

Studying Politics at Oxford

The Department of Politics and International Relations at Oxford is an internationally renowned centre of excellence for teaching and research and is now one of the largest in the field in the UK. The study of politics and international relations at the University of Oxford has a long and storied history; the subject has educated many who went on to be leading politicians, scholars, and thinkers, both in Britain and globally. The College has particular strengths in British Politics, Political Theory, and International Relations.

Studying Politics at St Anne's

At St Anne's you will have the opportunity to live and study with students from around the world and be fully integrated into the academic experience of the College. Whether debating theories of justice in tutorials or considering recent international events in St Anne's own coffee shop or bar, the College offers a place to engage with ideas both new and old in an inclusive, welcoming environment. The College and University also offer many avenues for social and political engagement—be it in the form of associations, clubs, or volunteer activities

Study durations

You can apply to study Politics as a single or joint subject for any study duration.

	Ext AY	AY	Fall Term	Hilary and Trinity terms	Studied with other subjects
Politics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English Literature; History; History of Art; Medical Humanities; Modern Languages; Philosophy; Law; Politics Computer Science; Maths

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) – visiting students can study all 3 subjects if they attend for the academic year or the extended academic year. If attending for a term it is only possible to study 2 of the 3 subjects

Courses

If you are offered a place to study Politics at St Anne's, you will usually study two politics courses per term, which requires you to attend two tutorials a week. You must also write essays for six of the eight weeks (you can usually choose which essays you write). This is a total of 16 tutorials and 12 essays over the 8-week term.

In addition, you need to attend lectures (typically a few hours per week) and classes organised by the faculty. It is not unusual for these to take place during terms other than your tutorials so it is important to plan ahead.

The following are **Core Papers in Politics**, which are offered each year but not necessarily each term. They are often, but not always, taught within St Anne's:

- Introduction to the Theory of Politics
- Introduction to the Practice of Politics
- Comparative Government
- British Politics and Government since 1900
- Theory of Politics (cross-listed as Philosophy 114)
- International Relations
- Political Sociology

Introduction to the Theory of Politics - Topics covered could include (i) the nature and the grounds of rights; (ii) the nature and grounds of democracy; (iii) the role of civil society; (iv) power in the democratic state; (v) the nature and grounds of liberty; (vi) state paternalism; and (vii) free speech. Readings could include the following texts: (i) John Locke, Second Treatise on Government; (ii) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Social Contract; (iii) Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America; (iv) Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto; (v) John Stuart Mill, On Liberty.

Introduction to the Practice of Politics - Topics covered could include (i) regime types; definition and measurement of variations between types of democracy; (ii) political institutions and practice outside the advanced industrial democracies; stability, state capacity and state formation; (iii) the state and its institutions (executives, legislatures, parties and party systems, electoral systems, courts, constitutions and centre-periphery relations); (iv) parties and party systems; political values and identity politics.

Comparative Government – topics covered include the state; the party system; interest groups; electoral systems; executives; legislatures; judiciaries; and federalism.

British Politics and Government since 1900 – topics covered include the Rise of Labour; New Liberalism; Enfranchisement; Attlee; Thirteen Wasted Years; the Post War Consensus; Thatcherism; and New Labour. Note that this is an historical paper; if your interest is in contemporary British politics then please see the option below.

Theory of Politics – topics covered include justice; equality; democracy; liberalism; feminism; conservatism; socialism; and libertarianism.

International Relations – topics covered include classical approaches; critical perspectives; postcolonialism and empire; international co-operation; power; global war and security; identity and international security; culture and conflict.

Political Sociology – topics covered include voting behaviour; turnout; populism; nationalism; social movements; civil war and revolution; and political culture, social capital, and trust.

You can also indicate a preference for **optional papers in Politics**, which can include the following. Not every course is available each year (and certainly not each term) and teaching may be arranged by St Anne's but conducted in another College. Papers marked * are often, but not always, taught within St Anne's. The course description is an indication of what could be studied.

- **Modern British Government and Politics ***

A study of the structure, powers, and operations of modern British Government, including its interaction with the European Union: the Crown, Ministers, Parliament, elections, parties and pressure groups, the legislative process; Government departments, agencies, and regulatory bodies; local authorities; administrative jurisdiction and the Courts.

- **Government and Politics of Japan**

The constitutional framework and structure of government; parliamentary and local politics; the electoral and party systems; the role of corporate interests and pressure groups; the bureaucracy; foreign policy.

- **Government and Politics of the United States**

The constitution; federalism and separation of powers; the presidency; congress; the federal courts; the federal bureaucracy; parties and the party system; electoral politics; mass media; interest groups; state and local politics; processes of policy-formation and implementation; political culture.

- **Politics in China**

The following topics may be considered: the Communist party and its structure, urban and rural reform since 1978, foreign relations, nationalism, elite politics, gender, legal culture, and the politics of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

- **Politics in Europe**

This paper is a comparative study of the national party and institutional systems of Europe, and of comparative issues in European politics, including democratisation, institutional relations, political economy and party politics.

- **Politics of the European Union**

This paper focuses on the study of the history, institutions, and policy processes of the European Union. It includes analysis of the history and theories of the European integration process. The paper also focuses on democracy in the European Union and the impact of European integration on the domestic politics and policies of the member states.

- **Politics in Russia and the Former Soviet Union**

Topics could include the transformation of the Soviet system from 1985 to the present day, and an understanding of the politics of the countries in the former Soviet Union with respect to their formation, post-Soviet transitions, regime types, institutional arrangements, party systems, electoral processes, ethnic and clan composition, political economy, corruption, and the influence of external factors.

- **Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa**

The following topics may be considered: nationalism; forms of government, civilian and military; parties and elections; conditions for democracy; class, ethnicity, religion, and gender; business, labour, and peasantries; structural adjustment and agricultural policies; the influence of external agencies.

- **Politics in Latin America**

The following topics may be considered: presidential systems; the role of congress; public administration; party and electoral systems; the politics of major groups such as the military, trade unions and business groups, and the churches; political ideologies; political movements; the politics of economic stabilization; the politics of gender; theories of regime breakdown, and of democratic transition and consolidation; the influence of external factors.

- **Politics in South Asia**

The following topics may be considered: the nature of the state; government and political institutions; party and electoral systems; politics in the provinces or states of a federation; the evolution of political ideologies; the politics of gender, caste, religion, language, ethnic regionalism, and national integration; the political economy of development, social change, and class relations; 'New' social movements and Left politics; regional conflicts in South Asia and the influence of external factors on South Asian politics. South Asia is taken to include India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

- **Politics in the Middle East**

The following topics may be considered: the emergence of the state system in the modern Middle East; the influence of colonialism and nationalism in its development; the military in state and politics; party systems and the growth of democratic politics; the politics of religion; women in the political sphere; the influence of major inter-state conflicts and external factors on internal politics. The Middle East is taken to comprise Iran, Israel, Turkey, and the Arab States.

- **International Relations in the Era of the Two World Wars ***

The relations between the major powers; the twentieth-century origins of the First World War and the origins of the Second World War; war aims, strategies, and peace-making; the disintegration of war-time alliances; the League of Nations and the establishment of the United Nations; the impact of major political movements (Communism, Fascism, nationalism) on international society; monetary and economic developments as they affected international politics.

- **International Relations in the Era of the Cold War ***

The relations among the major powers, 1945-91, including domestic and external factors shaping foreign policy; the origins and course of the cold war, including detente and the end of the cold war; East-West relations in Europe with particular reference to the foreign policies of France and the Federal Republic of Germany; European integration; the external relations of China and Japan, particularly with the Soviet Union

and the United States; the Soviet Union's relations with Eastern Europe; decolonization and conflict in the developing world.

- ***International Security and Conflict ****

This course provides a systematic introduction to major topics within the field of International Security & Conflict. It explores the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical questions involved, and examines their implications for security affairs involving state and non-state actors. The course engages broadly with classic security concepts, theories and issues; contemporary empirical developments, new threats, and future challenges; and critical perspectives on security, insecurity, and conflict.

- ***Advanced Paper in Theories of Justice ** (must first take Theory of Politics at St Anne's)**

This paper aims to examine the questions that arise when we broaden the focus of justice and consider how to apply principles of justice to real world policy questions. In particular, it examines what principles of justice should apply with respect to (i) future generations; (ii) historic injustice; (iii) global politics and those who are not co-citizens or co-nationals; (iv) those with disabilities; (v) children; (vi) health care; and (vii) unconditional basic income policy.

- ***Feminism***

This paper explores a number of topics of interest to feminist theorists. These may include: gender and sex; intersectionality; trans; feminist epistemology; sex and sexuality; reproduction; sex work; pornography; power, oppression and domination; feminism and liberalism; feminism, work and capitalism; global feminism; queer feminism; and feminism and method.

- ***Political Thought from Plato to Rousseau ****

The critical study of political thought from Plato to Rousseau, which could include the following authors, with a primary though not necessarily exclusive focus on the following texts: Plato, The Republic; Aristotle, Politics; Aquinas: Political Writings, ed. R. W. Dyson 2002; Machiavelli, The Prince, The Discourses ed. Plamenatz 1972; Hobbes Leviathan Parts I and II; Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government; Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, Books I-VIII, XI, XII, XIX; Hume, Moral and Political Writings ed. Aiken 1948; Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, The Social Contract; and the following topics: theories of political stability and civic virtue; the relationship between the personal and the political; utopian political thought; theories of natural law and justice.

- ***Political Thought from Bentham to Weber ****

The critical study of political and social thought from Bentham to Weber, which could include the following authors, with a primary though not necessarily exclusive focus on the following texts: Bentham, Political Thought ed. Parekh; J. S. Mill, On Liberty, essays 'The Spirit of the Age', 'Civilization', 'Bentham', 'Coleridge'; Hegel, The Philosophy of Right, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History (Introduction) (CUP edn.); Saint-Simon, Selected Writings 1760-1825, ed. Taylor 1975; Tocqueville, Democracy in America - Everyman edition; Marx, Selected Writings, ed. McLellan; Weber, From Max Weber, eds. Gerth and Mills; Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society, Professional Ethics and Civic Morals; and the following topics: state, society, and the family; individual and community; history and social change; science and religion.

- ***Marx and Marxism ****

The study of the ideas of Marx and Engels, of later Marxists and critics of Marxism. Candidates will be expected to study Marxism as an explanatory theory, and also to examine its political consequences.

- ***Sociological Theory***

Theoretical perspectives which may include rational choice; evolutionary psychology; interpersonal interaction; social integration and networks; functionalism. Substantive problems which may include stratification; gender; nationalism; race and ethnicity; collective action; norms; ideology; economic development; gangs and organised crime.

Pre-requisites

Visiting students applying to study politics need to have a foundation in politics, government, international relations or a related discipline when they apply. Successful completion of an introduction course(s) in politics, government, international relations is required and, ideally, an applicant has taken further courses in any/all of those subjects.

Additional information

Department of Politics and International Relations <https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/>