



# POLITICS A-LEVEL

## WHY SHOULD I STUDY POLITICS A-LEVEL?

"Just because you do not take an interest in politics, doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you." – attributed to Pericles, 5th century BC.

Politics is about power. Who has it, who doesn't and the 'how' and 'why' of its distribution. Aristotle once said that "man is a political animal" and he arguably captured something of our nature. We are all affected by the power dynamics in our society and although every successive generation has felt that they live in tumultuous times where the pace of change seems to be ever increasing, even the most cynical of analysts would concede that our present age is one of the most politically charged eras of human history. Studying politics prepares you to understand how the world operates, and to take your place in it.

As a member of society, the question shouldn't be "why study politics?" but rather "can you live well without studying politics?"

## WHAT WILL I LEARN ABOUT?

The course covers three main areas:

- Government and politics of the UK: You will study and discuss such questions as 'What is Brexit all about and why is it happening?', 'What powers does the Prime Minister have?', 'Why was the result of the 2017 General Election such a surprise?', and 'Is Britain truly democratic?'
- Political Ideas: You will examine some of the great ideas that have shaped our world for good or ill, including Liberalism, Socialism, and Conservatism; and at the work and influence of key political thinkers such as Karl Marx, Mary Wollstonecraft and Edmund Burke.
- Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics: Find out the answers to questions like 'How did Donald Trump become President?', 'Why is it so easy to have a gun in the USA?', and 'Why is race such a big issue in America?' You will also have the opportunity to compare and contrast US and UK politics.

## HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The Politics A level is assessed at the end of the course through three exams:

- Paper 1 - Government and politics of the UK: This paper lasts two hours and requires you to answer three short answer questions, an extract analysis question and a long form essay question on UK politics topics including democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour and others.
- Paper 2 - Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics: This paper lasts two hours and requires you to answer three short answer questions, an extract analysis question and a long form essay question on US Politics topics such as the constitution, congress, the presidency, the supreme court, civil rights, and democracy and participation, amongst others, along with comparative politics questions exploring the nature of the similarities and differences between the voting systems, representation and powers of the US and UK political systems.
- Paper 3 – Political Ideas: This paper lasts two hours and requires you to answer three short answer questions, an extract analysis question and a long form essay question on political ideas from the core theories of liberalism, conservatism and socialism, along with one other ideology taken from multiculturalism, feminism, ecologism, anarchism and nationalism.

## WHAT SKILLS WILL I DEVELOP?

Studying politics will develop your understanding of structures of authority and power, how political systems differ, and enable you to interpret, evaluate and comment on the nature of politics and government. You will also develop a range of transferable analytical, debating and communication skills, allowing you to express yourself with precision and clarity in both a written and oral form.

## WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE ME IN THE FUTURE?

Politics is highly regarded by universities and is particularly beneficial for students who wish to pursue careers in law, government, the civil service public policy, journalism, international relations, the charity sector and education.

