

A LEVEL POLITICS FAQs

Q: Which exam board do you use and what does the course involve?

We follow the Edexcel (Pearson) Politics A Level. There are 3 exams, all equal weighting. Paper 1 is on UK Political Participation and Core Political Ideas (Liberalism, Conservatism and Socialism). Paper 2 is on UK Government and the Non-Core Political Idea (Feminism). Paper 3 is on the Politics and Government of the USA and has questions asking students to compare the 2 political systems studied.

Q: Does it matter if I have not studied Politics before?

Not at all! No students have. There is no Politics GCSE and you do not need to have studied any particular GCSE such as History, Ethics or Citizenship. The essential requirement is that you are interested in Politics. Because of the written and analytical nature of the subject, you need 5s in 2 written GCSEs such as English, History or Geography.

Q: What can I go on to study after A Level Politics?

A Level Politics develops your critical thinking and analytical writing skills, as well as increasing your understanding of people, systems and the world around you. As such, there are very few degrees which it does not help towards. Many of our students have gone on to degrees in: Politics, International Relations, Journalism, Law, Economics, Business Management, Geography and Philosophy.

Q: Are the lessons spent having debates?

Not really no. There are debates at regular points as we go through the course; debating is great for practicing building arguments and providing evidence. But it is important to remember that it is a written A level and you need to be able to put your knowledge and arguments into essays. Most lessons do involve some discussion though, and college has both a Debating society and a Politics society.

Q: Does it matter what my political opinions are?

No! In Politics A Level you study political ideas, political institutions and political behaviour. It is about understanding how political systems function and critiquing them. We study the UK and US Political Parties but there is no scope for party political opinion. We encourage our students to be politically active outside of lessons though.

Q: Is there a lot of writing in Politics?

Yes, you write essays and we build up your essay writing skills by writing paragraphs, essay plans and all the different forms of questions in the exam. But reading and paying attention to Politics in the news is also important; you can study Politics by listening to the news, or a podcast...

Q: What is homework like in Politics?

The Independent study is often in the form of flipped learning; preparation work for the next lesson or topic. This will be a mix of research, knowledge consolidation and essay writing practice.

Q: What are the average class sizes in Politics?

As in line with the college, the maximum class size is 25, but normally the average is around 22 – we find that this is perfect for debates and group skill development.

Q: How many lessons a week do I have in Politics?

As with all your subjects at Bilborough College, you have 3 lessons per week and each lesson is 1.5 hours, with 4.5 hours of Independent Study per subject per week.