

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course Record Information

Name and level of final & intermediate Awards	BA (Hons) Politics BA Politics Diploma of HE in Politics Certificate of HE in Politics
Awarding Body	University of Westminster
Location of Delivery	Regent Site
Mode of Study	Full Time
UW Course Code	BPOLPRM
JACS Code	L200
UCAS Code	L200
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Politics and International Relations
Professional Body Accreditation	N/A
Date of initial course approval/ last review	November 2008
Date of Programme Specification	August 2013

Admissions Requirements

Normally, three A Levels (A2) at grades BBB or two A Levels (A2) at grades AB; plus English GCSE grade C or above. Other Curriculum 2000 combinations will be considered on an individual basis. A variety of non-standard vocational, professional and other qualifications may be acceptable with evidence of capacity both to benefit from and to pass this course.

Non native speakers of English will normally be required to have an overall IELTS score of 6 points (or equivalent), including a score of 6 in reading and writing skills.

Aims of the Course

Context

BA Politics is hosted by the Department of Politics and International Relations (DPIR), which is a centre of excellence for the study of Politics, International Relations and Development, and also hosts the internationally renowned Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD). DPIR has a longstanding tradition of innovative research and high quality research-led teaching. Being in the heart of London, we regularly invite leading intellectuals, policy-makers and officials for our well-established series of seminars, public lectures and conferences.

What is the discipline of Politics? According to the Politics and International Relations benchmarks produced by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

Politics is concerned with developing knowledge and understanding of government and society, the interaction of people, ideas and institutions and provides the focus to understand how values are allocated and resources distributed at many levels, from the local through to the sectoral, national, regional and global. Thus analyses of who gets what, when, how, why and where are central, and pertain to related questions of power, justice, order, conflict, legitimacy, accountability, obligation, sovereignty, governance and decision-making. Politics encompasses philosophical, theoretical, institutional and issue-based concerns relating to governance (QAA, 2007: 3).

To these ends the BA Politics degree concentrates on both political theory and political institutions, at the international, national and local level. Our central London location gives us a unique ability to facilitate guest lectures by politicians, policy makers and political activists, and to arrange visits to and internships in parliament, MPs' constituencies and other political organisations based in London.

Aims

The aims of the BA Politics degree at the University of Westminster reflect the University's mission statement, namely, to provide for "the intellectual, social and professional development of the individual". In line with these goals, the course's primary aims are to:

- equip you with an understanding of basic concepts, knowledge and methods associated with the study of politics;
- enable you to develop a critical appreciation of political institutions and processes, of political theory, and of the relationship between political concepts and political practice;
- facilitate your ability to comprehend, analyse and assess contemporary political events and problems;
- provide a strong basis for postgraduate study.

develop not only your intellectual abilities, subject-specific knowledge and your facility for critical reasoning, but also your personal and transferable skills.

Employment and Further Study Opportunities

A degree in Politics prepares students for many professional careers and as a graduate you will enter the job market with valuable transferable skills. This degree develops your critical awareness and analytical capacity and provides you with the skills required to undertake in-depth research. You will also hone your teamwork, and oral and written communication skills in your three years of undergraduate study. Additionally, you are encouraged to develop career management skills; such as conducting a skills audit, choosing appropriate modules to support your intended career choices, and identifying ways to fill skills gaps through additional training: for example in information communication technology (ICT), modern languages or academic literacy.

There will be opportunities for you to learn or continue to study many modern languages at each level of study throughout your degree (through the Westminster 'free elective' modules).

In the second year you are encouraged to take an internship module (1POL598) which requires you to secure, with our assistance, a suitable placement in a political setting, such as an MP's constituency or parliamentary office, an NGO or an embassy. The University of Westminster's location in central London provides an unparalleled opportunity to secure an internship. Additionally we have excellent links with prospective employers.

The University careers service provides lists of job vacancies and voluntary work opportunities at the University (such as being a student ambassador or working in the library); it also provides invaluable career information and support to individual students, who may continue to use the careers service for up to three years after they graduate.

Increasing numbers of our students continue their study at postgraduate level, in the UK and abroad. We envisage that many students will apply to do Masters Degrees and PhDs in DPIR.

Recent graduates have gone on to a wide range of careers, including academia, the media, the civil service, pressure groups, political consultancies, management, the retail sector, accountancy, and banking.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding of the Subject

Level 4

By the end of the first year, you are expected to:

understand key political concepts and contemporary debates, and the development of underlying political ideas and ideologies
understand key theoretical perspectives related to the study of Politics
have begun developing critical and analytical skills used in the practice and understanding of politics.
know about political institutions and methods of governance in their local, national and international contexts
have explored political processes in different national contexts all over the world

Level 5

By the end of the second year, you are expected to have:

- built on and consolidated the knowledge and understanding gained at Level 4
- developed a critical understanding of how political and democratic institutions emerge, how they operate, and how they shape individual and collective behaviour
- understood a range of theories in Western political thought and international political economy
- evaluated different types of research approaches and methods used in politics
- developed a research proposal in preparation for a dissertation at Level 6.

Level 6

By the end of the third year, you are expected to know how to:

- consolidate the knowledge and understanding gained at Level 5
- reflect critically on debates in contemporary political theory and identify and evaluate the contribution of key political theorists
- apply theories and concepts in different national and international political settings
- formulate and construct logical arguments about political phenomena and to evaluate these through empirical and theoretical methods
- design and complete a dissertation using appropriate conventions, methodologies and sources.

Generic Intellectual Skills

Level 4

By the end of the first year, you are expected to:

- understand the academic demands of a degree course
- be able to think critically about political concepts, ideologies and issues
- be aware of basic conceptual and theoretical debates
- be able to use basic academic skills of literacy without plagiarism
- be able to identify appropriate sources for assignments (including books, journals and e-resources) and reference them accurately
- be able to work independently

Level 5

By the end of the second year, you are expected to:

- have consolidated and developed skills acquired at Level 4
- be able to evaluate different theoretical perspectives
- know how to analyse, and effectively research, the main features and practices of politics
- to be able to critically examine political processes and institutions in national and international contexts
- know how to select and justify appropriate methodological and analytical approaches, relevant theories and techniques for different types of political research
- have the ability to produce and justify a feasible dissertation research proposal.

Level 6

By the end of the third year, you are expected to:

- have consolidated and developed skills acquired at Level 5
- be able to reflect critically on the development of contemporary political theory
- be able to present and defend your own analysis of texts in contemporary political theory
- know how to research a political issue or a policy using empirical knowledge
- be able to apply theories to real world contexts

Personal Transferable skills

Level 4

By the end of the first year you are expected to:

- be able to develop strategies to support your independent learning

be able to manage time to allow for the preparation and submission of assignments by deadlines set
know how to locate and retrieve information, organise and present material
be able to cite sources in coursework and produce a bibliography
be able to communicate ideas clearly in written and spoken form and make informed reasoned arguments
have acquired fluency in ICT skills – use of Word, PowerPoint, Blackboard;
have developed a PDP portfolio; submitted assignments online using Turnitin
be able to discuss ideas and concepts in groups
developed analytical and problem-solving skills that they can use to promote, defend, criticise a particular approach in politics

Level 5

By the end of the second year, you are expected to have:

- consolidated and developed the skills acquired at Level 4 having reflected on which strategies work and which of your skills can be improved
- developed career management skills
- acquired the ability to formulate an independent research question and carry out an extended piece of research

Level 6

By the end of the third year, you are expected to have:

- consolidated and developed skills acquired at Level 5 based on reflection about which strategies work and which skills can be improved
- the ability to work with academic staff on a research dissertation
- the capacity to work independently and apply appropriate critical and analytical skills
- the ability to formulate an independent analytical perspective

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Teaching

Teaching at DPIR advances your learning through a range of methods applied both inside and outside the classroom including lectures, seminars, workshops, debates and audiovisual formats. Level 4 modules focus on introductory skills of analysis and writing, learning techniques and the provision of core information and knowledge. There is an emphasis on 'learning how to learn' and on how to analyse material and present it effectively, in oral, visual and written formats.

Modules at Levels 5 and 6 progressively build on the knowledge and understanding gained during the foundational first year. The emphasis in these modules is on familiarising you with contemporary theories, debates in, and approaches to, the study of politics and institutions. For example, you will explore new forms of democratic practice currently emerging in political activism and public service in the UK and internationally, and you will examine the relationship between the state and civil society in contemporary European democracies. The emphasis in core modules is on applying theoretical perspectives and encouraging critical student-led debate. For instance, the module on contemporary Postcolonial Politics: India and China is research-led: it engages you with current research in postcolonial theory, and concepts which are essential in understanding politics in non-Western world.

Some optional modules on offer, such as 'Gender, Politics and the State' or 'Political Ecology' are linked to staff research. We also offer a range of innovative modules including 'Political Gaming and Simulations' (SPIR516) which critically analyses political gaming from both a theoretical and practical perspective and involves role play and game playing. The internship module (1POL598) is available in the second year. Here you will be encouraged to seek a placement with a political organisation – for example, in an MP's constituency or parliamentary office, or in an NGO or embassy – to give you a concrete, experiential, understanding of politics in action.

Learning

This section addresses the question of how you study the discipline of Politics at Westminster. DPIR's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy promotes 'student-centred, active learning', focussing on your individual needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles. And, as indicated above, teaching in the Department also makes full use of lecturers' own research interests: this is 'research-led teaching'. This approach is designed to bring the research and teaching purposes of the University closer together with the aim of enhancing your own learning. And in doing this, we encourage you to conduct your own research using inquiry-based learning techniques.

Your research sources will include academic journals, books, and electronic media linked to Blackboard: these develop your skills through 'blended

learning' which uses a wide range of teaching and research media. The first year requires you significantly shift your approach to education, with the goal of becoming more aware of your learning strategies and the value placed on your independent learning.

You can achieve these goals if you manage your time well. You are advised to spend approximately 150 hours (for a 15-credit module) and 300 hours (for a 30-credit module) on reading and preparation of coursework in order to gain the skills and understanding required for the successful completion of a degree in politics.

Academic staff will support you by providing clear documentation in module handbooks about the module's content, learning outcomes (expectations), and assessment strategy, and appropriate core reading).

Students at Level 4 will be required to engage critically with texts and other sources – including journals and e-journals – from the start of the course. Guidance on subject matter is provided through lectures and seminar activities which outline key political arguments, approaches, concepts, methodologies and issues; this process helps you to think critically. Formative assessments, particularly those in the first semester of the first year, help you to appreciate the standard of work that is expected at degree level.

As you progress through your second and third years of study, you are expected to undertake more student-led coursework, for example producing a research proposal for your Level 6 dissertation. Independent learning is most developed through this dissertation, where you have the opportunity and freedom, supported by supervision, to do in-depth research and to write about a topic within the field of politics that interests you.

Assessment

Assessment offers a way of measuring whether the learning outcomes of a module have been achieved and to what standard. Assessment is also crucial to student motivation; effective and timely feedback is a key aspect of the assessment strategy in the DPIR. There are appropriate assessments at each level and in each module. Our external examiners applaud the original and diverse range of assessments that we offer.

Exams in Level 4 modules will normally require three questions to be addressed; at Levels 5 and 6 there are usually two questions, as you should be able to develop fuller answers in your second and third years. With regard to coursework, in the Level 4 modules 'Introduction to Political Theory' and 'Introduction to Key Concepts and Issues in International Relations', students are required to write a critical review of a political concept and of a journal article, respectively. These exercises are designed to give you the confidence to use sources other than textbooks. In 'Comparative Politics' (also at Level 4) you are required to complete a research task using comparative analysis. At Level 5, you practice more advanced research and analytical skills. For example, in Western Political Thought you are required to read extracts from

the primary texts of political philosophers. In the Level 6 module ‘Power, Freedom, Justice: Explorations in Contemporary Political Theory’, you will produce a log reflecting on different perspectives and themes in twentieth- and twenty first-century political theory.

While assessments may take a range of forms, essays remain very important. Essays test your ability to research and answer a central question, to marshal arguments, and to develop academic literacy (including appropriate referencing conventions). Other assessments include presentations, research proposals, posters, reports, and presentations with supporting statements. Presentations test group work and communication skills. At Level 5, in ‘State and Society’, students will be required to engage with policy frameworks. The research proposal completed in the research methods module at Level 5 provides an outline of the dissertation to be completed at Level 6. The dissertation, which represents the culmination of your studies, is based on your own research.

Course Structure

This section lists the core and option modules available on the course and their credit value. Full-time undergraduate students take 120 credits per year. In the first year students in BA Politics will complete three 30-credit year-long core modules and two option modules, one of which can be a Westminster ‘free elective’. These three core modules ensure that students gain a firm understanding of Political Theory, Comparative Politics and International Politics/Relations.

Credit Level 4

Code	Title Value	Status	
1POL415	Introduction to Political Theory	Core	30
SPIR401	Comparative Politics	Core	30
1INR410	Introduction to Key Concepts and Issues in International Relations	Core	30

Optional modules at Level 4:

Code	Title Value	Status	
1EPO411	Immigration: the European Experience	Option	15
1INR411	Globalization, Power and International Governance	Option	15
SPIR402	International Relations and the Global Economy	Option	15

SPIR404	Global Environmental Politics	Option	15
SDEV411	Introduction to the Politics of Developing Countries	Option	15
SPIR404	Revolutions and Political Change	Option	15

Students may also choose one 15-credit 'free elective' module from outside the Department of Politics and International Relations.

Credit Level 5

Students in their second year may – subject to academic approval – choose one Level 6 module in the second semester.

Code	Title Value	Status	
SPIR507	Western Political Thought	Core	15
SPIR509	Democratic Innovations in Practice	Core	15
SPIR510	State and Society	Core	15
SPIR515	Political Research	Core	15

Choice of ONE from the following:

SPIR508	Questioning Rights	Option	15
1DEV520	International Political Economy	Core	15

Optional modules in Politics at Level 5:

Code	Title Value	Status	
1POL507	Democracy in America	Option	15
1POL508	Gender, Politics and the State	Option	15
1POL598	Politics and International Relations Internship module	Option	15
1EPO509	European Foreign Policy	Option	15
SPIR504	Governing the European Union	Option	15
SPIR506	Russia and Eastern Europe: The Politics of		

15	Transition	Option	
1DEV520	International Political Economy	Option	15
SDEV511	Political Economy of Development	Option	15
SDEV525	Oil, Globalisation and Development in the Middle East and Central Asia	Option	15
1INR521	Foreign Policy Analysis	Option	15
1FRE568*	Modernity and the French Republican Tradition	Option	15
1SPA568*	Populism, Dictatorship and Democracy In Latin America from Peron to Chavez	Option	15
SPIR509	Democratic Innovations in Practice	Option	15
SPIR513	International Security	Option	15
SPIR511	Theories of International Relations	Option	15
SPIR507	Western Political Thought	Option	15
SPIR512	Geopolitics	Option	15
SPIR516	Political Gaming and Simulations	Option	15
SPIR514	Introduction to the Politics of the Middle East	Option	15
SPIR508	Questioning Rights	Option	15
SPIR510	State and Society	Option	15

Credit Level 6

Code	Title Value	Status
SPIR613	Postcolonial Politics: India and China 15	Core
1POL699	Dissertation 30	Core

Choice of ONE from the following:

SPIR602	Citizenship and Democratic Politics 15	Core
SPIR601	Power, Freedom and Justice 15	Core

Optional modules in Politics at Level 6:

Code	Title Value	Status	
1POL620	Applied British Politics	Option	15
1POL678	Diplomacy and International Relations	Option	15
1POL682	Political Analysis: Mind, Knowledge and Reality	Option	15
1POL683	American Power in the 21 st Century	Option	15
1POL684	Politics and Media Freedom	Option	15
SINR600	Sovereignty and Intervention after the Cold War	Option	15
1INR620	Ethics and International Relations	Option	15
SPIR601	Power, Freedom and Justice: Explorations in Political Subjectivity	Option	15
SPIR602	Citizenship and Democratic Politics	Option	15
SPIR605	Themes in the Global Politics of Energy	Option	15
SPIR610 15	Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations	Option	
SPIR611	European Security	Option	15
SPIR612 15	Protest, Politics and the State: Social Movements Today	Option	
1DEV610 15	Development in the Era of Globalisation	Option	
SDEV610 15	Globalisation, States and NGO's in Developing Countries	Option	

1SPA672*	US-Latin American Relations, From Monroe to the Present	Option
15		
1CHI671	China and the World: From Mao Zedong to Hu Jintao	Option
15		
SPIR613	Postcolonial: India and China	Option
15		
SPIR614	Issues and Debates in the Middle East Politics	Option
15		
SPIR616	Political Psychology: New Perspectives on Organisations	Option
15		

* Modules marked with an asterisk are offered by the Department of Modern and Applied Languages.

Academic Regulations

SEE APPENDIX 2 for LEVELS 4 AND 5 STUDENTS

SEE APPENDIX 3 for LEVEL 6 STUDENTS

Support for Students

On arrival, an induction programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the Site on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, and to the Registry Office Administration. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes the Library which, across its four sites, holds printed collections of 356,000 printed books, 29,000 print and e-journal, over 45,000 electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Access to all services is facilitated through Library Search, a new online service.

There are over 3,500 computers spread over the four University sites available for students' use. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students can access course materials and communicate with staff and other students via message boards.

At University level, Student Services provides advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability matters, and careers. The chaplaincy provides multi-faith guidance.

The International Education Office provides particular support for international students. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University.

Reference Points for the Course

Internal

The design of this course has been informed by the university's mission statement, widening student participation, university policies on skills and teaching, and learning and assessment policies, as well as by school and departmental policies. The University's Skills Policy (2001) includes two elements: higher education (HE) and career management skills and personal development planning, both of which must be incorporated into course programmes (Whitlock, 2001). The Westminster Exchange (<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-19440>) provides professional development opportunities and publications and improves teaching and learning.

Most of your lecturers – permanent staff and visiting lecturers – are based in the Department of Politics and International Relations. The BA Politics closely reflects the specialist interests and research activity of the staff team in the areas of political theory, feminism, British politics, Islam and democracy, media freedom, social movements, and environmental politics. The Politics degree reflects the links with the Centre for the Study of Democracy, the Security and International Relations programme, and the Governance and Sustainability programme, all located in the Department. Researchers and PhD students from this Centre are encouraged to develop their pedagogical skills through participation as seminar leaders or dissertation supervisors to ensure that their research activity is fed back into teaching at undergraduate level.

External

The Dearing Report (1992) followed by the White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education*, published in 2003, significantly overhauled government policy. Together these gave rise to two key policy objectives: widening participation and employability, as expressed through Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) initiatives. The University's Teaching and Learning Policy (1998) and Skills Policy (2001) were responses to these initiatives; they are reflected in the University's statement 'Educating for Professional Life'. The Disability Equality Duty requires us to comply with the Disability Rights Commission code of practice for Post-16 Education and the Equality Challenge Unit to promote equality and diversity in HE.

The QAA's 2007 Politics and International Relations benchmarks were used in the revalidation of the course in 2008. These benchmarks provide detailed guidance and standards regarding subject knowledge, skills, teaching/learning, and assessment; they inform the current programme.

Quality Management and Enhancement

Course Management

The BA Politics is managed by the Course Leader, Dr Liza Griffin (Room 512 Wells St; tel: 020 7911 5000, ext 7613; email: l.griffin3@westminster.ac.uk, Department of Politics and International Relations. The Department also offers BA (Hons) International Relations, BA (Hons) Politics and International Relations and BA International Relations and Development Studies. The Department has 25 permanent members of staff and several Visiting Lecturers.

The Department has one away-day per year to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of its courses. Staff in the Department undergo annual appraisal and observation of their teaching by their colleagues. Staff in the Department attend events organised by the and the Teaching and Learning Groups that address aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.

Course Approval, Monitoring and Review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2008. The Panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and relevance to employers. Periodic course reviews help to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by the School to ensure that it is running effectively and that issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff consider the outcomes from each course committee, evidence of student progression and achievement, and the reports from external examiners in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Quality and Standards Office audits this process; the outcomes of the audit are reported to the Academic Council of the University, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Student feedback is important to the University; student comment is taken seriously. One formal feedback mechanism is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

Students are asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader about the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be improved. Students meet Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback about the course. Student meetings are also held annually with

representatives of the Academic Standards Group as part of the annual monitoring process.

For more information about this course contact:

- Dr Ricardo Blaug BA Politics Course Leader, Room 507 Wells St; tel: 020 7911 5000, ext 68910; email: blaugr@westminster.ac.uk
Course Enquiries Team, tel: +44 (0)20 7915 5511
course-enquiries@westminster.ac.uk

Please note – This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with module handbooks which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.