

Topics in Political Science: British Politics

Dr. Heather A. D. Mbaye

Summer 2007, 12:30-2:45

Office hours: daily from 9:30 to 10:00, 12:15-12:30, 2:45 to 3:15

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This course explores the political systems of the United Kingdom. It explores basic issues of political arrangements, political parties, and the challenges faced by each nation..

The course draws comparisons concerning the interaction of political institutions, conflicts, actors, and processes across regions in Britain, as well as within the UK as a whole. Topics include issues such as how governments are formed, what the role of political parties is, and how policy is made, among others. The course utilizes a variety of teaching techniques, including lectures, small group work, and oral presentations by students.

This course is part of the Writing Across the Curriculum requirement for all students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Thus, it will emphasize writing assignments. Writing is a valuable learning method (“writing to learn”) as well as a tool for communication (“writing to communicate”). Some writing assignments will help students learn course content, while others will help students learn to communicate that content.

Outcomes and Goals:

Students will demonstrate on examinations and in a critical thinking term project:

- in-depth knowledge of politics in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- specific knowledge of a topic in British politics (through your research project)
- the application of the basic concepts, historical development, and policy making processes in Britain and Northern Ireland

Grading:

A total of 450-500 points will be available.

-Three exams worth 100 points each will consist of a short answer section (short, three to four sentence IDs) and essay questions. These are writing to communicate activities.

-A research project (including an 6-8 page research paper) will be worth 150 points. The research assignment will be discussed further in class. The research paper is a writing to communicate activity. However, there will be a writing to communicate component to this in that each student must complete an annotated bibliography, worth 50 points.

- Additional points may be distributed at the discretion of the Professor. Generally speaking, this means pop-quizzes, in class writing responses (writing to learn activities), and homework assignments.

Term research project:

Students will be required to write a 6-8 page term paper, which will account for 100 points (this is a formal writing assignment and fulfills the writing to communicate component of the WAC course). The annotated bibliography prior to the paper will be worth 50 points (this is a formal

assignment as well). The topic will be defined in concert with the Professor, during individual meetings with students, in the first week of the course. The paper is to be a formal research paper: thesis driven, with citations and a bibliography. I have extremely high expectations on the quality of the paper and each of you should understand that grammatical and spelling errors, as well as poor organization, incorrect information, insufficient or poor sources, and unsupported theses will result in a reduced grade. All papers should be *carefully* edited.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is compulsory. Let me repeat: **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY**. If you cannot make the section, drop this class and take another. **ONE** unexcused absence is allowed. Beyond that, *each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a one half letter grade reduction in your grade. A failing grade will result if you miss enough classes, even if you do "A" work. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.*

Excused absences are possible *only when you speak with me prior to a necessary absence*. If you are ill and unexpectedly must miss class (or you have a car accident on the way to Carrollton or the like), you must leave a message on my office phone or send an email **provide proof**. Forgetting to sign in cannot be substantiated. If you must miss class, you are responsible for getting any notes, assignments, or other information. Any absence that must be excused after the fact **MUST** be excused on the day you return to class. No exceptions will be made to this rule. Only a doctor's note or a note from the health center will be considered proof of illness; if you are ill enough to miss class you need a medical professional.

You must be **on time** to class. If you arrive after I call the roll, you are considered tardy, and every three tardies will count as one unexcused absence (unless you are tardy for an excused purpose and I know you may be late. "I couldn't find a parking place close to Pafford" is not a valid excuse.)

Participation is absolutely necessary. However, participation must be prefaced with knowledge of the material. To that end: **do your reading prior to arriving in our classroom**. I would like to avoid pop quizzes if at all possible; however, if I suspect that students are arriving unprepared, I will give quizzes – every day if necessary. Pop quizzes and in-class assignments will be given particularly when attendance is poor.

Plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating:

It is university policy that plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating are not allowed. Cheating is using information obtained in forbidden ways during an examination, including furnishing that information to another student. Cheating will result in a zero on the examination. Fabrication is intentionally falsifying facts to support your conclusions. Fabrication will result in a failing grade on the assignment. Finally, plagiarism is "the purchase and use of ghost-written papers and reports, or incorporating into a report, term theme, research paper, or project, ideas and information obtained from another person without giving credit to the person from whom such information was obtained. Further, inclusion of the published or unpublished writings of another person without duly noting these sources according to normal scholarly procedures shall be considered plagiarism. The above definition of academic misconduct applies equally to improper

use of electronic sources of information and opinion” (Faculty Handbook, State University of West Georgia, August 2004, page 75).

If you plagiarize even a single sentence from another person, you will fail this course.

Other expectations:

1. You are expected to check your *UWG email* and *WebCT daily*. “I didn’t see the email / announcement / assignment” is not a valid excuse.
2. You should do each assignment on time, and be on time to class. “I couldn’t find a parking place close to Pafford” is not a valid excuse.)
3. You **will read the assigned reading** prior to arriving in class on the day listed in the syllabus.
4. ALL cell phones must be turned OFF – not on vibrate, OFF – when class begins. NO CELL PHONES should EVER be out in class. Anyone who has a cell phone out during class when there is a quiz or test will earn a ZERO on that quiz or test. Anyone who has a cell phone out once during a regular class period will loose TEN POINTS off a test grade. The second infraction will result in a ZERO on a test.

Required texts:

Budge, Ian et al. (2005) *The New British Politics*, updated edition.

June 4	Chapter 1	Context of British Politics
June 5	Chapter 2-3	Industrialization and new challenges
June 6	Chapter 4-5	Constitution and the Executive <i>Paper topic due</i>
June 7	Chapter 6-7	Executive branch and bureaucracy
June 8	Chapter 8-9	Britain and Europe
June 11		Midterm Exam – class will end at 1:50; there will be no breaks.
June 12	Chapter 10-11	The Celtic fringe and Devolution
June 13	Chapter 12-13	Local politics and pressure groups – class will end at 1:50
June 14	Chapter 14-15	The mass media Elections and voting <i>- class will be online!</i>
June 15	Chapter 16-17	Political parties and ideologies <i>Annotated Bibliography Due</i>
June 18	Chapter 18-19	Parliament and the Law
June 19		Midterm Exam – class will end at 1:50; there will be no breaks.

June 20	Chapter 20-22	Security, Foreign policy, and environmental policy
June 21	Chapter 23-25	Economic and Social Policy <i>- class will be online!</i>
June 22	Chapter 26-27	Equal Opportunity and New Labour <i>Term Paper Due – NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED.</i>
June 25	Chapter 28-updates	Future of British Politics
June 26		Final exam – class will end at 1:50; there will be no breaks.