties' and 'London elite', a trend also evident elsewhere in Europe.

In June 2007, after ten years as Prime Minister, Tony Blair was replaced by Gordon Brown, who promised to govern with greater transparency and commitment to Labour's principles. However, his three years in office failed to enthuse his party or the electorate and ended with growing calls for a new leader. Yet, widespread disillusionment with the ruling party, did not translate into sufficient increase in Tory support to hand them outright victory in May 2010 general election. The result was uncertain up to polling day with the Conservatives eventually topping the poll but without a majority of seats in the House of Commons. The outcome has been the present Conservative-Liberal Democrat government, the first **coalition** to rule the UK since the Second World War. For some the Coalition policies represented a significant departure from both Tony Blair's New Labour and the Conservative party of the late Margaret Thatcher. Others, however, saw the Tory-led government taking advantage of the financial crisis to pursue a neo-liberal (pro-market/deregulation/privatization) agenda largely set in terrain with the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in 1980, and continued in many respects through Clinton presidency and the years of Blair and Brown's premierships from 1997 - 2010. Yet, others considered Cameron above all as a pragmatic follower of Blair, especially in view of his attempt to 'modernise' the Tories, move the party to the centre, and reach out to the "natural" supporters of other parties or "minority" communities. In any case, Cameron encountered greater opposition from the 'traditionalists' in his party than Blair faced before the Iraq war, on a range of issues from gay marriage to the EU. Not so surprising, when we recall that Blair achieved a big parliamentary majority in 1997 at his first attempt (and went on to win two more elections), whereas Cameron could only manage a plurality of seats and thus ended up in coalition with the hitherto centre-left LibDems.

The Tory-LibDem government brought together parties historically evolved on the right and left of centre in a political system (the Westminster model and First Past the Post elections) made for single party governance. This made for many internal tensions which grew in the approach to the 2015 general election with the Tories aiming for an outright majority, and LibDems fearing relegation into fourth place and worse. Despite the traditionalist Tories' vocal misgivings about the Coalition, the electoral and policy costs of the compromise required to maintain it were largely paid by LibDems, most notably over breaking their promise of opposing increase in the university tuition fees. The Conservatives, on the other hand, took almost all the credit for UK's comparatively decent economic performance whilst with LibDem's help managed to pin the blame for the (global) economic crisis on Labour. Due to Conservative opposition, LibDems also failed to achieve their major constitutional goals, namely the introduction of some form of proportional representation (PR) for Westminster elections and completing the reform of the House of Lords. In retaliation, LibDems withdrew their support for boundary changes to electoral constituencies that may have cost the Tories twenty or more seats at the general election.

Just about all pundits and public polls predicted another 'hung parliament' and coalition. What remained open to question was whether Tories or Labour would end up as senior partner. This made Cameron's victory with a clear majority (331/650 with 37% of the votes cast) seats all the more 'sweeter' for the prime minister whose authority has been enhanced on all fronts. The polls, however, proved right in predicting Scottish National Party sweep of Scottish seats (from 6 in 2010 to 56/59 and Labour's collapse in Scotland (from 41 to 1 with LibDems from 11 to 1 and Tories retaining their 1 seat) and the collapse of LibDems across the country from (57 seats to 8). The general election also highlighted the perverse aspects of UK's First Past the Post (or winner takes all) electoral system. The anti EU/anti immigrant United Kingdom Independence Party with 12.6% of the votes has only 1 MP; LibDems with 7.9% have 8 MPs whereas SNP with 4.7% of the votes have 56 and Greens with 3.8% have 1. On the other hand, had a truly PR electoral system was in place, the likely outcome would have been a Conservative-UKIP coalition. It is also notable that with 66% turnout and the Conservative party's share of the votes cast standing at 36.9%, the new government is in power with the backing of 24% of the total electorate.

Since 1973 Britain has been a member of the **European Union** and this has had a profound effect on British politics. It is an issue that cuts right across traditional divisions, and, at times, has come close to destroying the basic two-party political system in the UK. Although in 1973 it was the Conservatives who took the UK into the association that now has evolved into the European Union, they have increasingly turned Eurosceptic since the 1980s. In the next two years the newly elected Conservative (also known as Tory) government will be renegotiating the terms of UK's EU membership and put its Yes/No recommendation to a referendum sometime in 2017.

Between 1997-2001, Tony Blair's first ('New Labour') government embarked on a series of major constitutional reforms including elected mayors for London and certain other cities, reducing the number of hereditary peers and so on. Following referendums in 1979, Scotland and Wales gained the right to govern themselves with regard to 'devolved' matters. Coming into effect in 1999, devolution has in turn fuelled demands for greater powers for Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly. This led to the September 2014 referendum on Scottish independence pitting the three major UK parties against the SNP and the Scottish Greens. The SNP had already confounded the political class by gaining the majority of seats in Scottish parliament in 2011, thus for the first time since devolution giving Scotland the taste of a single party majority government. Yet, all the polls indicated that the Unionists should win, not surprising given the fact that the Great Britain of England, Wales and Scotland has been one of the most successful multi-national unions in the world. And indeed at the end the "Better Together" bloc won the vote by a ten point margin, but not

before promising in panic to devolve a lot more power to the Scotland to stem the pro-independence momentum. Since the referendum, the defeated parties have emerged as the real victors with massive increases in the membership and popularity of SNP (and to a lesser extent the Greens) and, as already mentioned, it crushed Labour and LibDems in the general election. Ironically, the Conservatives the major UK-wide beneficiary of SNP's victory kept their one Scottish seat. In Wales, however, Labour has managed to retain its electoral supremacy and currently governs the country on its own, with 25/40 parliamentary seats (a loss of 1) whilst the Conservatives increased their seats from 8 to 11, LibDems from 3 to 1 and the nationalist Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales) unchanged at 3.

As with membership of EU, **devolution** has significantly changed the long standing centralized '**Westminster model**' of governance, although many observers would argue that some its fundamental features remain intact. Following the *Good Friday Agreement* in 1998, and after many setbacks, Northern Ireland (the fourth and last national component of the UK), too, now has its own assembly and '**power-sharing**' administration. Communal segregation and low level conflict, however, continues to bedevil Northern Ireland, requiring the continuing mediation efforts currently led by Richard Haass, a US diplomat.

Despite the lip service paid to localism and "subsidiarity" by all major parties, local government in the UK stands out in Europe for the extent of its subordination to Westminster. Through the Localism Act of 2011, the Coalition attempted to redress this situation and give some substance to Cameron's generally stalled Big Society agenda. However, much remains to be done before the UK catches up with the US or many other European countries. Apart from the re-election of the Conservative mayor of London (Boris Johnson), **local elections** in 2013 and 2014 produced large defeats for the governing parties. However, in 2015 Conservatives and UKIP made gains whilst both Labour and LibDems lost seats in the regions where local elections took place. In one of his first post-election speeches, George Osborne has promised a new round of devolution to major cities outside London. Boris Johnson, the incumbent mayor of London, won a parliamentary seat this month but will remain in post until the mayoral election in May 2016. The campaign has already started with many members of parliament and other notable politicians standing.

The strength of both positive and negative responses to **Margaret Thatcher's** passing (8 April 2013) served as a reminder of the combination of circumstances (Britain's politico-economic decline and Cold War) and personal-leadership qualities (a dominant and domineering or "**presidential**" prime minister who had the courage of her convictions) that made her tower above her successors and rivals. In the post- Second World War era which forms the historical context of our course, the politician who stands comparison with Thatcher is **Clement Attlee**. He was the Labour prime minister who between 1945-51 presided over the establishment of the modern welfare state in the UK. Both led governments that had a "transformational" impact, one ushering the **social democratic** era (1945-79) in modern British political history and the other introducing the subsequent period of "**neo-liberal**" hegemony (1979-?). In contrast to Mrs Thatcher, Attlee was, however, self effacing and embodied the principle of '**collective cabinet responsibility**'. In terms of policy agendas and personalities Thatcher and Attlee could not be more different. Yet, both marked the start of new eras in modern British history with lasting ideological and institutional legacies (broadly speaking the welfare state with a significant publicly owned industrial sector, and a finance dominated deregulated and privatized economy). Recalling and making careful use of your knowledge of parallel developments in the US under presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan or indeed the New Democrat Bill Clinton and the New Labour Tony Blair should help illuminate your path through this course. The question of leaders' personalities may have had a particularly notable impact on the election, with Ed Miliband

having been portrayed as insufficiently prime ministerial throughout the past five years in a generally hostile press, trailing badly behind Cameron on this score. Similarly, the second most powerful figure in the government, the Chancellor of Exchequer (?) George Osborne retained greater public trust for managing the economy than his Labour counterpart, the Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls. The latter lost his seat at the election, the most high profile casualty of the 2015 general election along with several Liberal Democrat cabinet ministers. Along with Boris Johnson (member of parliament and mayor of London until May 2016 mayoral election) and Theresa May, the Home Secretary, Osborne is a frontrunner for replacing Cameron by 2020 general election as the leader of the Conservative party and the likely prime minister. Ed Miliband resigned immediately after the results were announced and after a long campaign, Jeremy Corbyn, from the 'hard left' wing of the party, was elected as leader in September by the overwhelming vote of members and registered 'supporters' (with nearly 60% of the votes cast). This was considered unthinkable at the start of the campaign with Corbyn a 100 to 1 outsider with little support among Labour members of parliament. Despite his sizeable mandate, and a recent by-election victory, Corbyn's leadership is under continuous pressure from a generally very hostile media as well as from a divided 'shadow cabinet' and many Labour 'backbenchers'.

The last (2011) **Census** published in December 2012 provides a clear statistical overview of the country, the region, and the city in which you'll be living, studying and working in the next few months (http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_290685.pdf). The following is taken from the section Who We Are:

- The resident population of England and Wales on 27 March 2011 was 56.1 million, a seven percent (3.7 million) increase since 2001 with 55 per cent (2.1 million) of this increase being due to migration. One in six people were aged 65 or over (16 per cent, 9.2 million).
- Four out of every five usual residents of England and Wales described themselves as in very good or good health (81 per cent, 45.5 million).
- Fifty nine per cent (33.2 million) recorded their religion as Christian and 25 per cent (14.1 million) reported that they had no religious affiliation.
- Most residents of England and Wales belonged to the White ethnic group (86 per cent, 48.2 million) in 2011, and the majority of these belonged to the White British group (80 per cent of the total population, 45.1 million).

In London in 2011, 45 per cent (3.7 million) out of 8.2 million residents were White British. As indicated by comparative regional growth rates, tax revenues, employment rates or house prices, London (and South East) have been doing far better economically than other UK regions.

The Course Objectives

Within this overall frame, the course **aims** to give you a **critical** and thorough, if basic, understanding of political Britain and thereby also prepare you for your internships and the broader socio-political context in which they take place. Thoroughness requires clear knowledge of the **defining features** of British political institutions, and the major **debates** about their nature. Critical understanding is mediated by a clear application of the **values** with reference to which we may **judge** institutions, policies or indeed political systems. Such values include, liberty, equity, equality, security, efficiency, prosperity, effectiveness, global power, democracy, internationalism, localism, sustainable development, and national identity. Politicians often claim many, if not all, such values for their parties and policies, but in practice prioritize and pursue them in accordance with their ideological agendas, constituencies, and electoral calculations.

The same goes when we turn to evaluate Britain's **unitary** political system where ministers are at same time members of one of the houses of parliament, or first past the post system that governs elections to the House of Commons. The advocates of these systems often defend them by claiming that they produce more effective and efficient governance compared to alternatives based on clear separation of the executive and legislature or some form of proportional representation. Their opponents usually emphasise the democratic deficit of the **evolving** 'Westminster model' whilst also questioning its effectiveness, and so the debate goes on. Once you have examined such debates in the light of the structural logic and actual performance of the institutions in question, you have to draw your own **conclusions** with reference to your **own value hierarchy**. This process would be facilitated and enriched by the **comparative** perspective which can illuminate the otherwise hidden weaknesses and strengths of every system. You are of course fortunate for knowing at the least the American system as citizens as well as students of politics.

Learning and Teaching

Each session is divided into lectures, group discussions, individual presentations, questions and feedback. Thus the learning and teaching is interactive and you are expected to participate fully.

Assessment

- A final two-hour examination on **Monday 15 February** (40% of the final grade). The exam will consist of ten or more questions pertaining to each of the main topics covered in the course from which you will choose to answer three. You may not choose a topic already covered in your essay (see below).
- An oral presentation discussing for about 10 minutes issues related to your forthcoming internship or a topical issue/policy that specially interests you such as immigration, terrorism, housing, education, international policy, London Mayoral election (10% of the final grade). In either case you need my approval.
- An essay of approximately 2500 words to be submitted by 4.00pm on **Monday 15 February**. You may focus your essay on your internship or choose one of the seminar questions listed below. In either case you need to receive my approval.
- Regular attendance and participation (10% of the final grade). In addition to contribution to class discussion, 'participation' also includes sharing pertinent website links, articles, and observations arising from following the media or attending events. You are expected to post on Blackboard's 'Discussion Board' links to at least three items of interest for our course. You are therefore strongly encouraged to read one or more dailies and weeklies (see below for suggestions) available in the library and/or online. This should also enhance your internship experience. It would be equally helpful for the purposes of this course and the internship seminar for all us to watch BBC 1's **Sunday Politics** (11 am on Sundays or any time during the week on iPlayer at www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b042yt8m/sunday-politics-london) and discuss the more pertinent issues it raises in class.

Assessment Criteria

In assessing your work, particular attention is paid to the following qualities:

- Relevance - Make sure that you have understood the question and its key terms precisely and outline and develop your answer accordingly. Don't simply write everything you remember or can glean about the general issue in question.
- Substance - You should demonstrate familiarity with the main facts and arguments regarding the topic in question. Explicit evidence of having studied and understood the required readings is essential. You are expected to develop your argument and provide supporting evidence by drawing on the press or other media as well as academic sources. A comparative approach, based on data from the US and other countries, is also valued. The conclusions you present should be your **own** and refer explicitly to the sources, arguments, evidence, and values on which they are based.
- Clarity – The course assignments should be presented in an accessible and clear language.
- Coherence - The arguments presented should be well structured and the relationship between them made clear. The conclusions should be informed by preceding discussion and evidence and not merely asserted. You are encouraged to structure your essay with headings that indicate the major aspects of the question. This may help avoid repetition as well as enhance the clarity of presentation.
- Referencing - The sources for the arguments and factual information should be stated consistently and fully. You should make appropriate use of the full range of the available sources from the course textbook, articles posted on the Blackboard, and academic journals to the print and electronic media and political websites. Do not, however, list sources that you have not used. There should be clear indication that all sources mentioned in your essay's bibliography have in fact been consulted.

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: <http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester>

** Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

Attendance

All Boston University Study Abroad London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

Authorised Absence:

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness, for which students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible).

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness, supported by a local London doctor's note (submitted with Authorised Absence Approval Form).
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Lateness

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

Schedule and Basic Reading

Politics UK (edited by B. Jones and P. Norton, Routledge: 2014) is this course's main textbook and should be purchased.

Essentials of UK Politics (A. Heywood: Palgrave, 20015); *UK, Government and Politics: General Election 2015* (N. Macaughton and E. Magee: Philip Allen, 2015); *British Politics* (edited by R. Leach et al, Palgrave: 2011), *Developments in British Politics* (edited by R. Heffernan et al. Palgrave: 2011), and *Exploring British Politics* (M. Garnett and P. Lynch, Pearson: 2012) may also be consulted for supplementary discussions of the topics covered in the course.

You are expected to read the chapters selected from the **main textbook** (Jones and Norton). These may be supplemented with others suggested below and on Blackboard Learn as well as other pertinent sources, in view of your interest, time, and choice of assignments. Depending on your timetable (and possible clashes with elective courses) you are also encouraged to attend at least one "event" at London School of Economics and Political Science (**LSE**) or elsewhere that pertains to the subjects covered in this course. See, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/publicEvents/eventsHome.aspx>

You'll be further advised about this as appropriate in view of the talks on offer.

1. Thursday 14 Jan.

British Politics in an Historical Context

Jones, chapters 2-3 & Appendix.

David Cameron's First Hundred Days:

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/may/17/camerons-hectic-first-100-days-are-setting-off-into-a-minefield-of-battlefields>

<http://www.democraticaudit.com/>

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom>

Social Progress Index:

<http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/data/spi/countries/GBR>

<http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/blog/posts/watch-our-new-video-on-the-results-of-the-social-progress-index-2014>

<http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/GBR.pdf>

<http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/USA.pdf>

The Economist's overview of the UK's "social troubles":

<http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21602266-crime-teenage-pregnancy-bad-schools-and-other-ills-are-increasingly-suburban-and-rural>

Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR): *The Condition of Britain* (2014): http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/the-condition-of-britain_June2014.pdf?noredirect=1

Seminar question: Discuss the reasons for choosing to study politics and this particular programme and explore two or more important differences in the UK and US's political histories.

Key Terms: Contexts, Actors, Ideologies, liberal/representative democracy, majoritarian/representative democracy, direct/deliberative democracy, UKNI, Great Britain, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Multi-national, London, North-South Divide, Empire, Immigration, Multiculturalism, Integration, Liberal (Anglo-American) Secularism, Republican (French or Turkish/Kemalist) Secularism,

In view of your readings and reflections on each session's topics you are encouraged to suggest at least one key term that should be included and one or more that should be dropped.

2. Wednesday 20 Jan. The Major Political Parties and Competing Ideologies
Jones, chapters 4-6, 11.

See the official Websites of the three main parties as well as UKIP, SNP, and the Green party.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/11/blair-frail-legacy-labour-corbnyistas>

<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/current-state-of-the-parties/>

Some ‘Grassroots’ websites associated with the three major parties:

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/>

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/>

<http://www.compassonline.org.uk/>

<http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21638112-everything-about-years-general-election-strange-new-and-unpredictableexcept>

“The Public Philosopher” in Boston on “Welfare”:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01nl6h6>

Key Terms: Tories, Whigs, One Nation Conservatism, Thatcherism, Eurosceptics/Europhiles Social Democracy, Socialism, Liberalism Welfare State, New Labour, Blairites, Third Way, Hard/Soft Left, Liberal Democrats, UKIP, SNP, Greens, Electoral Machine/Mass Movement, Nationalism, Environmentalism, Politics of Interest/Identity, Negative/Positive Liberty, Equity, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Internationalism

Seminar question: Discuss your ideal model of governance with reference to values such as liberty, equity, prosperity, effectiveness, environmentalism as well as particular periods and parties in the history of the UK and other countries.

3. Thursday 21 Jan. Westminster Walk. You will meet Andy Charlton, your Blue Badge Guide, at Westminster tube station for a guided walk of Westminster which will start at 2.30 pm (further details including meeting time will be sent to you nearer the date of the walk).

4. Wednesday 27 Jan. The ‘Westminster’ model of Governance and the British Constitution
Jones, chapter 13.

Democratic Audit: <http://www.democraticaudit.com/>

The Constitution Unit: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/>
<http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-british-and-american-constitutions>

Key Terms: Magna Carta, Positive/Negative Constitutionalism, Codified/Uncodified Constitutions, Sources of British Constitution: *Statute Law, Common Law, Conventions, Works of Authority, EU Laws*; Unitary/Federal State, Separation/Union of Powers, PR/FPTP, Incoherent/Pragmatic Incrementalism, Mixed/Pluralist Constitutions, Dynamic/Static

Constitutions, French Rationalism, British Pragmatism, Established Church, Constitutional Monarchy, Traditionalists/Reformers, Westminster Model, New Reforms

Seminar question: Compare the British and US constitutions and suggest the key lessons that may be learnt for improving governance in each country.

5. Thursday 28 Jan. The Houses of Parliament and Parliamentary Sovereignty
Jones, chapters 15-16.

<http://www.parliament.uk/>

PM's Question Time and other parliamentary business:

<http://www.parliamentlive.tv>

Modernising UK's Parliamentary Democracy-Democratic Audit UK:

<http://www.democraticaudit.com/?cat=11>

Key terms: Parliamentary Sovereignty, Entwined Executive and Legislature, Executive Patronage, Party Discipline, Election Manifestos/mandates, Queen's Speech, Law Taking/Making, legislative process, Parliamentary Scrutiny, Select/Standing/backbench Committee, Ministerial/Parliamentary/Constituency roles, Career Politicians, Homogenized/Privileged Profiles, Parliamentary Reform.

Seminar question: Discuss and evaluate the British parliament with comparative reference to parliamentary institutions in the US and/or other countries.

6. Wednesday 3 Feb. The Executive and the Westminster Model of Governance
Jones, 17-18,14.

<https://www.gov.uk/>

Achieving Accountable Government, Democratic Audit UK:

<http://www.democraticaudit.com/?cat=3>

Former and present senior ministers discussing their experiences:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/house_of_commons/newsid_9688000/9688423.stm

Hilary Mantel, on 'Royal Bodies' in London Review of Books:

http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n04/hilarymantel/royalbodies?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=3504&utm_term=.el&utm_content=2300790&utm_term=.l=5&utm_term=.v=9fa0025000

Key terms: Executive dominance, Cabinet/Prime Ministerial/Presidential Government,

Collective Cabinet Responsibility, Ministerial ladder, Independent Civil Service, Special Advisors, Principal-Agent/Baronial/Power Dependency Models of Governance, Elected Dictatorship, Effective Governance.

Seminar question: Examine the claim that the office of British Prime Minister has become increasingly “presidential” (or more powerful vis-à-vis the cabinet or parliament) and suggest whether and how it might be reformed.

Additional question: Present, contextualize and evaluate the current government’s record and basic vision in a policy area of your choice (e.g. Health, Education, International).

7. Thursday 4 Feb. Britain, Supranational and International Governance: The European Union, the USA & the Commonwealth

This session will be conducted by our guest lecturer, Professor Paul Cousins.

Jones, chapters 25, 27.

In view of the European Union’s direct role in the governance of the UK, the main focus of this session will be on EU. The session will be conducted by our guest lecturer, Professor Paul Cousins.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>

http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

Europe Debate, LSE, 11 August 2012:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b011jk52/The_EU_Debate/

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it>

For one of the clearest pro-EU counterparts of UKIP and its sister parties, see the website of the Union of the European Federalists: <http://www.federalists.eu/>

On AngloAmerican Special Relationship:

<http://ashbrook.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/ShermanBrown-Printable.pdf>

<http://www.rooseveltinstitute.org/new-roosevelt/special-relationship-between-great-britain-and-united-states>

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/31/opinion/cohen-a-much-less-special-relationship.html?_r=0

On Commonwealth: <http://thecommonwealth.org/>

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmfaff/writev/commonwealth/com02.htm>

Key terms: Churchill's Three Circles, Supranationalism, Intergovernmentalism, Federal EU, Europe of Nation-States, Eurozone, Monetary Union, Fiscal Fragmentation, Austerity/Growth, Northern/Southern/Eastern EU, Special Relationship, UN, NATO, Bretton Woods Institutions, Old/New Colonies, Commonwealth, Commonwealth in the UK.

Seminar Question: Should the process of European integration be speeded up or reversed in response to the present crisis? Discuss and decide the question from the perspective of Britain's interest, and with a side glance at the possibilities offered, if any, by "special relationship" with the US and the Commonwealth.

**** Contingency Class Date: Friday 5th February.** Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled.

8. Wednesday 10 Feb. Multi-national State and Multi-level Governance: Devolution and Local Government

Devolution:

Jones, chapter 12.

<http://www.parliament.uk/topics/Devolution.htm>

http://www.democraticaudit.com/?page_id=92

Devolution: A brief beginners' guide:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/first_time_voter/8589835.stm

<http://devolutionmatters.wordpress.com/devolution-the-basics/>

BBC Radio 4, Moral Maze on Devolution: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04sxr8z>

Key terms: Nationalism, Politics of Identity, Voluntary Union, Models of Devolution: *State Realism, Colonial legacy, European Regionalism*; Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Power Sharing Irish Government, DevMax, English Parliament, Regional/Metropolitan Assemblies, New Constitutional Settlement.

Seminar question: Discuss and evaluate "the devolution" in the UK with reference to one or more cases and the theoretical models suggested in your textbook and decide whether there is a need for English Parliament.

Localism:

Jones, chapter 19.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/publications/>

<http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/>

<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/>

<http://www.haringey.gov.uk/>

On the Coalitions' 2011 Localism Act:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/localism-act>

<http://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2013/nov/02/localism-act-devolution-uk-local-authorities>

Think Tank focused on local government and localism: <http://www.localis.org.uk/>

<http://www.thebigsociety.co.uk/>

<http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/2013/03/08/big-society-neoliberalism-rediscovery-social-britain/>

<http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21602266-crime-teenage-pregnancy-bad-schools-and-other-ills-are-increasingly-suburban-and-rural>

Key terms: Westminster/National Party Dominance, Limited competence, Ultra Vires, Mandamus, Declining Autonomy/Local Revenue, Local Democracy/National Inequality, Big Society, Individualist/Third Sector/Collectivist Localism, Electoral Machine/Political Movement

Seminar question: Examine the evolution and role of local government in Britain with reference to David Cameron's 'Big Society' and the government record so far.

9. Thursday 11 Feb.

Review of the Course & Internship

In this session in addition to reviewing the Course, we will address any remaining tasks (e.g. presentations) or questions pertaining to the course, assignments and the grading system. This is followed by the **first internship session**.

Jones, chapter 19; Leach, chapter 17; Jones, chapter 19;
Heffernan, chapter 7; Garnett, chapter 11.

****All students must attend a mandatory drop-in session (to sign Internship Agreement and for any questions about placement, social programmes, travel and academics) on 15th February 2016, in the Boston Room (Student Common Room), 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU. Food will be served!**

Monday 15th Feb **Examination** (time and place to be announced two weeks before exams).

Submit your **Essay** to the Student Affairs Office by 4.00pm.

You are encouraged to attend the many scholarly and political events that take place in London during your period of study and many of which are free and open to the public. Of particular interest to all students of politics, international relations and public policy are talks that take place at London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Details can be found at www.lse.ac.uk/events.

Further Reading

Further readings and supplementary notes are posted on Blackboard and will be extended or updated as appropriate: <https://lms.bu.edu>

Selected Additional Reading (all in the BU library)

- Bale, T. (2010) *The Conservative Party: From Thatcher to Cameron*, Polity.
Bale, T. (2015) *Five Year Mission: The Labour Party Under Ed Miliband*, Oxford University Press.
Barnett, H. (2002) *Britain Unwrapped*, Penguin.
Bogdanor, V. (2001) *Devolution in the United Kingdom*, Oxford University Press.
Bogdanor, V. (2009) *The New British Constitution*, Hart.
Butler, D. et al. (2005) *The British General Election of 2005*, Macmillan.
Cawley, P. et al. (2010) *The British General Election of 2010*, Palgrave Macmillan.
Colley, L. (2014), *Acts of Union and Disunion*, Profile Books.
Edwards, A. (2012) *The Northern Ireland Conflict*, One World.
Edwards, R. (2015) *None of the Above*, Simon and Schuster.
Flynn, P. (2012) *How to be an MP*, Biteback Publishing.
Gamble, A. (2003) *Between Europe and America: the Future of British Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan.
Gould, G. (2015) *Wasted, How Misunderstanding Young Britain Threatens Our Future*, Little, Brown.
Haidt, J. (2012) *Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Penguin.
Hennessy, P. (1996) *The Hidden Wiring: Unearthing the British Constitution*, Phoenix.
Hennessy, P. (2000) *The Prime Minister: The Office and its Holders Since 1945*, Penguin.
Hennessy, P. (2003) *The Secret State*, Penguin.
Jones, O. (2015) *The Establishment, and How They Get Away with It*, Penguin.
Kavanagh, D. et al. (1997) *The Reordering of British Politics*, Oxford University Press.
Kavanagh, D. (2000) *The Powers Behind the Prime Minister*, HarperCollins.
Keating, M. (2010) *The Government of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press.

Lawton, K. et al. (2014) *The Condition of Britain: Strategies for Social Renewal*, IPPR.

McBride, D. (2013) *Power Trip: A Decade of Policy, Plots and Spin*, Biteback.

Mickelthwait, J. and A. Wooldridge (2014), *The Fourth Revolution: The Global Race to Reinvent the State*, Allen Lane.

Morrison, J. (2000) *Reforming Britain: New Labour, New Constitution?* Pearson Education.

Mount, F. (2012) *The New Few*, Simon and Schuster.

O’Neil, M. (ed) (2004), *Devolution and British Politics*, Routledge.

Pinder, J. (2007) *The European Union*, Oxford University Press.

Pitcher, B. (2009) *The Politics of Multiculturalism*, Palgrave.

Qvortrup, M. (2013) ed., *The British Constitution: Continuity and Change*, Hart Publishing.

Rhodes, R. (2015) *Everyday Life in British Politics*, Oxford University Press.

Rogers, R. (2004) *How Parliament Works*, Pearson Longman.

Thane, P. (2005) *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945*. Continuum.

Tonge, J. (2006) *Northern Ireland*, Polity Press.

Toynbee, P. and D. Walker (2012), *Dogma and Disarray: Cameron at Half-Time*, Granta.

Toynbee, P. and D. Walker (2015), *Cameron’s Coup*, Guardian and Faber Publishing.

Vincent, A. (1992) *Modern Political Ideologies*, Blackwells.

Weir, S. (2005) *Unequal Britain*, Politico’s.

Wright, A. (2000) *The British Political Process: An Introduction*, Routledge.

Wright, A. (2012) *Doing Politics*, Biteback.

Mass Media, Academic Journals, Websites

You are advised to read a “serious” British newspaper such as *The Guardian*, *Independent*, *Daily Telegraph* or *Times*, *Financial Times* (regularly updated full text versions of the first three are available on line). The Sunday editions of these papers are also informative. *The Economist* (weekly) and *Prospect* (monthly) are two informative magazines available at the library. *Newsnight* on BBC 2, (10.30-11.15 pm with no commercial breaks) and *Channel Four News* (7- 7.45 pm) are worth watching to keep up with current political developments as is BBC Radio 4’s *Today* programme (6-9 am) a daily news and current affairs programme that is part of the staple diet of Britain’s political class. Andrew Marr Show, Sundays 9-10 a.m. is a must see for those interested in British politics.

Two useful websites for most matters related to British democracy and constitution and other aspects of our course are: Democratic Audit at <http://www.democraticaudit.com>; and the University College Constitution Unit at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/>.

In addition to the **websites of political parties** which you can simply Google, the following ‘grassroots’ websites should be useful for gauging how the coalition partners are being viewed by their “core constituencies”:

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/>

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/>

Of the various pressure groups associated with the Labour party, you may start with <http://www.compassonline.org.uk/>.

You may access electronically a wide range of Politics journals at <http://www.bu.edu/library/index.shtml>, including *Political Studies*, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* and *Politics*, three of the British Political Studies Association’s journals. *Parliamentary Affairs* and *Political Quarterly* are among other useful journals for the purposes of our course.

A sample of the on line information provided by the UK government and other official agencies and think tanks is provided as follows:

- Government Information Service <http://www.open.gov.uk>
- <http://www.number-10.gov.uk> (Prime Minister's office)
- *EU's sever: europa.eu.int
- www.psr.keele.ac.uk/parties (link to political parties)
- www.ukpolitics.org.uk (general link to other political websites)
- www.statistics.gov.uk (economic and social statistical data)
- www.cabinet-office.gov.uk (central and local government)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation <http://www.jrf.org.uk> (Major charity with a social mission)
- Institute of Economic Affairs: www.iea.org.uk (right of centre think tank)
- Fabian Society: www.fabian-society.org.uk (traditional Social Democratic)
- Institute for Public Policy Research: www.ippr.org.uk ('New Labour')
- New Economics Foundation: www.neweconomics.org (radical)
- ResPublica www.respublica.org ('Red Tory' and close to David Cameron)
- <http://thebiggsociety.co.uk/>
- <http://www.yourmorals.org/index.php>

Terms and Conditions

I will make some time available in each session for students to raise questions. Should students wish to discuss matters with me in person I will also be available during the break mid-lecture and at the end of class or by appointment.

Note: Please turn off all mobile phones in class; laptops can only be used for note-taking.