**INTL 4325: British Politics**

**Spring 2024: Oxford, UK**

Dr. Scott H. Ainsworth ([sainswor@uga.edu](mailto:sainswor@uga.edu))

Office: UGA House, 104 Banbury Road

Office Hours: by appointment

Class Meeting Time: Monday – Friday, 9:00 pm to 12:00 p.m.

Class Location: Milles Room, H B Allen Center, Keble College

**Description and Goal of the Course**:

This seminar introduces students to the history, culture, economics, and politics of the British political system. Characteristics of the British political system will be contrasted with those in the U.S. Students will gain a better understanding of both British and U.S. politics.

Upon completion, students should have a basic understanding of the history, political culture, and political institutions of British society. In addition, participants will gain perspectives to assess contemporary political issues in Britain and elsewhere.

**Required Course Materials**:

Please see that you have regular and easy access to the textbook.

Amazon:

Bill Jones (2021): *British Politics*, (2nd Edition), Routledge (London and New York). E-edition: <https://www.amazon.com/British-Politics-Basics-Bill-Jones-ebook-dp-B08MV91Y75/dp/B08MV91Y75/ref=mt_other?_encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=>

UGA Library E-Access

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ugalib/detail.action?docID=6349506>

*Please note the following:* The access you obtain through the UGA library portal is a bit clunky and you may find it difficult to reference the text and follow the discussion during class.

Additional Required Materials: A handful of pdfs will be made available. Some videos are also required.

**Course Requirements**:

*“Be curious, not judgmental.”* Ted Lasso

**In-class Participation**:

As noted at the orientations, attendance is mandatory. As a seminar participant, you must complete the readings for each class period. I encourage you to take reading notes and to jot down thoughts and observations as you read. Owning hard copies of assigned materials allows you to mark them up as you read. After completing the reading, notetaking, and marking, you will be best positioned to engage in seminar discussions. Even when my lectures do not cover the readings in a traditional manner, I nevertheless will assume that you have completed all assignments for the day. The readings offer crucial background information for understanding my lectures. I expect every student to participate.

These participation structures serve three purposes.

Better comprehension of ideas related to this course.

Better preparation for your Oxford classes.

A means to increase self-confidence.

In-class participation counts for 20% of the overall grade. Obvious engagement and the quality of comments are key.

**In-Class Writing**:

There will be **regular writing assignments**. **Think daily**. These assignments will generally be short, some might appear playful. Others will be more traditional.

What is the reason for so much writing?

Writing practice is essential for academic advancement and job preparation.

These writing assignments will be worth 30% of the grade. One’s ability to use information to analyze key concepts or to craft arguments is critical. Improvement will be merited.

**Group Presentation**:

Groups will include 6-7 people. On the first day, groups will meet to think about which sections/days they would like to lead the discussion. Each group member will offer a 10-15 minute presentation. Group members must also be ready for questions from (and for) the other seminarians.

Presentations will be worth 20% of the grade. To be successful, everyone will need to work ahead. They will be evaluated on the following criteria:

* Clarity in articulating the main concepts.
* Coordination of presentations.
* Quality of presentation – logic presentation and organizational structure, usefulness of information contained in slides, and audience engagement.

**Final Paper**:

Details on the final paper are toward the end of the syllabus. Papers are worth 30%.

**January 2**: Introductions and

Becoming Modern Great Britain: Industrialization and Democratization

Assignments: Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 2006, pp. 1-5

Jones, pp. 3-33

View a few videos from The British Empire: https://www.britannica.com/place/British-Empire/images-videos

[British Empire](https://www.britannica.com/place/British-Empire), from: Britannica. Com (read to and including: “Nationalism and Commonwealth”)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Yr1Dj8jKv8&list=PLj3mInRJqIenDVcuoOiOzO6GIiVnNrgrI>

Further Thoughts: Consider the 3 questions on page 33. Be especially well-prepared for Question 1.

**January 3**: Class and Inequality: The Development of the Modern Welfare State

Assignments: Dave Robson (2016): [How important is social class in Britain today?](https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20160406-how-much-does-social-class-matter-in-britain-today)

[Beveridge Report: How has the UK changed in the past 75 years?](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42182013)

BBC News, Michael Buchanan (2017).

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/02/14/americans-overestimate-social-mobility-in-their-country>

At the bottom of the article, also view why it’s harder to earn more than your parents at the bottom of the article.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/19/opinion/rich-billionaires-philanthropy-covid.html?campaign_id=190&emc=edit_ufn_20231203&instance_id=109184&nl=from-the-times&regi_id=29402303&segment_id=151594&te=1&user_id=795533b707042327c6d588a14161c068>

Jones, pp. 47-67. Also start reading 70-128

Further Thoughts: Consider the questions on page 67. Consider the joint existence of democracy and capitalism. Are they consistent?

**January 4**: Political Cultures and the Unwritten Constitution

Assignments: Jones, pp. 70-128

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaJuFbtuK7E>

Further Thoughts: Note the questions on page 84. Pay particular attention to questions 1, 3, and 4. How do parties and cultures interact? How are unwritten constitutions meant to operate? Are there drawbacks to written constitutions?

**January 5**: Catching up on General Structures and Current Events

Assignments: Jones, pp. 325-357 and 377-423

Boris Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qm5gV1KIdVc>

Liz Truss

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I9fQc_sRdI>

PM Question

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-fosFbNsAk>

Further Thoughts: Consider the questions on page 340. What is the West Lothian question? Consider question 3 on page 357.

**Happy Weekend: Explore, Observe, and Read**

**January 8**: Political Parties, Interest Groups, and the Media

Assignments: Jones, 133-164

Further Thoughts: Consider the questions on page 164. Evaluate the questions themselves. Do they force (or even invite) you to engage the material deeply? To evaluate how groups operate in the UK?

How might media influence political behaviors? Should media roles be restricted prior to elections? How might new technologies affect these issues?

**January 9**: Making and Operating the House of Commons

Assignments: Jones, pp. 187-254: skim 187-204 and read 205-254

Thomas, “Explaining the Rise of All-Party Groups in the UK”

Keeling, et al., “Transparency, Transparency: Comparing the New Lobbying Legislation in Ireland and the UK.”

Further Thoughts: Political institutions often gain stability by developing some resistance to ever-changing outside forces. That is, there is a difference between operating within the institution and operating outside of it. What entities permeate that boundary? How do they permeate it? What general statements can we make about the entities operating at the nexus between the inside and outside?

**January 10**: The Executive

Assignments: Jones, pp. 257-298

Further Thoughts: Consider the questions on page 298. How would you answer them regarding the UK? The U.S.?

**January 11**: Policymaking

Assignments: Reading: Jones, 301-320

Further Thoughts: Consider questions 2 and 3 on page 320.

**January 12**: Final Discussions (Aka: Catch-up)

**Paper**:

Consider expanding on one of the topics that we have already explored. Other topics might expand upon

Enclosure movements Falklands War Industrial revolution

The “Troubles” The Enlightenment Brexit

National Health Service UKIP Whigs

Collective responsibility First past the post Unwritten constitution

Good Friday Agreement Labour Party The “third” way

Great Reform Act 1832 Rise of the HoC Your idea here. Ask first!

The final research report should be approximately 10-12 pages (inclusive of all materials; 12 pages max.). Please use 1-inch margins, use 12-point font, number the pages, and double space the text. Use academic sources (>60%) and primary documents (e.g., government documents/papers, speeches, etc.), not merely websites. In addition, keep in mind this is a research paper. What is driving your curiosity? What is the puzzle? What data would you want to use to unwrap this puzzle? Make your paper as analytical and as empirical as possible. That is, consider your hypotheses. Provide data, tables, etc. related to your hypotheses.

If you already know the answer to your puzzle before you investigate sources and write your paper, you are not likely to perform as well.

This report will be due at the start of the final period for the seminar on January 12.

Please use the APSA style of manual for citations and bibliography (<https://connect.apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2020/07/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-July-2020-Revision.pdf>), start at p. 37.

**Grading Rubric:**

20%: Thoroughness of explanation of the nature of the theme/topic. Who are the key players? Are their tensions between them? What is at stake? What has evolved?

20%: Why was/is this theme important? What does it say about British politics?

40%: Research (analytical clarity, data support, use and relevance of sources)

20%: Grammar, spelling, correctly citing and quoting, bibliography

**Formal Matters**

**Grade Scale:**

>=93%: A

90-92.99%: A-

87-89.99%: B+

83-86.99%: B

80-82.99%: B-

77-79.99%: C+

73-76.99%: C

70-72.99%: C-

60-69.99%: D

<60%: F

**The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.**

**Laptops and Smartphones**: The use of smartphones, tablets and laptops during class is strictly prohibited. Bring a good pen and notebook to class. Be ready to listen, think, and take notes.

**Grade Concerns**: I am happy to discuss graded assignments. Those discussions are part of the education process. If, however, you feel that an assignment was graded incorrectly, you must submit a type-written explanation of the problem along with the assignment in question **within one week** of receiving the grade. I will re-evaluate your work and you will receive a “new” grade, whether that be the **same**, a **higher**, or **lower** grade. Of course, simple errors in calculation are an exception and they are readily corrected.

**Late/Missed Assignments:** Missed assignments will result in a zero without a university approved medical excuse or family emergency. Students will be penalized for late assignments; 20% of the grade for each day late without a university-approved medical excuse or family emergency. Make-up quizzes and exams can be arranged with the instructor with a university-approved medical excuse or family emergency ONLY.

**Prohibition on Recording Lectures.** In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

· Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.

· Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.

· Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.

· Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.

· Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.

· Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

**Students with Disabilities**: Students requiring accommodations should discuss such matters with the instructor at the outset of the course. Students requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center on campus (706-542-8719, <http://www.drc.uga.edu>).

*As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.*

**Who are we?**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Argarin | Camille | cma73521@uga.edu | Group A |
|  | Arnold | Donavan | dwa71579@uga.edu | Group B |
|  | Buck | Mackenzie | [mtb84800@uga.edu](mailto:mtb84800@uga.edu) | Group C |
|  | Chan | Gabrielle-Patrice | gsc76868@uga.edu | Group A |
|  | Crowe | Abigail | amc05123@uga.edu | Group B |
|  | Hunter | Evelyn | ejh60229@uga.edu | Group C |
|  | Kouyate | Fanta | fik74635@uga.edu | Group A |
|  | Lavender | Alexandria | all93810@uga.edu | Group B |
|  | Maiolo | Lila | lrm66280@uga.edu | Group C |
|  | Moebes | Kaitlin | kgm65038@uga.edu | Group A |
|  | Mundy | Meghan | mcm12300@uga.edu | Group B |
|  | O Farrell | Delia | dco35583@uga.edu | Group C |
|  | Steyer | Jack | jcs86732@uga.edu | Group A |
|  | Valencia | Ana | amv14467@uga.edu | Group B |
|  | Vanden Heuvel | Lauren | lmv94126@uga.edu | Group C |
|  | Walther | Caroline | clw32734@uga.edu | Group A |
|  | Walton | Grace | gew04791@uga.edu | Group B |
|  | Wearing | Mary Anna | maw50988@uga.edu | Group C |
|  | Welle | Laine | lcw50582@uga.edu | Group A |