

Government and Politics AS and A Level (Edexcel)

Around 100 students study Government and Politics at Godalming College across the two years. Guiding the students through the course are staff with high levels of expertise, enthusiasm and experience in the field. Classes are invariably vibrant and interesting and fuelled by the hot political issues of the day. Our high standards of achievement were evidenced again this year by a very strong set of results at both AS and the more demanding A2, where nearly 90% attained grades A - C. Departmental value added scores indicate that the Department adds strong positive value to the progression and attainment of students. We aim to develop a critical awareness of the nature of politics and the relationship between political ideas, institutions and processes. We are preparing our students to be active and knowledgeable members of our democracy and also to develop the skills required to argue a case with relevance and coherence. As a result of their experience of Politics at Godalming, many students choose to read the subject at major British universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.

To support learning, a variety of different teaching approaches are adopted. We have an excellent collection of up-to-date material, both in the Department and in the College Library. We also make full use of the increasing amount of information technology that is now available to develop learning. Work done in the classroom is supported by other activities, such as attending Conferences in London on relevant issues, delivered by politicians, political journalists and academics. In recent years we have had visits from Members of the European Parliament, Jeremy Hunt, MP for Surrey South West, and Charles Kennedy, former Leader of the Liberal Democrats. Election candidates are invariably invited to campaign in College during election periods, submitting their policies and proposals to the scrutiny of the student body. Political enrichment trips abroad to destinations such as the Houses of Parliament and also to Paris help broaden and deepen the experience of the Politics student at Godalming College.

What is the course about?

AS

Unit 1: People and Politics

This Unit introduces students to the key channels of communication between government and the governed in the UK. Topics studied include Parties, Democracy, Pressure Groups and Elections. Students are encouraged to evaluate the adequacy of existing arrangements for ensuring strong lines of representative democracy and high levels of political participation.

Unit 2: Governing the UK

This Unit introduces students to the key institutions that wield power in the UK and the concepts that underpin and drive them. Topics included the Executive, Parliament, Judiciary and the Constitution. This unit encourages students to develop a critical understanding of their role and effectiveness and of their inter-relationship.

A2

Unit 3: Key Themes in Political Analysis: Distributions of Power in International Relations

This Unit looks in detail at structures of power in International relations. Who, on the international scene, gets their will done, why and how? What institutions exist to limit the exercise of power? It looks in particular at key examples, such as the UN, the USA and other major world powers and institutions. It also looks at compelling environmental issues and possible approaches to them.

Unit 4: Extended Themes in Political Analysis: Co-operation and conflict in International Relations

This Unit builds upon the previous Unit but looks in more detail at the frictions and tensions that emerge as different states and institutions attempt to wield or restrict power. It is fuelled by hot contemporary political issues, such as US foreign policy, the Iraq war, the growth of Chinese and Russian power and the state of Africa.

How will I be assessed?

Module	Method	Length	Contribution	
AS Exam			AS	A
Unit 1	Written Exam	1hr 20	50%	25%
Unit 2	Written Exam	1hr 20	50%	25%
A2 Exam				
Unit 3	Written Exam	1hr 30		25%
Unit 4	Written Exam	1 hr 30		25%

All written papers will comprise of short answer questions, stimulus questions and essay questions. There is no coursework element.

What qualifications are recommended?

Five GCSE subjects at Grade C or above including Grade C or above in History and/or English Language. However, it is anticipated that all who choose the subject will be newcomers to it.

What are the progression routes with this qualification?

Politics is taken by students doing a wide range of other subjects, in both the Arts and Sciences. At this level, Politics can be a truly complementary subject, extending and balancing a programme of study drawn from any part of the College curriculum. Our students go on to a wide range of courses and careers. A considerable number will take a degree in the subject, or a related field, such as History, English, Law, Economics, Philosophy, or Theology. In addition to a wider angled view of many contemporary events and issues, those trained in Politics have developed skills of critical analysis and judgement; these are highly valued in many professions, including Law, Management, Finance, Diplomacy, Journalism and, of course, Politics.

What extra work can I do?

Wide reading is helpful and encouraged. Students will be expected to make use of the extensive materials relevant to Politics in the library. These include academic textbooks, in addition to regular compulsory reading of a quality daily newspaper and a quality political periodical. Frequent visits to the BBC website are also advised.