

**LCC 2823/INTA 4803VP:**  
**British Government/Politics in TV and Film**  
School of Literature, Culture and Communication

FALL 2012

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:05-4:25p, Clough Commons 102

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This course is designed to familiarize you with the government structure and politics of the United Kingdom and the use of TV and film as a method of instruction and analysis. This class will rely heavily upon both written (textbook) and visual (YouTube® clips, TV shows, movies) media.

We begin by looking at the development and behavior of the government of the United Kingdom. We will learn about the different institutions that make up the different levels and parts of the government of the United Kingdom. We will also discuss current political issues being faced by the UK government. Once a firm foundation has been laid, we will then begin watching the TV shows and films. We will watch shows from a variety of time periods that depict several different eras as well. We will then discuss whether or not the visual media match the reality of government and how the TV/film tried to use British politics to tell their story.

I assume you know nothing about government, politics or political science. So no previous courses are necessary for you to succeed in this course.

**Learning Objectives:**

- **Understand** the basic underpinnings of British governmental structure and the political system
- **Understand** the British legislative and law-making processes
- **Analyze** fictional portrayals of actual institutions, roles and people
- **Distinguish** methods of portrayal in TV/film of the same subject matter

**Learning Outcomes – Students should be able to:**

- **Explain** the institutional design of the British/Westminster form of parliamentary democracy
- **Generate** a plan of the process of how a law is made in the UK at the national level

- **Compare** the biases and/or accuracy of the depiction of the different institutions and historical figures in TV and film

### **Required Reading**

One textbook is required for this course. Copies are available at the student bookstores and elsewhere.

- Moran, Michael (2011). *Politics and Governance in the UK*: (2nd ed.). New York, NY, US: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 978-0-230-28999-4 (abbreviated as PGUK)

There will also be a YouTube® channel created for the class that will be a link in the class T-Square site. Videos that are shown during lectures will be added to that channel so that you can access them at your leisure.

The T-square site will also contain other important material for the course, including assignments, study guides for exams, and so on. Regular access to T-Square is mandatory for this course. Most of you already have the necessary skills to use this tool, but if you don't OIT runs periodic workshops.

### **Recommended Reading**

Being informed about what is going on in the world is always a good idea. We will spend some time in this course discussing contemporary British politics, and though it is not required I highly recommend spending a little time each day checking the international news. Keeping up with UK events will enhance the quality of our discussions as we incorporate what we are learning with what we see and read in the news. Listed below are some of the best news sources you can use to stay abreast of events in the United Kingdom.

- [\*The Financial Times\*](#) (British daily newspaper with quality information on Europe)
- [\*The Economist\*](#) (weekly British newsmagazine)
- [\*BBC News\*](#)

### **Class Format**

This class will meet twice a week for 80 minutes each. A list of general discussion questions appears with the reading assignment for each session during the lecture portion of the semester. I expect all students to come to class having done the reading and ready to comment and/or ask questions. Remember, no question is too small or too obvious. Chances are your classmates will be wondering the same thing. During the viewing portion of the semester, students will be expected to participate fully in all discussions.

### **Course Requirements**

- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Final Paper: 20%
- Response Papers: 30%
- Participation: 25%

### **Exam (25%)**

There will be one exam during the semester – the midterm. The midterm will cover all of the material from the lecture portion of the class. The exam will consist of a series of short answer, matching and identification questions. I will provide study resources prior to the exam. **The midterm exam will be held September 27<sup>th</sup> in class.**

### **Response Papers (20%)**

I will assign response papers to be written every week during the viewing portion of the semester. The assigned topic will be given on a Thursday and the paper will be due the following Tuesday. Each should be between two (2) and three (3) pages, matching the format listed in the paper guides. All papers are due by the beginning of class. Papers must be submitted on paper and stapled (double-sided is encouraged). Electronic submission will be not accepted. Late papers will not be accepted without a valid (documented) excuse.

There should be a total of seven papers assigned. I will only count the best five towards the grade for the course.

### **Final Paper (20%)**

I will assign one final paper to be written. It should be between seven (7) and nine (9) pages, matching the format listed in the paper guides. Papers will be due by the end of the final exam period for the course (Thurs 12/13 11:30-2:20). Papers must be submitted on paper and stapled (double-sided is encouraged). Electronic submission will be not accepted. Late papers will not be accepted. The topic for the paper will be assigned no later than November 1.

### **Attendance and Participation (25%)**

Attendance in class is mandatory. However, being in class is not enough – you should participate and ask questions, especially during each lecture. Demonstration of having done the reading will result in a better grade. Please advise me ahead of time if you will miss class or afterward if you are ill. I will grant you two absences (for whatever reason) during the semester after which your final grade will be deducted 2.5 points for each additional absence (10 points off your participation grade). Obviously there are extenuating circumstances that I will consider, but you need to consider your presence in class as vital to your final grade. Only family emergencies, documented illnesses, or Institute-approved absences will count as excused absences.

Keep in mind that the majority of the semester will be spent watching television programs and films, followed by group discussion. Your absence will make it awfully difficult to keep up with the course.

**Honor Code**

Full compliance with the Georgia Institute of Technology's Honor Code is required on all assignments, exams, and papers.

Go to [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu) for more information.

**Special Needs**

I am happy to meet any special needs you may have for the class in terms of assistance. You must present me with your ADAPTS office information so that I can make sure our learning environment is best suited to help you succeed.

**Final Caveat**

This syllabus is to be considered a living document and therefore subject to change. Any major changes (such as moving a due date) will be discussed with the class and posted to T-Square. If you have any questions about what you see on the syllabus, please see me to discuss.

# **COURSE SCHEDULE**

## **Week One: August 21/23 : Introduction and History**

- PGUK, chapters 1 -3

*Why study UK politics?*

*What are the influences of capitalism on the development of British democracy?*

*How is the UK adapting to an increasingly globalized world?*

## **Week Two: August 28/30: Culture, Constitution, Europe, Westminster**

- PGUK, chapters 4-7

*What constitutes the British constitution?*

*How has the development of the EU and its institutions impacted the UK political system?*

*What is the Westminster system?*

*What is the core executive? How does it operate?*

*How does the departmental structure of the Westminster system work?*

## **Week Three: September 4/6: Parliament and devolution**

- PGUK, chapters 9-11

*How does Parliament work?*

*What is the composition and function of the Houses of Parliament?*

*What is devolution?*

*Scotland: Is devolution the stepping stone to independence?*

*Wales: How are the Welsh forming their own identity?*

*Northern Ireland: Can there truly be reconciliation and cooperation?*

## **Week Four: September 11/13: Parties, Elections, Leaders**

- PGUK, chapter 14-15, 17-18

*What are the important parties in the United Kingdom's political system?*

*How are parties organized?*

*What do the parties stand for?*

*How are elections run in the UK? What are the different types?*

*How are leaders chosen? What are their powers?*

## **Week Five: September 18/20: Wrap-Up**

- PGUK: chapters 21-23

*How is the judiciary organized?*

*How is public order maintained in the UK? Is it?*

*How do society and government interact?*

*How do we explain the government/political system of the UK?*

## **Week Six: September 25/27: The Midterm**

- **Progress Reports on Friday 9/28**
- **MIDTERM Thurs 9/27**

*Tuesday: Review for Midterm*

*Thursday: Midterm exam*

## **Week Seven: October 2/4: House of Cards**

- Episodes 1-2

## **Week Eight: October 9/11: House of Cards**

- Episodes 3-4

## **Week Nine: October 16/18:**

- **NO CLASS 10/16 (Fall Break)**
- TBD

## **Week Ten: October 23/25: Yes, Minister and The Thick of It**

- Open Government (YM) and S01E01 (ToI)
- The Devil You Know (YM) and S02E02 (ToI)

### **Week Eleven: 10/30 & 11/1: Yes, Minister and The Thick of It**

- Party Games (YM) and Spinners and Losers (ToI)

### **Week Twelve: November 6/8: Yes, Prime Minister and The Thick of It**

- The Grand Design (YM) and S03E01 (ToI)
- The Key (YM) and S0305 (ToI)

### **Week Thirteen: November 13/15: The Queen**

### **Week Fourteen: November 20/22 : Dr. Who**

- NO CLASS – 11/22
- Aliens of London and World War III (Series One)

### **Week Fifteen: November 27/29: Iron Lady**

### **Week Sixteen: December 4/6: Viewer Request**