

British Politics and Government

Spring, 2023

GOV 366G

The University of Texas at Austin

Instructor

Professor David L. Leal

Office Hours: T & TH 1:30 - 3:00 PM

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Class Information

Class Location: RLP 0.128

Class Hours: 3:30 - 5:00 PM

Unique Number: 38280

Course Description

This course examines key aspects of British politics and government. While no longer as powerful as during its days of empire, Britain is a longstanding ally of the United States and remains an important global power. To understand the course of US, European, Atlantic, and global politics requires an understanding of the UK. We begin with an overview of modern British political history, including the ideas, actors, laws, structures, and events that set the stage for contemporary politics. We then examine Parliament, which is central to all UK politics, and encompasses the House of Commons, House of Lords, and Prime Ministers. We then examine political institutions such as the political parties, Civil Service, and judiciary. The next section covers elections and public opinion, including campaigns, candidates, constituencies, rules, voters, and recent contests. Lastly, we discuss emerging developments, including Brexit, regionalism, immigration, and social policy. Throughout the class, we will ask about the nature of democracy in the UK, make comparisons with US politics and government, and discuss the relationship of Britain with the US and the world in a post-empire era.

Required Reading

This class uses the Longhorn Textbook Access program, and you may choose to participate but are not required to do so:

“The materials for this class are available through the Longhorn Textbook Access (LTA) program, a collaboration between UT Austin, The University Co-op and textbook publishers to significantly reduce the cost of digital course materials for students. You can access your required materials through the ‘My Textbooks’ tab in Canvas. You are automatically opted into the program but can easily opt-out (and back in) via Canvas through the 12th class day. If you remain opted-in at the end of the add/drop period (12th class day fall/spring, 4th class day summer sessions), you will receive a bill through your ‘What I Owe’ page. If you do not pay your bill by the specified deadline, you will lose access to the course materials and your charge will be removed. More information about the LTA program is available at:
<https://www.universitycoop.com/longhorn-textbook-access>”

However, you are free to buy paper copies online or in some other way, although the UT Co-op will not sell copies.

Philip Norton. 2010. *The British Polity*, 5th edition. Routledge. ISBN 9780321216663

Tony Wright. 2020. *British Politics: A Very Short Introduction*, 3rd edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780198827320

Richard Heffernan, Colin Hay, Meg Russell, and Philip Cowley (Eds.) 2016. *Developments in British Politics*, 10th edition. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 9781137494740

David Denver and Robert Johns. 2022. *Elections and Voters in Britain*. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-3-030-86491-0

Additional readings (indicated with *) are in a course pack available for purchase at Jenn’s at 2518 Guadalupe Street: <https://jennscopiespacket.com/product/leal-gov366g-s23/>. Some of these readings may also be available online through the UT Library website.

Assignments

Student understanding of the readings and topics will be assessed in a variety of ways, as discussed below.

Course Grade

Exam #1

25% of course grade

Includes identification, essay, and multiple choice questions

Covers approximately first half of class

Exam #2

25% of course grade

Includes identification, essay, and multiple choice questions

Covers approximately second half of class; may include cumulative questions

Book Review

25% of course grade

The choice of book is open, but it must involve some aspect of 20th or 21st century British politics, policy, or government. No fiction, autobiographies, or poetry, please. Guidelines on how to write the review will be emailed by the instructor and discussed in class. Instructor must approve your choice of book no later than Thursday, March 9. Reviews are due on Thursday, April 13.

Reflection Essays

25% of course grade

For any ten (10) weekly topics, students will write a two-page essay (doubled spaced) with reflections, observations, comments, and questions about the readings and corresponding class discussion. This could include, for example, what you found to be the most interesting or unexpected. The instructor will discuss this assignment further in class.

Class attendance: This is not used in determining your course grade. Nevertheless, regular class attendance is *highly* recommended.

The class does not have a “final exam” during the final exam period at the end of the semester.

There are no extra credit assignments.

Grading

To determine your final course grade, divide your total number of points by 400 and find the letter grade that corresponds to your percentage.

Percentages are not rounded up or down. For example, 90.0%, 91.7%, and 92.9% are all A- grades.

93-100%	A	(4)	73-76%	C	(2)
90-92%	A-	(3.67)	70-72%	C-	(1.67)
87-89%	B+	(3.33)	67-69%	D+	(1.33)
83-86%	B	(3)	63-66%	D	(1)
80-82%	B-	(2.67)	60-62%	D-	(.67)
77-79%	C+	(2.33)	Below 60%	F	(0)

Policies

By taking this class, you agree to all of the following policies:

- * All aspects of this course are subject to change depending on the public health context. Directives from UT or the State of Texas may therefore require changes that are large, small, and anything in-between.
- * Make-up exams and late essays will only be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Please check with the instructor before an exam or the essay due date to discuss your situation and see what is allowable.
- * Grades of “Incomplete” are generally not assigned, but please discuss your situation with the instructor if you believe an Incomplete may be necessary.
- * If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A’s website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please discuss your Accommodation Letter with me as early as possible in the semester so we can review your approved accommodations.
- * Accommodations for religious holidays. By UT policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
- * Important announcements will be made in class and via the class Canvas email list. It is the responsibility of students to make sure that the University knows their correct email address.
- * The Canvas class email list can only be used for class purposes. Do not use it for any commercial or business activities, for example.
- * Students who miss class should obtain notes from a classmate.
- * Any complaints about grades must be initiated by your written or emailed explanation of why the decisions behind the assignment of your grade should be revisited. You will have one week after an exam or paper has been graded to submit this written explanation. After that period, all grades will be considered final and any discussion that we might have will be restricted to how you can do better on the next exam or essay.
- * During class discussions, be respectful at all times.
- * Computers and cell phones should only be used in class for academic purposes.
- * Students must be prepared to show their UT identification card during exams.
- * This syllabus is subject to change or adjustment by the instructor at any time. Consistent class attendance is the best way to ensure that no important announcements are missed.

Honor Code

“The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.”

Scholastic Dishonesty

*“‘Scholastic dishonesty’ includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor), or the attempt to commit such an act.” Section 11-802 (b), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*. If you have any questions about what constitutes scholastic dishonesty, you should consult with me and the following websites: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/> <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>

* Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: “Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.”

Emergency Evacuation Policy

* Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

* Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

* Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

* In the event of an evacuation, follow the instructions of faculty or class instructors.

* Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

* Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: <http://emergency.utexas.edu/>

* Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050,

<http://operations.utexas.edu/units/csas/bcal.php>

Class Recordings

“Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.”

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited

“No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University’s Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.”

Senate Bill 212 and Title IX Reporting Requirements

“Under Senate Bill 212 (SB 212), the professor and TAs for this course are required to report for further investigation any information concerning incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking committed by or against a UT student or employee. Federal law and university policy also requires reporting incidents of sex- and gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct (collectively known as Title IX incidents). This means we cannot keep confidential information about any such incidents that you share with us. If you need to talk with someone who can maintain confidentiality, please contact University Health Services (512-471-4955 or 512-475-6877) or the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center (512-471-3515 or 512-471-2255). We strongly urge you make use of these services for any needed support and that you report any Title IX incidents to the [Title IX Office](#).”

Course Schedule

Week 1	Tuesday, January 10 Thursday, January 12
Political Culture and Traditions	

Richard Heffernan et al., Chapter 1: “What’s British About British Politics?”

Tony Wright, Chapter 1: “The Britishness of British Politics”

Philip Norton, Chapter 1: “The Contemporary Landscape”

Philip Norton, Chapter 2: “The Political Culture”

Week 2	Tuesday, January 17 Thursday, January 19
The British Constitution and Political History	

Norton, Chapter 3: “Past and Present: Historical Perspectives and Legacies”

Norton, Chapter 4: “The Uncodified Constitution”

Wright, Chapter 2: “The Constitution, Old and New”

Historical Background

* David Thomson. 1950. *England in the Nineteenth Century (1815-1914)*

“Economic and Social Reform” (pp. 77-87)

“The Age of Palmerston” (pp. 119-136)

* Christopher Harvie: “Roads to Freedom” (pp. 491-499 in *The Oxford History of Britain*)

* H.C.G. Matthew: “Free Trade” (pp. 518-529 in *The Oxford History of Britain*)

Week 3	Tuesday, January 24 Thursday, January 26
Parliament: House of Commons and House of Lords	

Norton, Chapter 12: “Parliament: Commons and Lords”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 6: “Parliament: A Significant Constraint on Government”

House of Lords Reform

* Peter Dorey and Alexandra Kelso. 2011. *House of Lords Reform Since 1911*. “Introduction” (pp. 1-9)

* Iain McLean, Arthur Spirling, and Meg Russell. 2003. “None of the Above: The UK House of Commons Votes on Reforming the House of Lords, February 2003.” *Political Quarterly*.

Week 4 (Part I)	Tuesday, January 31
The Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and the Government	

Norton, Chapter 8: “The Executive: Government at the Center”

Wright, Chapter 4: “Governing: The Strong Centre?”

Wright, Chapter 6: “Accounting: Parliament and Politicians”

Week 4 (Part II)	Thursday, February 2
The Monarchy	

Norton, Chapter 13: “The Monarchy: Above the Fray?”

Historical Background

* David Thomson: “The Monarchy” (pp. 169-174)

* Edward Shils and Michael Young. 1955. “The Meaning of the Coronation” (pp. 63-64)

Week 5	Tuesday, February 7 Thursday, February 9
Political Parties: More than Two	

Tony Wright, Chapter 5: “Representing: Voters and Parties”

Norton, Chapter 6: “Political Parties: More or Less than a Two-Party System?”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 4: “The Party System: Turbulent Multipartyism or Duopolistic Competition?”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 2: “Britain’s Experience of Coalition Government”

Week 6	Tuesday, February 14 Thursday, February 16
Political Parties: Ideology and Representation	

Heffernan et al., Chapter 5: “Ideological Politics and the Party System”

Denver and Johns, Chapter 3: “The Changing British Party System”

Wright, Chapter 3: “Arguing: The Politics of Ideas”

Week 7 (Part I)	Tuesday, February 21
The Civil Service and the Political Class	

Heffernan et al., Chapter 9: “Developments in the Civil Service”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 7: “Political Recruitment and the Political Class”

Week 7 (Part II)	Thursday, February, 23
Interest Groups	

Norton, Chapter 7: “Interest Groups: Insiders or Outsiders?”

Week 8 (Part I)	Tuesday, February 28
** EXAM #1 **	In Class

Week 8 (Part II)	Thursday, March 2
The Judiciary	

Norton, Chapter 14: ‘Enforcement: The Courts and the Police’

Recent Coverage

“Britain’s Supreme Court Takes a Conservative Turn”

The Economist

June 2, 2022

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2022/06/02/britains-supreme-court-takes-a-conservative-turn>

Week 9	Tuesday, March 7 Thursday, March 9
Elections: Rules and Context	

Denver and Johns, Chapter 1: “Studying British Elections”

Norton, Chapter 5: “The Electoral System: Campaigns, Voting, and Voters”

Denver and Johns, Chapter 7: “The Geography of British Elections”

Reform Ideas

* Paul Whiteley, Harold Clarke, David Sanders, and Marianne Stewart. 2012. “Britain Says NO: Voting in the AV Ballot Referendum.” *Parliamentary Affairs*, v65: 301-322.

** Week 10, Spring Break, March 13-18 **	
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Week 11	Tuesday, March 21 Thursday, March 23
Elections: Issues and Voter Choice	

Denver and Johns, Chapter 4: “Issues, Policies, and Performance”

Denver and Johns, Chapter 5: “Party Images and Party Leaders”

Recent Elections and Identities

* David Cutts, Matthew Goodwin, Oliver Heath, and Paula Surridge. 2020. “Brexit, the 2019 General Election and the Realignment of British Politics.” *The Political Quarterly*, v 91(1): 7-23.

* Sara B. Hobolt, Thomas J. Leeper, and James Tilley. 2020. “Divided by the Vote: Affective Polarization in the Wake of the Brexit Referendum.” *British Journal of Political Science*.

Week 12	Tuesday, March 28 Thursday, March 30
Elections: Voter Participation	

Denver and Johns, Chapter 2: “Turnout: Why People Vote (or Don’t)”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 8: “Political Participation”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 3: “Voting Behaviour and Electoral Outcomes”

Week 13	Tuesday, April 4 Thursday, April 6
Regionalism and (Emerging?) Federalism	

Norton, Chapter 10: “The New Assemblies: Government Beyond the Center”

Norton, Chapter 11: “Local Government: Government Below the Center”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 13: “The United Kingdom after the Scottish Referendum”

Week 14	Tuesday, April 11 Thursday, April 13
The Welfare State, Social Policy, and Immigration	

Heffernan et al., Chapter 11: “Governing in Times of Austerity”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 12: “The Politics of Immigration”

Historical Background

* David Thomson: “The Demand for Social Security” (pp. 190-202)

* Kenneth Morgan. 2000. *Twentieth Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (pp. 6-10, 57-60)

* Kenneth Morgan. 2010. *The Oxford History of Britain*, “The Post-War World” (pp. 633-637)

Week 15 (Part I)	Tuesday, April 18
Brexit and the EU	

The Brexit Vote

* Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, and Paul Whiteley. 2017. *Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union*.

Chapter 7, “Voting to Leave” (146-174)

Chris Prosser, Jon Mellon, and Jane Green. “What Mattered Most to You When Deciding How to Vote in the EU Referendum?”

<https://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-findings/what-mattered-most-to-you-when-deciding-how-to-vote-in-the-eu-referendum/#.XCuyJlxKiUk>

Kaufmann, Eric. 2016. “It’s Not the Economy, Stupid: Brexit as a Story of Personal Values”

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/personal-values-brexit-vote/>

Background

Norton, Chapter 9: “The European Union: Government above the Center”

Heffernan et al., Chapter 14: “Britain Beyond the European Union?”

Week 15 (Part II)	Thursday, April 20
** EXAM #2 **	In Class