



Politics

Examination Board: AQA

Examination Code: 7152

Outline of the Course

Topics are studied simultaneously in the below order, across two teachers.

Government and politics of the UK

1. Nature and Sources of the Constitution
2. Structure and Role of Parliament
3. PM and Cabinet
4. Judiciary
5. Devolution
6. Democracy and Participation
7. Election and Referendum
8. Political Parties
9. Pressure Groups
10. EU

Government and politics of the USA

1. Constitutional Framework of the US
2. The Legislative Branch of Government: Congress
3. The Executive Branch of Government: President
4. The Judicial Branch of Government: Supreme Court
5. The Electoral Process and Direct Democracy
6. Political Parties
7. Pressure Groups
8. Civil Rights
9. Comparative Politics: Constitution
10. Comparative Politics: The Executive
11. Comparative Politics: Judiciary
12. Comparative Politics: Electoral Process and Party Systems
13. Comparative Politics: Pressure Groups
14. Comparative Politics: Civil Rights

Political Ideals

1. Socialism
2. Conservatism
3. Liberalism
4. Feminism

What will you learn?

Component 1: Government and politics of the UK

1. Nature and Sources of the Constitution

- Key features of the UK constitution – uncodified, unentrenched, unitary
- Sources of the constitution – statute law, common law, conventions, authoritative works, EU laws/treaties
- Ongoing debates about constitutional reform and the case for codification

2. Structure and Role of Parliament

- Functions of the House of Commons and House of Lords, including scrutiny, legislation, and representation
- Relationship between the two chambers and parliamentary sovereignty
- The effectiveness of Parliament in holding government to account

3. PM and Cabinet

- Powers and limitations of the Prime Minister – prerogative powers, cabinet leadership
- Role and function of the Cabinet – decision-making and policy coordination
- The balance of power between Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the concept of Prime Ministerial government

4. Judiciary

- Role and independence of the UK Supreme Court
- Judicial neutrality and its importance in a liberal democracy
- Impact of the judiciary on government and Parliament through judicial review

5. Devolution

- Nature and purpose of devolution in the UK – Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
- Differences in devolved powers and policies
- Debates around further devolution and the future of the UK as a union

6. Democracy and Participation

- Forms of democracy – direct vs representative, liberal democracy in the UK
- Participation crisis debate – voter turnout, party membership, and engagement

- Rights and responsibilities of citizens and the role of pressure groups and media

7. Elections and Referendums

- Functions and types of electoral systems used in the UK – FPTP, AMS, STV, SV
- Strengths and weaknesses of electoral systems – representation, proportionality, outcomes
- Role, function and impact of referendums in the UK democratic process

8. Political Parties

- Development and policies of major parties – Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats
- Roles of minor parties and their influence on UK politics
- Funding, internal democracy, and functions of political parties in elections and governance

9. Pressure Groups

- Types of pressure groups – insider vs outsider; sectional vs promotional
- Tactics and success factors – media, lobbying, public campaigns
- Debate on whether pressure groups enhance or hinder democracy

10. European Union

- Impact of EU membership on UK politics and sovereignty
- Key policy areas affected by EU – trade, law, immigration, environment
- Consequences and significance of Brexit for UK political institutions

Component 2: The government and politics of the USA

1. Constitutional Framework of the US

- Principles of the US Constitution – separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism
- Process and significance of constitutional amendments
- Ongoing debates about the relevance and interpretation of the Constitution

2. The Legislative Branch of Government: Congress

- Structure and functions of the House of Representatives and the Senate
- Legislative process and the role of committees
- Factors influencing the effectiveness of Congress

3. The Executive Branch of Government: President

- Formal and informal powers of the US President
- Role as chief executive, commander-in-chief, and in foreign policy
- Limits on presidential power and the role of Congress and the courts

4. The Judicial Branch of Government: Supreme Court

- Composition, appointment and tenure of justices
- Role and significance of judicial review
- The political and constitutional impact of landmark rulings

5. The Electoral Process and Direct Democracy

- Electoral system used in presidential and congressional elections
- Role of primaries, caucuses, and the Electoral College
- Use and limitations of direct democracy – initiatives and referendums

6. Political Parties

- Characteristics and ideologies of the Democratic and Republican parties
- Party organisation and role in elections and governance
- Importance of third parties and independents in the US system

7. Pressure Groups

- Role of interest groups and PACs/Super PACs in the US political process
- Influence on Congress, the presidency and the judiciary
- Debates on the extent to which pressure groups promote or undermine democracy

8. Civil Rights

- Historical and contemporary civil rights issues and movements
- Role of the Supreme Court, government and pressure groups in advancing rights
- Evaluation of the current state of civil rights in the US

Comparative Politics (UK/US)

9. Comparative Politics: Constitution

- Codified vs uncoded constitutions – flexibility, clarity, and judicial power
- Separation of powers vs fusion of powers
- Protection of rights and enforcement mechanisms

10. Comparative Politics: The Executive

- Prime Minister vs President – roles, powers and limitations
- Cabinet government vs presidential system
- Executive accountability to legislature

11. Comparative Politics: Judiciary

- Role and power of Supreme Courts in UK and US
- Judicial independence and politicisation
- Judicial activism vs restraint

12. Comparative Politics: Electoral Process and Party Systems

- Electoral systems and their impact on representation and governance
- Two-party dominance in the US vs multi-party influence in the UK
- Campaign finance and media influence

13. Comparative Politics: Pressure Groups

- Structure and influence of pressure groups in UK and US
- Methods of access and success – lobbying, litigation, media
- Impact on policy-making and democracy

14. Comparative Politics: Civil Rights

- Civil rights protections in UK and US legal systems
- Role of courts, legislatures and activism in advancing rights
- Contemporary issues and effectiveness of enforcement

Component 3: Political Ideas

1. Socialism

- Core ideas – collectivism, equality, common ownership
- Differences between revolutionary, democratic and third-way socialism
- Key thinkers – Marx, Luxemburg, Webb, Crosland, Giddens

2. Conservatism

- Core ideas – tradition, hierarchy, pragmatism, human imperfection
- Divisions – traditional, one-nation, New Right conservatism
- Key thinkers – Hobbes, Burke, Oakeshott, Rand, Nozick

3. Liberalism

- Core ideas – individualism, liberty, tolerance, limited government
- Classical vs modern liberalism – economic and social views
- Key thinkers – Locke, Mill, Rawls, Friedan

4. Feminism

- Core ideas – patriarchy, sex and gender, intersectionality
- Types – liberal, socialist, radical, postmodern feminism
- Key thinkers – bell hooks, de Beauvoir, Millett, Rowbotham, Friedan

Mark Breakdown and Assessment

Written examination for each Component : 2 hours, equal weighting of 33.3%

Unit	Title	Method of Assessment	Exam Length
Component 1	Government and politics of the UK	1 examination with five questions	A Level – 2 hours
Component 2	The government and politics of the USA	1 examination with five questions	A Level – 2 hours
Component 3	Political ideas	1 examination with five questions	A Level – 2 hours

Learners will be expected to answer three questions from Section A, one question from Section B and one question out of a choice of two from Section C. Questions can be taken from any area of the specification on all questions.

A01: 30-40% weighting

A02: 35-45% weighting

A03: 25-35% weighting

A01: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues.

A02: Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.

A03: Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.

Website links	https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/politics/a-level/politics-7152/specification
Key Dates	Exam: May/June Year 13
Further Information	<p>Mrs. H. Allerton – Curriculum Leader for History and Politics h.allerton@stretfordgrammar.com Mr. T Whiting – Curriculum Leader for Geography Mr. J Broome – Head of Year and Teacher of History</p>
What can I do after I have completed the course?	<p>Students who have studied Politics at A-level or degree level can pursue a wide range of career and academic pathways. Common routes include Law, History, International Relations, Philosophy, Economics, Journalism, Civil Service, Business, Media and Communications, and Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Many former students use Politics as a third A-level alongside subjects like Economics, History, Geography or English to access university courses in Law, PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics), and International Relations. As a facilitating subject, Politics develops analytical thinking, written communication, and evaluation skills, making it a strong foundation for both academic study and professional careers in a wide range of sectors and is seen as complementary option to a sciences and medicine A-level route for students.</p>