

# Politics



## Head of Learning

Mr S D Draper

## Departmental Staff

Mr J J Wooton

## Exam Board

Edexcel A Level Politics

## Why study Politics?

Politics exists because people disagree about how they should live, who should get what and who should make decisions. Politics seeks to establish the general rules under which we live; it is the most basic and necessary of social activities. For the philosopher Aristotle, politics was the 'master science': that is, nothing less than the activity through which people try to improve their lives and create the 'good society'. What makes politics different as a subject is its emphasis on debate, discussion and argument. It is likely to suit students who have an interest in the world around them, like to think for themselves and ones who want to develop their own views, rather than accept the views of others.

## Course Outline

### ■ Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

*UK Politics* explores the nature of politics and how people engage in the political process in the UK. Students will explore the emergence and development of the UK's democratic system and the similarities and differences between direct and indirect democracy. They will focus on the roles of political parties, including the significance of the manifestos they publish at election time and their relevance to the mandate of the resulting government. Students will examine electoral systems in the UK and consider how individuals and groups are influenced in their voting behaviour and political actions. They will also examine the role of the media in contemporary politics and develop their understanding of voting patterns and voting behaviour.

*Core Political Ideas* - Students explore the three traditional political ideas of conservatism, liberalism and socialism.

### ■ Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

*UK Government* - This component is fundamental to understanding the nature of UK government, since it enables students to understand where, how and by whom political decisions are made. The component also gives students a base of comparison with other political systems. Students are introduced to the UK constitution, which is different in nature from most of the rest of the world. It further introduces students to the specific roles and powers of the branches of the government – legislative, executive, and judiciary – as well as the relationships and balance of power between them, and considers where sovereignty now lies within this system.

*Optional Political Ideas* - This section allows students to explore the political idea of nationalism.

## Where are they now?

Recent students of Politics at CRGS have gone on to study:

- Law (*University of Cambridge, Leeds University, York University, Newcastle University*)
- Politics and American Studies (*Nottingham University*)
- Politics and International Relations (*University of Bath, University of Warwick*)
- Criminology (*York University*)
- Medicine (*Liverpool University, Newcastle University*)
- Politics, Philosophy and Economics (*University of Exeter*)
- History and Politics (*Lancaster University*)
- American and Canadian Studies (*Birmingham University*)

#### ■ Component 3: Comparative Politics

*Government and Politics of the USA* - The USA has been considered by some to be a 'beacon of democracy'. Understanding the nature of US democracy, and the debates surrounding it, is crucial given the considerable impact that the USA has on UK, European and global politics. Students will explore the US Constitution and the arguments surrounding it. Students will be expected to debate the nature of democracy in the USA and evaluate the extent to which it remains an issue. The impact of the US government on the world beyond its borders is increasingly a feature of international politics. Students will begin to engage with this by comparing and contrasting politics and institutions in the US with those in the UK.

#### Assessment

There are three externally examined papers:

Component 1: UK Politics. Written examination: 2 hrs. 33.3%

Component 2: UK Government. Written examination: 2 hrs. 33.3%

Component 3: Comparative Politics. Written examination: 2 hrs. 33.3%

#### Frequently Asked Questions

*Q. Is any previous knowledge required to study this subject?*

No previous knowledge of the subject is required. However, the course is likely to suit students who have an interest in the world around them, like to think for themselves and ones who want to develop their own views, rather than accept the views of others. Students are required to meet the General Entry Requirement of a minimum of 4 GCSEs at grade 6 with at least GCSE grade 4 in English Language and Maths.

*Q. What opportunities are there for Extended Learning?*

Students take part in visits to lectures and political institutions in Manchester and London. Occasionally, guest speakers attend events at the Sixth Form. In recent years, A Level Politics students have visited New York and Washington DC.

*Q. What facilities are there?*

The department is housed in two large rooms with excellent facilities. A wide range of teaching methods are employed and the department is keen to encourage student participation and debate. Considerable emphasis is placed on the use of audio and visual teaching resources. The department has satellite TV and sophisticated ICT facilities, including an extensive bank of resources available to students at home, through a very comprehensive Virtual Learning Environment accessible via the Internet. The department also has its own Twitter account.

#### Exam Board Specification

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Politics (9PL0)

<https://qualifications.pearson.com>

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SIXTH FORM



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