

Departmental Curriculum Statement Politics

Politics is a lively, relevant and thought provoking course. Students will study how political parties and ideologies are formed, how political decisions are made, and who has the power and authority to make them. It is a dynamic, topical and fascinating look into political systems around the world from Westminster to the White House.

Politics affects every aspect of our daily lives and having an in-depth insight into the political systems of our world is crucial. The study of Politics is key to understanding how lives are governed and how laws are made.

The course is assessed through three equally weighted exams at the end of Y13. The course aims to develop students' knowledge and provide them with an informed understanding of contemporary political structures and issues in their historical context, both within the UK and globally. It also aims to encourage students to develop a critical awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationship between political ideas, institutions and processes.

In addition, students will be encouraged to develop the ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate political information to form arguments and make judgements. The specification requires in depth study of UK and US government and politics, as well as comparisons across the two political systems. The political ideas which students study are relevant to both of the systems of government.

Curriculum Implementation Statement

A Level Politics is a two year course during which students will develop a range of knowledge, expertise and skills. The students will develop their ability to: comprehend and interpret political information; critically analyse and evaluate the areas of politics studied; construct arguments and explanations leading to reasoned conclusions; identify parallels, connections, similarities and explanations with relevance, clarity and coherence; use appropriate political vocabulary; make connections between the different areas of politics studied; and make comparisons across two political systems.

The examinations that students take allow them to demonstrate their ability to recall knowledge, draw together information from different areas of the specification and apply their understanding in practical and theoretical contexts. Essay writing, analysis and debating skills are also developed over the two years.

Students will begin by studying the government and politics of the UK, which prepares them for their Paper 1 examination. This is separated into two distinct areas: 'the government of the UK' and 'the politics of the UK.' By studying the 'government of the UK' students will explore topics such as: the nature and sources of the British Constitution; the structure and role of Parliament; the Prime Minister and cabinet; the judiciary; and devolution. In 'the politics of the UK' section, students will explore topics such as: democracy and participation; elections and referendums; political parties; pressure groups; and the European Union.

The second broad area of study will be the government and politics of the USA, and comparative politics, which prepares students for their Paper 2 examination. This is separated into two distinct areas: 'government and politics of the USA' and 'comparative politics.' In government and politics of the USA' students will study: the constitutional framework of the US government, the legislative branch of government (Congress); the executive branch of government (President); the judicial branch of government; the electoral process and direct democracy; political parties; pressure groups; and civil rights. In comparative politics, students will make a comparative study of the government and politics of the UK and USA, analysing and explaining the structural, rational and cultural similarities and differences between them.

Students will also study the core ideologies of Liberalism, Conservatism and Socialism, along with a range of key concepts and terminology.

Lessons will take various forms and will range from lecture style classes and exam skills sessions to seminar discussion groups. Students will be expected to do pre-reading before lessons and will be provided with text books, revision guides and question banks. In addition, students will complete retrieval quizzes to aid long term memory and recall. There will be a strong emphasis placed on independent study and how to use effective revision techniques.

Both of the Politics teachers are also English teachers and the overlap will help students develop essay writing techniques. Politics is a subject designed to prepare its students for a wide range of occupations and further study.

Curriculum Beyond the Classroom

Studying Politics at Cowley provides an opening to an exciting range of career paths for students. The team are looking forward to arranging trips to local government institutions, media outlets and UK Parliament.

The team are also using their links to universities, political parties and media organisations such as Channel 4, ITV and the BBC in order to provide students with real life experience and opportunities.

Enrichment lectures in Politics have been provided in recent years to Cowley Honours Programme students to broaden their understanding and also prepare them for further study at University.

Subject Expertise

The Politics team are highly qualified teachers with a passion for politics, constitutional history and current affairs. The team is committed to supporting students to achieve their goals, both academic and through extra-curricular activities and visits.

External CPD is regularly sought and attended, including specific courses, as well as general pedagogy developments and AQA training. Newly acquired knowledge is disseminated during meetings, where the team work together to develop new ideas and resources. The lead teacher holds an MA in Politics and Media and has experience working with professionals from both industries.

The team communicates with AQA which affords invaluable insight into the examination format and demands. Involvement in Politics teaching online forums, where good practice and ideas are regularly shared, maintains an up to date subject and curricular knowledge within the department. Additional links with other local secondary schools, allow for further sharing of good practice, resources and staff expertise.

Destinations

Politics is a versatile stepping-stone to many fields of work and study. A qualification in Politics is highly regarded by employers in industries including law, politics, the media, broadcasting, journalism, the civil service, education and the police.

A-Level Politics is an ideal qualification for those wanting to move onto Higher Education to study law, international relations, philosophy, economics, sociology, criminology, journalism, advertising or politics.