The Course Objectives

This 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 **evolving** (and “devolving”) **unitary** political system where ministers are at same time members of one of the houses of parliament, the members of the second chamber are appointed rather than elected, or ‘first past the post system’ that governs elections to the House of Commons but other “national”, European or mayoral elections follow different types of ‘proportional representation’. The advocates of the country’s traditional (uncodified) constitution often defend it by claiming that it produces 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 ‘**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.

**List of British Prime Ministers since 1945**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Prime Minister</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Apr 1955</td>
<td>9 Jan 1957</td>
<td>Sir Anthony Eden (Conservative)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Jan 1957</td>
<td>18 Oct 1963</td>
<td>Harold Macmillan (Conservative)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Mar 1974</td>
<td>5 Apr 1976</td>
<td>Harold Wilson (Labour)</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; First Europe Referendum</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Apr 1976</td>
<td>4 May 1979</td>
<td>James Callaghan (Labour)</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Crisis of Social Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 May 1979</td>
<td>28 Nov 1990</td>
<td>Margaret Thatcher (Conservative)</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Neoliberal Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Nov 1990</td>
<td>2 May 1997</td>
<td>John Major (Conservative)</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Eurosceptic Ascendancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 May 1997</td>
<td>27 Jun 2007</td>
<td>Tony Blair (Labour)</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; The Third Way (US and/or Europe?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 May 2010</td>
<td>13 July 2016</td>
<td>David Cameron (Conservative, in coalition with Liberal Democrats between 2010-2015)</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Big Society and Brexit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 July 2016</td>
<td>means Brexit…?</td>
<td>Theresa May (Conservative)</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Shared Society and Brexit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 June 2017</td>
<td>Theresa May returns as PM but <strong>without</strong> a parliamentary majority (Confidence and Supply Agreement with Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland)</td>
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**Key Political Battlegrounds:** Brexit, NHS, Housing, Immigration, Public Spending-Austerity…UK – US “Special Relationship”!

(Indicative) **Context**

The mid-2015 population estimates for the UK was 65.1m - approximately 54.8m for England (84% of the UK population), 5.4m for Scotland at 5.4m (8% of the UK population), 3.1m for Wales (5% of the UK population) and 1.9m for Northern Ireland (3% of the UK population). 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 UK became a much more equal nation during the post-war years. The data available shows that the share of income going to the top 10% of the population fell over the 40 years to 1979, from 34.6% in 1938 to 21% in 1979, while the share going to the bottom 10% rose slightly. Since 1979 this process of narrowing inequality has reversed sharply. As shown in the graph below, inequality rose considerably over the 1980s, reaching a peak in 1990.

The UK has the 7th most unequal incomes of 30 countries in the developed world, but is about average in terms of wealth inequality. While the top fifth have 40% of the country’s income and 60% of the country’s wealth, the bottom fifth have only 8% of the income and only 1% of the wealth.” ([https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/about-inequality/scale-and-trends](https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/about-inequality/scale-and-trends))

**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 February 19** (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 essay of approximately 2500 words (40% of the final grade) to be submitted by or before **Monday February 19**, 4.00pm. You may focus your essay on specific aspects of your internship, or a policy area, or choose one of the discussion questions listed below, subject to my approval.
- An oral presentation discussing for about 10 minutes a key issue related to your Internship, a policy or political question of particular interest to yourself which falls within the remit of our course (10% of the final grade).
- Regular attendance and participation (10% of the final grade). In addition to contribution to class discussion, ‘participation’ 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 one item per week that pertains to the topics discussed in that week. This makes for a minimum of **4 items**.
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 one or more of the following programmes: BBC 1’s **Sunday Politics** (11 am on Sundays, channel 1); **Andrew Marr Show** (Sundays at 9 am, BBC 1); or **Peston on Sunday** (Sundays at 10 am, ITV, channel 3). A regular slot in each class is devoted to pertinent questions arising from these programmes or newspapers and other media.

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, finance, public policy and law are talks that take place at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Details can be found at [www.lse.ac.uk/events](http://www.lse.ac.uk/events). Attending one or more events at the LSE or elsewhere will be taken into account in evaluating the “participation” component of the course. Depending on what will be on offer and our other engagements, we may attend an event together.

**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, arguments, and debate(s) regarding the topic in question. Explicit evidence of having studied and understood the basic recommended 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. It is also important to you make explicit the values or norms with reference to which you evaluate a particular institution, policy, or political actor. A comparative approach, based on data from the US and other countries, is also valued, but the focus should be on the UK. 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](http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester)

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

**Attendance Policy**

**Classes**

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfil 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 more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor’s note as soon as possible). The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available from: [http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester/](http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester/)

**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 (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student’s lecturer).
- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- **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.

**Religious Holidays**
Boston University’s Office of the University Registrar states:

‘The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.’

**Special Accommodations**
Each student will need to contact the Office of Disability Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-ODS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-ODS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the ODS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

**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 Associate Director for Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

**Schedule and Basic Reading**

*British Politics, the Basics* by Bill Jones (Routledge, 2015) is this course’s main textbook and should be purchased. Our main supplementary textbook is *UK Government and Politics, Annual Update* by Neil McNaughton and Eric Magee (Hodder, 2017) which is selected precisely for what it says on the tin. Most of our topics and related issues are examined in the output of Democratic Audit, [http://www.democraticaudit.com/](http://www.democraticaudit.com/) or the Constitution Unit, [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/). You are expected to make appropriate use of these sources in your essays.


You are expected to read the chapters selected from the main textbook (Jones) and the 2017 Update in preparation for each session as noted below and appropriate. These should be
supplemented with one or more readings suggested below and on Blackboard Learn as well as other pertinent sources, in view of your interest, time, and choice of assignments.

1. Thursday 18 January

**British Politics in an Historical Context**
Jones, Part 1 and chapter 4.
Jones and Norton, chapters 2-3 & Appendix

http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom


http://www.democraticaudit.com/

Social Progress Index:
http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/data/spi/countries/GBR


The Economist’s overview of the UK’s “social troubles”:


**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 democracy, direct/deliberative democracy, UKNI, Great Britain, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Multi-national, London, North-South Divide, Empire, Immigration, Multiculturalism, Integration, Secularism, Brexit

Suggest more!
2. Wednesday 24 January

The Major Political Parties and Competing Ideologies
Jones, Chapters 6 and 7.
McNaughton, Chapter 3, 6, 9
Jones and Norton, chapters 4-6, 11.
See the official Websites of the two main parties, and then others, e.g. LibDems, UKIP, SNP, Green party…

John Curtice  General Election 2017: A New Two Party Politics, Political Insight, September 2017

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


Some ‘Grassroots’ websites associated with major parties:
http://conservativehome.blogs.com/

http://www.peoplesmomentum.com/

http://www.libdemvoice.org/

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


Seminar question: Discuss your ideal model of governance with reference to values such as liberty, equity, prosperity, effectiveness, environmentalism and draw on evidence from particular periods and parties in the history of the UK and other countries to illustrate and validate your claims and conclusions.

3. Thursday 25 January

The ‘Westminster’ model of Governance and the British Constitution
Jones, chapters 4 and 5.
McNaughton, chapter 7
Jones and Norton, chapter 13.

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/30/trump-us-constitution-weakness-founding-fathers


https://www.opendemocracy.net/anthony-barnet/brexit-has-killed-sovereignty-of-parliament

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


Seminar question: Compare the British and US constitutions and suggest the key lessons that may be learnt for improving governance in each country. Make sure you specify and apply the values with reference to which your reforms are to be pursued.

4. Wednesday 31 January  **The 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).

5. Thursday 1 February  **Houses of Parliament and Parliamentary Sovereignty**

Jones, chapters 11-13.
Jones and Norton, chapters 15-16.

http://www.parliament.uk/

http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/reforming-the-house-of-lords


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

Flynn, P. (2012) How to be an MP, Biteback

Key terms: Parliamentary Sovereignty, Merged Executive and Legislature, Executive Patronage, Party Discipline, Election Manifestos/mandates, Queen’s Speech, Law Taking/Making, legislative process, Parliamentary Scrutiny, Select/Standing/backbench Committees, Ministerial/Parliamentary/Constituency roles, Career Politicians, Homogenized/Privileged Profiles, Parliamentary Reform (House of Lords).

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

6. Wednesday 7 February The Executive and the Westminster Model of Governance

Jones, Part 5
McNaughton, chapter 9
Jones and Norton, 17-18,14.

See Democratic Audit (on elective dictatorship and core executive)

https://www.gov.uk/

http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/this-cabinet-reshuffle-was-expected-to-herald-a-new-age-of-may-and-it-failed-to-deliver-a8148581.html


Achieving Accountable Government, Democratic Audit UK:
http://www.democraticaudit.com/?cat=3

Former and present senior ministers discussing their experiences:

In Defence of Kings and Queens, Philip Blond: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11930839

Hilary Mantel, on ‘Royal Bodies’ in London Review of Books:
http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n04/hilarymantel/royalbodies?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium
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: Is “elective dictatorship” a reasonable characterization of the UK political system?

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 8 February  Britain, International and Supranational Governance
Jones, chapter 20
McNaughton, chapter 1

Jones and Norton, chapters 25, 27.

This session will be led by Professor Paul Cousins and the main focus will be on EU and Brexit.

On Brexit and EU
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/europe
(several briefings and other research)

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

http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

http://www.federalists.eu/

On AngloAmerican Special Relationship:


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
Key terms: Churchill’s Three Circles, Concert of Europe, Balance of Power, League of Nations, UN, NATO, Bretton Woods Institutions, Supranationalism, Intergovernmentalism, Federal EU, Europe of Nation-States, Eurozone, Single Market, Austerity/Growth, Northern/Southern/Eastern EU, Brexit, Norwegian Model, Special Relationship Old/New Colonies, Commonwealth, Commonwealth in the UK.

Seminar Question 1: Discuss June Referendum result with reference to the evolution of the European Union and current general election campaign to decide whether Brexit is in fact in the UK’s national interest or should be reversed in another referendum or by parliament.

Seminar Question 2: Discuss and evaluate the UK’s international standing and policy with reference to Churchill’s three circles. Which, if any, of the circles should be prioritised in the present context?

* Friday 9 February Contingency Class

8. Wednesday 14 February Devolution and Multi-level of Governance

Jones, chapter 17
McNaughton chapter 5
Jones and Norton, chapter 12

This session takes place in two parts and two places. 10 – 12 am at Wetherby Room Harrington Gardens.

We’ll reassemble at Gielgud Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, Piccadilly Circus Tube at 1.15 pm to watch Ferryman, a play set at the height of “troubles in Northern Ireland” (see, among other reviews, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/may/03/the-ferryman-review-jez-butterworth-sam-mendes-paddy-considine-royal-court). The play should end by around 5 pm.

http://www.parliament.uk/topics/Devolution.htm
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/europe/briefing-papers/briefing-paper-3
(Devolution after Brexit)

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
Seminar question: Discuss and evaluate “the devolution” in the UK with reference to Ireland and/or Scotland. Examine the impact of Brexit on one or both and suggest how the emerging problems may best be addressed.

9. Thursday 15 February  

Multi-level Governance and Localism; Review of the Course
Jones, chapter 18
Jones and Norton, chapter 19.

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


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/


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 claim that the local government is the weakest link in the UK political system with comparative reference to the selected European countries and/or one or more countries of your choice. Suggest two policies for improving local governance in England.

Monday 19 February Examination (Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London Programmes Blackboard course page and will be emailed to students, a week before the final exam.)

Submit your Essay to the Student Affairs Office by or before Monday 19 February, 4 pm.

Contingency Class Date: Friday 9 February Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled.

Further Reading
You are expected to obtain and read the set reading for each class session. Most set texts are available for loan on a free-of-charge basis from the Library; others you will need to buy from the Blackwell’s Book sale at the start of the semester or from an alternative supplier. Please consult the semester booklist issued by the Library for full details. You may be advised of further reading during the course, particularly with regard to assisting you with your paper.

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)
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.

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); The New Statesman (weekly) and Prospect (monthly) are three 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. As already mentioned, BBC 1’s Sunday Politics, and Andrew Marr Show are worth watching, as is the latter’s rival show, ITV’s Peston on Sunday.

Two useful website 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 how the parties are viewed or pressured by their “core constituencies”:

http://conservativehome.blogs.com/
http://www.libdenvoice.org/
http://www.peoplesmomentum.com/
https://labourlist.org/

For a pressure group aiming to create a “Progressive Alliance” of Labour, LibDems and Greens… see:

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 online 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://thebigsoctiety.co.uk/

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.