British Politics

**Class code**  POL-UA 9514 - 001

**Instructor Details**  Dr Scott Kelly

**Class Details**  Autumn 2013
Tuesday 2pm – 5pm
Location to be confirmed.

**Prerequisites**  None

**Class Description**  This course provides an introduction to British politics, and therefore carries no previous political science requirements. It will provide an introduction to the study of politics, focusing predominantly on the British system of government, its institutions, and the historical processes that have shaped modern Britain. The topics include theories of the state, parties and party systems, central government, nationalism, devolution, the Northern Ireland question, and the development of politics and policies in relation to the European Union. The course topics will be approached from a theoretical and historical perspective in the lectures, and applied to analysis of current British politics in the classes.

The course will be taught in the form of an informal lecture followed by a class discussion, usually initiated by a short presentation by one or more members of the class who will then guide the class discussion. There will be a visit to Parliament arranged for one session, during class time, where students will be addressed by an MP.

**Desired Outcomes**  It is expected that students will acquire a good grounding in the institutions of British Government by the end of the course.

Students will also be aware of the issues facing the British state, issues of constitutional reform and Britain’s relationship with the European Union.

Students will also be introduced to some of the main theoretical approaches to the study of politics and government.

**Assessment Components**  Class participation (including presentation) 30%;
Two research essays (first due 15th Oct, the second 26th Nov) of between 1,500 and 2,000 words each 40% (20% for each paper);
Final exam 30% (unseen exam, two essays in 1 hour and 10 minutes)
Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Indicates excellent work that displays a sophisticated level of understanding and is based on a high degree of individual research

**Grade B:** Indicates good work with some individual research

**Grade C:** Indicates satisfactory work with little indication of individual thought or reading

**Grade D:** Indicates passable work based on an adequate understanding of the subject matter

**Grade F:** Indicates failure

**Grade conversion**

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
- B+=87-89
- B=84-86
- B-=80-83
- C+=77-79
- C=74-76
- C-=70-73
- D+=67-69
- D=65-66
- F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

**Grading Policy**

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

**Attendance Policy**

NYUL has a strict policy about course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.** While students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work, you should NOT approach them for excused absences.

Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill-health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons for absence will not be considered.

Excused absences can only be considered if they are reported in accordance with guidelines which follow, and can only be obtained from the appropriate member of NYUL’s staff.
Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester. See also section 11.1 - Make up days.

Absence reporting for an absence due to illness

1. On the first day of absence due to illness you should report the details of your symptoms by e-mailing absences@nyu.ac.uk including details of: class(es) missed; professor; class time; and whether any work was due including exams. Or call free (from landline) 0800 316 0469 (option 2) to report your absences on the phone.

2. Generally a doctor’s note will be required to ensure you have sought treatment for the illness. Contact the Gower Street Health Centre on 0207 636 7628 to make an appointment, or use HTH general practitioners if you cannot get an appointment expediently at Gower Street.

3. At the end of your period of absence, you will need to complete an absence form online at http://bit.ly/NuCl5K. You will need to log in to NYU Home to access the form.

4. Finally you must arrange an appointment to speak to Nigel Freeman or Donna Drummond-Smart on your first day back at class. You must have completed the absence form before making your appointment.

Supporting documentation relating to absences must be submitted within one week of your return to class.

Absence requests for non-illness reasons

Absence requests for non-illness reasons must be discussed with the Academic Office prior to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retrospectively. Please come in and see us in Room 308, 6 Bedford Square, or e-mail us at academics@nyu.ac.uk.

Further information regarding absences

Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student’s final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from an examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

NYUL also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early departure.

Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the policies relating to attendance. A copy is in your apartment and has been shared with you on Google Docs.
Late Submission of Work

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in person to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: the presentation of another piece of work or words, ideas, judgements, images or data, in whole or in part, as though they were originally created by you for the assignment, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the plagiarism policy.

All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to www.turnitin.com and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

Electronic Submission

The Turnitin database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students’ work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

1) Go onto the Turnitin website http://www.turnitin.com
2) Click ‘Create Account’ in the top right hand corner
3) Select user type of ‘student’
4) Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrolment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact academics@nyu.ac.uk if you have misplaced these).
5) Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

1) Log in to the Turnitin website
2) Enter your class by clicking on the class name
3) Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the ‘submit’ icon
4) Enter the title of your piece of work
5) Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click ‘submit’
6) Click ‘yes, submit’ to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or ‘no, go back’ to retry)
7) You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website.
8) Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you submit it to your professor (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the ‘file’ icon in the ‘content’ column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. **Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.** NYU in London may submit an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

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**Required Text(s)**


**Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)**


**Internet Research Guidelines**

Please speak to Dr Kelly about the use of any internet sources in essays

**Additional Required Equipment**

none

**Session 1**

**Introduction: The Westminster Model in Perspective**

3rd Sept

R, Heffernan et al, “A Landscape Without a Map?” British Politics after 2010 in *Developments 9*

B. Jones: ‘Politics in Perspective’ in *Politics UK*

**Session 2**

Parliament

10th Sept
Class discussion topic:
Should the powers of Parliament be strengthened? If so, how?

P. Norton, “The House of Commons”, in *Politics UK*

P. Norton, “The House of Lords”, in *Politics UK*

“Changing Parliamentary Landscapes” in *Developments 9*

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**Session 3**

**Political Parties and Ideology in the U.K.**

17th Sept

Class discussion topic:
Does the Coalition Government demonstrate that there are no significant policy differences between the major political parties?

Part 2: “Defining the Political World”, in *Politics UK*

“Political Parties and the British Party System” in *Developments 9*

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**Session 4**

**The Myth and Reality of Cabinet Government**

24th Sept

Class discussion topic:
Are British Prime Ministers more powerful than American Presidents (within their respective polities)?

P. Norton: “The Core Executive: Prime Minister and Cabinet” in *Politics UK*

“Changing Patterns of Executive Governance” in *Developments 9*

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**Session 5**

**Ministers and Civil Servants**

1st Oct

Class Discussion topic:
Are ministers or their civil servants the dominant force in the British policy-making process?

P. Norton, “Ministers, departments and civil servants” in *Politics UK*

P. Riddell ‘and another thing’ in *Politics UK*

“Changing Patterns of Executive Governance” in *Developments 9*
Session 6

Interest Groups and the Policy-Making Process

8th Oct

Class discussion topic:

Would British democracy benefit from a growth in lobbying and pressure group activity?

B. Jones, “The policy-making process” in Politics UK

B. Jones, “Pressure Groups” in Politics UK

“Pressure Group Politics” in Developments 9

“Anti-Politics in Britain” in Developments 9

Session 7

The Politics of the Constitution

11th Oct (Make-up Class)

Class Discussion topic:

Does the British Constitution need to be codified?


P. Norton, “The Crown”, in Politics UK

“Constitutional Politics”, in Developments 9

Session 8

Britain and the European Union: ‘An Awkward Partner’?

15th Oct

Class Discussion topic:

Has EU membership undermined British sovereignty?

“Britain’s place in the European Union” in Developments 9

N. Rees, “Britain, European Integration and the European Union”, in Politics UK

First Essay Due (15th October)

Session 9

The European Union and models of integration

22nd Oct

Class discussion topic:
Has the process of European Integration now reached its limits?
Same reading as for week 8

**Session 10**

**The Judiciary and the British State**

*29th Oct*

Class discussion topic:

Should the Courts be able to overturn an Act of Parliament?

P. Norton, “The Judiciary” in *Politics UK*.

“Constitutional Politics” in *Developments 9*

**Session 11**

**Electoral Reform**

*12th Nov*

Class discussion topic:

Does the result of the AV referendum demonstrate that the plurality system of election is right for the UK?

“Elections and voting” in *Developments 9*

M. Garnett, “Elections”, in *Politics UK*

**Session 12**

**Trip to Parliament** (date to be confirmed)

*19th Nov*

**Session 13**

**Nationalism: Scottish, Welsh and N. Irish Devolution**

*26th Nov*

Class discussion topic:

Is devolution likely to lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom?

R. Deacon, “Devolution” in *Politics UK*

“Territorial Politics in Post-Devolution United Kingdom” in *Developments 9*

“Power Sharing in Northern Ireland” in *Developments 9*

**Second Essay Due (26th Nov)**

**Session 14**

**The end of the Westminster model?**

*3rd Dec*

Class discussion:
Review of the course

Session 15

Final Exam

10th Dec

Classroom Etiquette
Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks.
Food & drink, including gum, are not to be consumed in class.
Mobile phones should be set on silent and should not be used in class except for emergencies.
Laptops are only to be used with the express permission of the teacher.
Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

Required Co-curricular Activities
There will be a trip to the Houses of Parliament during class time. Students will be addressed by a member of parliament on the role of the MP in the British Parliamentary system of Government.

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
Students can ask Dr Kelly about places worth visiting relevant to the course. Visits to the Royal Courts of Justice and the new Supreme Court are recommended. The London School of Economics runs a series of evening lectures every term, some of which are given by leading politicians and commentators.

Your Instructor
Dr Scott Kelly lectures in British Politics at New York University (NYU) and advises on public policy in Westminster. He is the author of The Myth of Mr Butskell: the Politics of British Economic Policy 1950-55 (Ashgate, 2002) and of various academic articles and policy papers. Since 2009 he has been a research fellow at the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS).