

DEPARTMENT

MODERN STUDIES

TITLE OF COURSE

POLITICS

LEVEL

HIGHER

RECOMMENDED ENTRY LEVELS

Higher Modern Studies A or B pass or other social subject. National 5 A or B pass at Modern Studies in discussion with Faculty Head.

COURSE CONTENT:

Higher Politics develops an understanding of how political ideologies, systems and parties have developed over time. This allows learners to explore and analyse past and current political issues and so develop their own views and perspectives. There are three units covered in the course:

UNIT 1: Political Theory

Learners will gain an understanding of the concepts of power, authority and legitimacy by studying the work of political philosophers such as Steven Lukes and Max Weber. The relevance of these concepts today will be analysed. The key ideas of two political ideologies – Conservatism and Socialism – will be studied and related to current politics to allow learners to draw balanced conclusions about these ideologies.

UNIT 2: Political Systems

Learners will compare and contrast the constitutional approaches in two different political systems – the UK system and the USA's. The respective powers of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government in the UK and USA will be studied, compared and analysed.

UNIT 3: Political Parties and Elections

Learners will study the dominant ideas within one of the UK political parties such as: the Conservative Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats or SNP. They will analyse a range of electoral data to evaluate the party's ideas and performance over a number of elections. Learners will also study theoretical analyses of voting behaviour and judge the effectiveness of political campaign strategies.

METHODOLOGY:

Throughout the course you should develop important skills including the ability to handle and analyse complex data. You will further develop evaluation skills such as detecting bias and formulating and sustaining lines of argument. You will participate in debate and discussion and will be expected to keep abreast of current affairs.

As knowledge and understanding forms the main focus of assessment you will be expected to learn large amounts of information. Essay writing skills will be learned and practiced in class.

ASSESSMENT

Regular homework and class assessments will be given to ensure thorough preparation for

the final exam. Each study theme is assessed at the end of the unit. There are three internal assessments which must be passed to gain an overall course award. Thorough preparation for internal assessments is essential. Reassessment, should it be needed, will take place out-with normal class time.

All learners also have to complete an Assignment. They will select a political issue, conduct research and then produce under timed conditions, a response which critically analyses the issue – showing awareness of different viewpoints – and draw a detailed and reasoned conclusion.

There will also be a final exam consisting of one paper which lasts 2 hour 15 minutes.