This course has two aims: first, to introduce you to the study of the politics of the United Kingdom, arguably the United States' closest ally, and secondly, to improve your writing skills. We shall focus largely on contemporary political institutions, ideological debates and issues, but some background knowledge will be required about the evolution of British political affairs during the twentieth century and especially since 1945. This will be provided in lectures.

The course will be run as a seminar. Students will be expected to do approximately 200 pages of reading per week, drawn from a number of key texts. Because of the number of books required to be read, it is suggested that students come to a sharing arrangement with others on the course so that they do not have to buy all the books on the reading list. As a class we shall use all parts of all the books, but individual students may well be required to read and present specific sections.

Students will be expected by the end of the course:
- to provide a basic assessment of all British governments since 1945;
- analyze the governing styles and skills of all Prime Ministers since 1945;
- outline the achievements of the Attlee Government;
- to understand the evolution and collapse of the political consensus of the 1950s-1970s;
- understand the basic ideological differences between the major parties;
- analyze the social changes that have taken place in British society since the war and their impact on support for the parties;
- to outline the electoral process and assess election changes;
- to describe the work of Ministers and the civil service;
- the role of the Cabinet;
- and the evolution of the British Constitution;
- to describe the role of local government;
- the impact of devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- and to explain the key aims and achievements of Thatcherism and New Labour.

This is an intensive writing course.
(i) Every student is required to hand in a two-page synopsis of their reading every second week, which will be circulated around the class for discussion. This will count for 20% of their final grade.
(ii) Every fourth week, they will be required to make a power-point presentation on some particular theme. These will be worth 20% of their final grade.
(iii) In addition, they will be required to write three 2,000 word book reviews, which should be handed in on weeks five, eight and eleven. These will count for another 20% of their grade.

(iv) They will also produce a 5,000 word paper. The first draft of this should be handed in on week six and a second draft on week twelve. During the interim each student should see me for 15 minutes to discuss ways to improve their first draft before embarking on their second draft. The two drafts will each count for 15% of the class grade, totaling 20%.

(v) Finally, students will be required to write a 5,000 word essay under exam conditions on some aspect of British politics. This will be worth a final 20% of the grade.

The following books may be purchased from the bookstore. I suggest that you form a sharing arrangement with one or two other students so that you do not have to buy all the texts.


Pippa Norris and Christopher Wlezin, (eds.), *Britain Votes, 2005*, Oxford University Press, 2005


COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK ONE
January 17th
Introduction to the Course

WEEK TWO
January 24th

WEEK THREE
January 31st
David Butler, British General Elections since 1945, pp. 1-125.

WEEK FOUR
February 7th
Pippa Norris, Electoral Change since 1945, pp. 1-237.

WEEK FIVE
February 14th
Hand in book review.

WEEK SIX
February 21st
Dennis Kavanagh and Peter Morris, Consensus Politics from Attlee to Major.
Hand in first draft of paper.

WEEK SEVEN
February 28th

WEEK EIGHT
March 6th
Dennis Kavanagh, Thatcherism and British Politics: The End of Consensus?, pp. 1-310.
Hand in book review.
WEEK NINE
March 13th
Spring Break

WEEK TEN
March 20th

WEEK ELEVEN
March 27th

WEEK TWELVE
April 3rd
Hand in book review.
Peter Hennessy, The Prime Minister: The Office and Its Holders since 1945, pp. 3-177 or James Barber, The Prime Minister.

WEEK THIRTEEN
April 10th
Hand in second draft of paper.
Peter Hennessy, The Prime Minister: The Office and Its Holders since 1945, pp. 331-543 and I. Budge et al., pp. 399-484.

WEEK FOURTEEN
April 17th

WEEK FIFTEEN
April 24th
David Laws, 22 Days in May: The Birth of the Lib Dem-Conservative Coalition, pp. 11-335.