European politics has always been a vibrant subject, and one that has been in considerable flux in recent years. In fact, the word ‘crisis’ is frequently used to describe various aspects of European politics – from the ‘crisis of the post-war settlement’ and the ‘crisis of the welfare state’ to the ‘crisis of political parties’, the ‘Eurozone crisis’, and the ‘migration crisis’. Most recently, the UK’s vote to leave the European Union has raised profound questions about the relationship between Britain and continental Europe, the effectiveness of the UK’s political institutions, and the long-term prospects of both the UK and the EU.

POL13 examines these questions through two modules, one on British Politics and one on the Politics of the European Union: the examination takes the form of an undivided paper, so students can specialize in one module or study them in combination. The British Politics module explores political developments in the UK since 1945, including the rise of Thatcherism and New Labour, devolution and constitutional reform, economic and social policy, and changes in electoral behaviour up to the 2017 general election. The Politics of the European Union module examines key aspects of the process of European integration, such as the nature of the European Union, the distribution of power within (and political mobilisation against) the EU, monetary integration and its problems, EU enlargement, and the EU’s role in international affairs. The paper will enable students to engage critically with the scholarly literature in these fields and to develop a comparative and historical perspective on British and European politics.

Prerequisites and Background Reading

There are no formal prerequisites for this paper, but students who took either the Western Europe module or the United States and United Kingdom module in the POL4 paper last year will find that they provide some useful background information.

Students are strongly encouraged to develop their general understanding of the post-war political history of Britain and/or the European Union (as appropriate) before the start of Michaelmas Term, so that they are ready to engage with the supervision topics at an appropriate level of sophistication. Reading textbooks and general histories is one way of doing this, but diaries and memoirs can also provide valuable insights into how politics and policy-making worked.

Section A. British Politics

This section of the paper covers politics and government in modern Britain. It is divided into four mini-sections: British Political History since 1945, The Political Economy of Britain since 1945, The British Political System and Policymaking in Britain. There are four key cross-cutting themes to the approach taken to teaching this section of the paper:

1. It is empirical. It focuses on the concrete reality of what has happened, and is happening, in British politics. At times, theoretical models are used but this is generally to further
understanding of British politics or highlight how the British case fits within broader political scholarship.

2. It is historical. It looks back to look forward, setting contemporary academic and political debates in a longer context.

3. It is current. It will examine very recent developments in British politics, including evaluating recent political science.

4. It acknowledges the broader, international context. This is not a comparative paper, however, it will at times provide some brief context on how the British case fits with broader comparative (generally western European) developments.

Lecture Topics

Michaelmas Term

British Political History since 1945 (Dr Mitya Pearson)

3. Thatcherism, 1979-1997
4. New Labour, 1997-2010

The Political Economy of Britain since 1945 (Dr Jeremy Green)

5. The City of London and British Capitalism
6. The IMF Crisis of 1976 and the Crisis of Keynesianism
7. Thatcher, Monetarism and the Politics of Financial Liberalisation
8. British Capitalism after the Financial Crisis

Lent Term

The British Political System (Dr Mitya Pearson)

10. The Union and Devolution
11. Party Politics
12. Elections and Voting

Policymaking in Britain (Dr Mitya Pearson)

13. Policymaking and the Executive
14. Policymaking and Parliament
15. Policymaking and Whitehall
16. Case Study Lecture: Environmental Policy

Supervision Topics

Michaelmas Term

4. New Labour and the Financial Crisis, 1997-2010
Lent Term

5. The Union and Devolution
6. Party Politics and Voting
7. Policymaking in Britain (the Executive, Parliament and Whitehall)

Some General Background Readings


Meg Russell et al. (eds.), *Developments in British Politics Ten* (2016)


Andrew Gamble, *Britain in decline: economic policy, political strategy and the British state* (1994)


Jeremy Green, *The Political Economy of the Special Relationship* (2020)

Diaries and Memoirs


Sir Douglas Wass, *Decline to Fall* (2008)


Alastair Campbell, *The Alastair Campbell Diaries* (6 vols., 2010-17)


Questions

‘The Labour Party is a Socialist Party, and proud of it. Its ultimate purpose at home is the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain – free, democratic, efficient,
progressive, public-spirited, its material resources organised in the service of the British people.’ (LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO, 1945) Discuss with reference to the record of the 1945-51 Labour governments.

‘The gap between Butlerism and Gaitskellism is too small to drive a Rotary Club, yet alone a major national party between.’ (THE ECONOMIST, 1954) Has the case for a ‘Butskellite’ consensus been exaggerated?

How did the revival of the City’s international role from the 1950s challenge the UK’s Keynesian economic model?

The Second World War and the 1945 General Election

Ross McKibbin, Parties and People: England, 1914-1951 (2010), Chapters 4-6
Paul Addison, The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War (1975; 2nd edn., 1993), Chapters 1 (Introduction), 6, 9 and 10

The Attlee Government, 1945-51

Henry Pelling, The Labour Governments, 1945-51 (1984), Chapters 1-2, 5-6 and Conclusion
Martin Francis, Ideas and Policies under Labour 1945-51: Building a New Britain (1997), Chapters 1-4
Charles Webster, ‘Conflict and consensus: Explaining the British Health Service’, Twentieth Century British History (1990)
Alan Booth, ‘How long are “light years” in British politics? The Labour Party’s economic ideas in the 1930s’, Twentieth Century British History (1996)

The Conservative Governments, 1951-64

Peter Clarke, Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000 (2004), Chapters 7 and 8
R.C. Whiting, ‘Income tax, the working class, and party politics, 1948-52’, Twentieth Century British History (1997)
Harriet Jones, “‘This is magnificent!’ 300,000 houses a year and the Tory revival after 1945’, *Contemporary British History* (2000)


**Consensus**

Ben Pimlott et al., ‘Is the “Post War Consensus” a myth?’, *Contemporary British History* (1989)


David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History* (2018), Chapter 14 (Two Classes, Two Parties, One Nation)

**The City and Keynesianism**


2. **British Politics: Decline and Crisis? 1964-1979**

**Questions**

Why did governments between 1964 and 1979 find it so difficult to win re-election?
Has the ‘crisis’ in British government during the 1970s been exaggerated?
How transformative was the 1976 IMF Crisis for Britain’s political economy?

Politics and Social Change in the 1960s and 1970s


Jon Lawrence, ‘Paternalism, class, and the British path to modernity’, in Simon Gunn and James Vernon (eds.), The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain (2011)


Keith Middlemas, Power, Competition and the State (3 vols., 1986-91), Introductions to vols. II and III

The Wilson Government, 1964-70


Richard Tyler, “‘Victims of our history”? Barbara Castle and In Place of Strife’, Contemporary British History (2006)

The Heath Government, 1970-74


The ‘Crisis’ of Social Democracy, 1974-79


Peter A. Hall, ‘Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: The Case of economic policymaking in Britain’, *Comparative Politics* (1992-3)


1976 IMF Crisis


3. Thatcherism and Financialisation, 1979-1997

Questions

What, if anything, was conservative about ‘Thatcherism’?
'The first Thatcher Administration was designed primarily as an experiment in government survival rather than in economic or political theory.' (Jim Bulpitt) Discuss.

What motivated the transformation of monetary policy and financial regulation under the Thatcher government?

**Introductions, Interpretations and Biographies**


Jim Bulpitt, 'The discipline of the new democracy: Mrs Thatcher’s domestic statecraft’, *Political Studies* (1986)


**Thatcherism and the Conservative Party**


Stephen Evans, ‘The not so odd couple: Margaret Thatcher and One Nation Conservatism’, *Contemporary British History* (2009)

**The Conservatives in Opposition, 1974-79**


Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, ‘Neo-liberalism and morality in the making of Thatcherite social policy’, *Historical Journal* (2012)
The Thatcher Governments and their Policies


Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon (eds.), The Thatcher Effect: A Decade of Change (1989)


Matthew Francis, “‘A crusade to enfranchise the many’: Thatcherism and the “property owning democracy”’, Twentieth Century British History (2012)

Aled Davies et al., “‘Everyman a capitalist” or “Free to choose”? Exploring the tensions within Thatcherite individualism’, Historical Journal (2018)


Monetary Policy and Financial Regulation


Ben Clift, ‘The hollowing out of monetarism: the rise of rules-based monetary policy-making in the UK and USA and problems with the paradigm change framework’, Comparative European Politics (2019)


4. New Labour and the Financial Crisis, 1997-2010

Questions
What was New Labour’s electoral strategy, and did it take working class voters for granted?

‘Instead of thinking of “New” Labour as a deviation from the party’s past, it is better understood to be a reworking of Labour’s dominant “revisionist” tradition’ (FIELDING). Do you agree?

Did the Global Financial crisis transform or reinforce the main features of Britain’s pre-crisis political economy?

General Readings and Interpretations


Colin Hay, The Political Economy of New Labour (1999), Chapters 1-3


Jon Davies and John Rentoul, Heroes or Villains? The Blair Government Reconsidered (2019)

New Labour Electoral Strategy

Peter Kilfoyle Articles in Tribune, 8 March and 9 September (1996)


Economic Policy

Patrick Diamond and Michael Kenny, Reassessing New Labour: Market, State and Society under Blair and Brown (2011; also published as a special issue of Political Quarterly, September 2010) esp. Introduction and essays by Corry, Horton and Brivati


Social Policy


Foreign policy

Oliver Daddow and Jamie Gaskarth (eds.), British Foreign Policy: The New Labour Years (2011)


Financial Crisis


5. The Union and Devolution
Questions

How far have efforts to devolve power from Westminster and Whitehall been driven by public demand? Answer with reference to ANY ONE OR MORE parts of the United Kingdom.

To what extent has Brexit exposed the fundamental instability of the union of the United Kingdom?

Is the UK’s devolution settlement deeply flawed?

Devolution

James Mitchell, *Devolution in the UK* (2009)

Vernon Bogdanor, *Devolution in the United Kingdom* (second edition, 2001)


Akash Paun and Sam Macrory, ‘Has Devolution Worked? The First 20 Years’ (2019) – available online at https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/has-devolution-worked


Brexit, Devolution and the Union


Mark Sandford and Cathy Gormley-Heenan, ‘“Taking back control”, the UK’s constitutional narrative and Schrodinger’s devolution’, *Parliamentary Affairs* (2020)

UK in a Changing Europe, *Brexit and the Union* (2020)


England


Scotland


I.C.G. Hutchison, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke, 2001)


Ben Jackson, ‘The political thought of Scottish nationalism’, *Political Quarterly* (2014)


Wales


Northern Ireland


Jonathan Tonge, ‘Supplying confidence or trouble? The deal between the Democratic Unionist Party and the Conservative Party’, *Political Quarterly* (2017)


Katy Hayward, ‘The 2019 general election in Northern Ireland: The rise of the centre ground?’, *Political Quarterly* (2020)


6. **Party Politics and Voting**

**Questions**
Which model of voting behaviour (sociological, spatial, or valence) best explains recent electoral outcomes in Britain?

Is social class still relevant to the study of British electoral politics?

How and why has the British party system changed since 1997?

**Voting Behaviour**


David Denver et al., *Elections and Voters in Britain* (multiple editions, most recently 2011)


Geoffrey Evans and Kat Chzhen, ‘Re-evaluating the valence model of electoral choice’, *Political Science Research and Methods* (2016)


**Long-Run Changes in the UK Party System**

Patrick Dunleavy, ‘Facing up to multi-party politics: How partisan dealignment and PR voting have fundamentally changed Britain’s party systems’, *Parliamentary Affairs* (2005)

John Curtice, ‘So what went wrong with the electoral system? The 2010 election result and the debate about electoral reform’, *Parliamentary Affairs* (2010)

Thomas Quinn, ‘From two-partism to alternating predominance: The changing UK party system, 1950-2010’ *Political Studies* (2013)


**Recent General Elections, 1997-2019**


Paul Whiteley et al., *Affluence, Austerity and Electoral Change in Britain* (2013)


Harold D. Clarke et al., *Austerity and Political Choice in Britain* (2016)
Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds.), *Britain Votes 2015* (2015); also available as a supplement to *Parliamentary Affairs*, 68 (2015), esp. Chapters by Curtice, Fisher, Flinders, and Tonge and Geddes


Jonathan Tonge et al. (eds.), *Britain Votes 2017* (2018); also available as a supplement to *Parliamentary Affairs*, 71 (2018)

Nicholas Allen and John Bartle (eds.) *None Past the Post: Britain at the Polls, 2017* (2018)


David Cutts et al., 'Brexit, the 2019 general election and the realignment of British politics', *Political Quarterly* (2020)


**Recent Developments in Voting and Party Politics**


UK in a Changing Europe, ‘Mind the Values Gap’ (2020)

Rob Ford and Maria Sobolewska, *Brexitland* (2020)

**Questions**
Is the British Prime Minister only as powerful as their ‘cabinet colleagues let him or her be’ (Jones, 2016)?

Following the 2019 General Election, the UK Parliament is as weak as it has always been. Evaluate this statement.

To what extent is policymaking in Whitehall ‘programmed to go wrong’ (Dominic Cummings, 2014)?

The Prime Minister and the Executive


Peter Hennessy, The Prime Minister: The Office and Its Holders since 1945 (2000)


Andrew Blick and George Jones, Premiership (2010), esp. Chapter 2 - Recurring Errors


Robert Elgie, ‘Core executive studies two decades on’, Public Administration (2011)

Parliament


Whitehall


Anthony King and Ivor Crewe, *The Blunders of our Governments* (2013)


Policy Areas

In answering the three questions above, one potential option is to focus on a specific policy area or case study. Some sources for this are listed below.

Peter A. Hall, ‘Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: The case of economic policymaking in Britain’, *Comparative Politics* (1992-3)


Michael Barber, *Instruction to Deliver: Fighting to Transform Britain’s Public Services* (2007)


Neil Carter and Mike Childs, ‘Friends of the Earth as a policy entrepreneur: “The Big Ask” campaign for a UK Climate Change Act’, *Environmental Politics* (2018)
Nicholas Timmins, Universal Credit: From Disaster to Recovery? (2016), available online at https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/universal-credit-disaster-recovery

Wendy Williams, Windrush Lessons Learned Review (2020)

**Section B: The Politics of the European Union**

This section will be updated shortly.