

A LEVEL POLITICS

2025-26



THE
PORTSMOUTH
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL



Course Outline

The AQA Politics course is followed which consists of three units, all examined externally at the end of Year 13. The course begins with British politics, covering areas such as the Prime Minister, Parliament, civil rights and pressure groups. Towards the end of Year 12 we then move on to American and comparative politics where there is a chance to learn how the American political system functions. Among the topics studied are the US Constitution, the presidency and Congress and the Supreme Court. There is also a strong comparative element too, comparing British and American political systems and how they are divided by a common system. The last third of the course is an excursion into political ideas with a focus on the ideologies of liberalism, socialism, conservatism, and anarchism.

External Assessment at A Level

All three exams follow the same format and structure. Each is worth one third of the total marks, lasts two hours, and covers respectively; government and politics of the UK, government and politics of the US and comparative politics and political ideas. There is no coursework.

Entry Requirements

There are no prescribed entry requirements, as pupils will not have studied Politics previously. The course involves some essay writing and comprehension of passages explaining contrasting ideas and arguments, so a GCSE Grade 6 in a relevant subject such as English or History is required.

Skills Required and Developed

You should have a lively and enquiring mind, an interest in politics and current affairs, a desire to explore new ideas and an ability to communicate your ideas effectively, both verbally and on paper. If you have no interest in power, politics, current debates and consider 'Hello' to be the epitome of your magazine or newspaper reading, look elsewhere! It is not a soft A Level option, but it is a lively and interesting one. It is also an increasingly popular one at PGS with normally just over 20 pupils in each year group opting for the subject.

Beyond the Classroom

In Year 12 we visit Parliament and the Supreme Court, as well as occasional conferences and debates. Politics students are automatically eligible for the annual History trips to places as diverse as Vietnam, Germany, the USA, and Budapest/Vienna. There is also an active Politics Society which meets twice termly, featuring talks by a range of academics and politicians, including local MPs and academics. In September 2023 we hosted a 'Learn with the Lords' event, giving students the opportunity to meet and question a current member of the upper house. We also ran mock school elections for the general elections in 2017, 2019 and 2024. The latter two were followed up by an election night sleepover in the Sixth Form Centre, sustained by pizza and a walk to the Guildhall to witness the live count and declaration of results.

University Courses and Professions that require the Subject

Politics can be a useful choice for a wide range of careers including journalism, law, the Civil Service and business. You may even want to climb the greasy pole yourself! One of our A level Politics students stood for election to his local council in May 2023. Politics combines well with a wide range of courses, most especially History, but also English, Economics and the creative/expressive subjects.



More Information

Contact our Head of History and Politics, Mrs N Neil:

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You can also find more information on the exam board's website: www.aqa.org.uk