

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz
Institut für Politikwissenschaft
Political System of the United Kingdom

Summer Term 2015; Wed 12-2, room no. 02-607

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Readings

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- 1 22.04. Introduction: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 3
 - 2 29.04. The British Tradition: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 4+7, supp: Hay, 2007
 - 3 06.05. The Constitution: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 10 + Russell, 2011 + Jones and Norton, 2014, p. 262
 - 4 13.05. We'll debate the fallout from the General Election 2015
 - 5 20.05. Electoral System and Electoral Reform: Dunleavy and Margetts, 2001 + Blau, 2004 + Jones and Norton, 2014, p. 262
 - 6 27.05. Parliament: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 19 + Kelso, 2011 + Russell, 2009 (supp.)
 - 7 03.06. The Core Executive: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 12 + Richards, 2011
 - 8 10.06. Ministers, Departments, Civil Servants: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 12+13 + Wilson, 2002 + Rhodes, 2005 (supp.)
 - 9 17.06. Devolution and the Irish Problem: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 17 + Scully and Wyn Jones, 2011 + McLean, 2007 (supp.)
 - 10 24.06. The Party System: Cowley, 2011 + Ford and Goodwin, 2014
 - 11 01.07. Elections and Voting Behaviour: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 20 + Denver, 2011
 - 12 08.07. The Media: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 25 + Chadwick and Stanyer, 2011
 - 13 15.07. Pressure Groups and the Judiciary: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 21+24 + Woodhouse, 2002
 - 14 22.07. Assessing British Democracy: Kavanagh et al., 2006, ch. 32 + Beetham et al., 2003 + Wilks-Heeg, 2012
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Important peer-reviewed journals

- British Journal of Political Science
- British Journal of Politics and International Relations
- Government and Opposition
- Parliamentary Affairs
- Political Quarterly
- Political Studies

Articles from these journals should be available electronically on any computer connected to the university network (either on campus or via VPN).

Assessment

1. I expect you to come to class well prepared. If you don't read the assigned texts, participation is pointless.
2. Even with a medical certificate, you may miss a maximum of two classes.
3. Assessment is based on satisfactory class performance and your essay. The usual deadline as well as all the usual standards for structure, citations etc. apply.
4. The American Political Science Association's style manual is a useful but verbose guide (<http://www.apsanet.org/files/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>). The main points are summarised here: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>.
5. Please send your essays by mail (leaving enough time for delivery by the due-date), or hand them in to the Studienbüro. I do not accept email submissions

6. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offence. It is both morally and legally a form of fraud and will not be tolerated. Students who cheat in this way will be awarded a mark of zero.
7. Essays must be entirely students' own work, and any passages from the work of others that are *quoted directly, or paraphrased or summarised*, must be acknowledged and accompanied by full references. Avoid internet sources as they are not normally peer-reviewed. If you absolutely have to use material from the internet, you must give the full URL and the date on which the website was accessed.
8. Essay titles *must* be chosen from the two lists below.

Essay Topics

1. At what point did Britain become a Liberal Democracy?
2. Has Britain's constitution become more or less democratic during the last 40 years?
3. What alternative voting systems have been proposed for elections to the Westminster Parliament? Which would be preferable on what grounds?
4. Would an elected House of Lords weaken or strengthen Parliament?
5. "The British PM is more powerful than the president of the United States". Discuss.
6. Should the House of Commons be reformed? If so, in which ways?
7. Why have the Liberal Democrats found it so difficult to break the mould of British politics?
8. What is the most democratic answer to the "English Question"?
9. Why has the "political role" of the judiciary increased in recent decades?
10. Has the Human Rights Act strengthened or undermined British democracy?
11. Does the "Westminster Model" still accurately portray the British political system?

References

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