

**BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
POLITICAL SCIENCE 351
BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

Winter 2009
MW 4:00-5:15
280 SWKT
TA: Christian Smith

Jeff Ringer
237 HRCB
OH by appt
422-3378

Course Description: This course is designed to critically examine modern British politics and policy. Although there are no prerequisites, it is an upper division course that assumes basic knowledge of political issues and processes. We will try to balance both breadth and depth, considering the historical and social context for issues while focusing specifically on a number of key policies.

Readings: The following book is required and is available at the BYU bookstore:

Budge, Ian et al. 2004. *The New British Politics*, 3rd ed. Pearson/Longman.

The following book is optional (available from Amazon.com), but suggested for students who wish to develop a better understanding of British history:

Hibbert, Christopher. 1994. *The Story of England*. Phaidon.

Additional readings, videos and guest lectures will be assigned and scheduled as appropriate. **Each student is required to subscribe to the on-line edition of *The Economist* during the semester.** Readings will be assigned from *The Economist* and a subscription is also necessary to complete the essay assignments. Discussion will be a key component of the course and students need to be prepared to participate.

Course Requirements and Grading: The lectures and readings are designed to be complimentary with neither substituting for the other. Please complete the readings before class. Each student's grade will be based on his or her performance on a midterm, a final, a series of short essays and a writing assignment. Each of these will be worth 1/4 of the final grade, equal to 100 points per assignment. Letter grades will be assigned as follows to the total points earned during the semester:

A 372+ **A-** 360-371 **B+** 348-359 **B** 332-347 **B-** 320-331 **C+** 308-319
C 292-307 **C-** 280-291 **D+** 268-279 **D** 252-267 **D-** 240-251 **E** 239>

The tests will consist of short answer and essay questions and will draw equally on lectures and readings. Each Monday a short writing assignment will be given based on articles from *The Economist* with a two-page essay due the next Monday. Over the course of the semester each student will be required to submit five of these short essays worth twenty points each. More information about the major writing assignment will be given during the first several weeks of class.

Full-credit make-up exams and late papers will only be administered or accepted in the event of a university-approved absence. Otherwise late points will be deducted.

Honor Code: While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See <http://www.byu.edu/honorcode> for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere, which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability, which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Critical Essays

This assignment is designed to aid you in responding thoughtfully to the issues raised in the required weekly field activities. It is not busywork, nor simply an effort to ensure you stay awake. Rather it is an attempt to help you focus on what the author or speaker is saying, organize what you read or hear and analytically respond.

You will be graded on 5 responses during the semester. Each response should be 2 pages and consist of the following elements:

1. The date, presenter and general summary of the topic.
2. A discussion of the main ideas or themes and the support given for them.
3. A discussion of the speaker's underlying assumptions.
4. A discussion of how the speaker's ideas compare to others with which you are familiar.
5. Your personal (and thoughtful) response to the activity.

Critical responses will be collected each week for the previous week's activity. Only one paper will be accepted each week. You may not store the papers and submit them in bulk. Each essay will be worth 20 points, with 100 total points possible during the semester.

British Politics Briefing Project

This project is designed to simulate the kind of briefing papers that are regularly produced in the British government. The paper should be **a maximum of 7 pages of single-spaced text** and consist of the following sections with appropriate sub-headings:

1. **Issue:** this section briefly frames the issue and discusses its significance to British politics.
2. **Background :** this section consists of the essential background information necessary to understand policy options. You will have to make choices about exactly what information should go into this section, making sure that enough information is included to understand the issue without overwhelming the policy maker.
3. **Analysis:** this is the key section of the brief. You should consider all reasonable options, discussing their key points and the ramifications of their implementation. You need to treat the likely reactions of political actors including the public, media, special interest groups and others.
4. **Recommendation :** briefly make a case for which option you believe is the strongest. You do not need to recap what was covered in the previous section, simply make your conclusion.

Briefing papers will be due the final day of class. They are worth 100 points.

Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments

B = Budge

E = Economist

DATE **TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

1/5 Course Introduction

1. The Setting

1/17-
21 1.1 Political History
B 2/3
Schama videos

1/26 1.2 Geography, Culture and Society
B 1

1/28 1.3 The Constitutional Framework
B 4

2. The Actors

2/2 2.1 The Monarchy
E Packet

2/4-
9 2.2. Parliament
B 18

2/11-
17 2.4 The Government and Civil Service
B 5,6,7

2/18 2.5 The Courts
B 19

2/23 MID-TERM EXAM

3. The Process

2/25 3.1 Parties and Elections
B 15,16,17,18

3/2 3.2 The Media, Public Opinion and Interest Groups
B 13,14

4. The Policies

3/4	4.1 Foreign and Defense Policy B 22
3/9	4.2 Economic Policy B 24
3/11	4.3 Social Policy B 25

5. The Issues

3/16- 18	4.1 Civil Liberties B 20/21 E Packet
3/23- 25	4.2 Devolution B 11 E Packet
3/30- 4/1	4.3 European Union B 8/9 E Packet
4/6- 8	4.4 The Special Relationship E Packet
4/13	Course Review

FINAL EXAMINATION: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 5:45-7:45 p.m.