Please note that options do not necessarily run every year, and may also sometimes be unavailable due to timetable clashes. While we do our best to put on a wide range of options, staff availability is likely to determine both what is on and the evening on which it is taught.
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20 weeks teaching in total.
**Global Politics and International Relations Programme Structure 2015/16**

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<th>Full-Time (Three Years) 4 modules each year</th>
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<td><strong>YEAR TWO</strong></td>
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<td><strong>YEAR THREE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YEAR FOUR</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Two level 6 options + dissertation</td>
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*Students can substitute one or both of these Level 4 option modules with Level 5 or Level 6 option modules if they have obtained a grade of at least 50% in each of the two compulsory Level 4 modules taken the previous year (The Study of Politics and Introduction to Global Politics.*

**PLEASE NOTE** students can take a maximum of 30 credits (1 module) from outside the department, which must be approved by the Programme Director before selection.
## BA Politics & Government Programme Structure 2015/16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>The Practice of Politics (Level 4)</td>
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<td>Modern Political Analysis (Level 4)</td>
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<td>Two Level 6 options + dissertation</td>
<td>Two Level 6 options + dissertation</td>
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</table>

*Option module descriptions are on the following pages*

**PLEASE NOTE** students can take a maximum of 30 credits (1 module) from outside the department, which must be approved by the Programme Director before selection.
To complete the degree students must complete 12 units. Of these, three courses are at level 4 (The Study of Politics, Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Historiography), and AT LEAST four courses must be taken at level 6 (Problems of Explanation plus at least three options). The remaining three options can be taken at level 5 or 6. Across the degree students must take two options from each discipline.

If you are in the first or second year you must take Conceptions of the Human from the Enlightenment to Today this year.

This document only shows courses available in 2015-65; the cross-disciplinary courses run bi-ennially and Rise of the Modern State and Problems of Explanation & Interpretation will be offered again in 2016-17.

Before submitting your option choices please check that your plans contain no timetable clashes and that if you are in your final year that you have two modules from each discipline in order to be awarded your Degree.

### Part-Time (Four Years)

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<td>Enlightenment to Today</td>
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<td>Introduction to the History of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two options at level 5 or 6 + dissertation</td>
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</table>

**Option modules for PPH must consist of 60 credits from each discipline ie two Politics, two History & two Philosophy. (If you choose a dissertation you will only have 30 credits in one discipline)**

Compulsory modules running in 2015-16

- Conceptions of the Human (Wednesday)
- Introduction to the History of Philosophy (Tuesday)
- The Study of Politics (Monday)
- Historiography (summer term)

Module descriptions for each discipline are listed on the following pages.
Politics Module information

Level Four Modules
The Study of Politics
Module Code: SSPO017S4 AAA Monday Term 1 (Core for Global Politics & International Relations year 1 students)

Module Code: SSP017S4 AAB Thursday Term 1 (Core for Politics and Government year 1 students)

What is politics? How can we best study it? Such questions define this module. The answer to the first might seem obvious, but politics can be constructed differently in different times, cultures and disciplines, and those constructions can be contested and changed. To that extent, this module is historical and interdisciplinary. We will examine the possibility that the study of politics is a branch of the social sciences. But philosophers and historians also study politics, while feminists both study politics and seek to transform it. The resulting models of politics are not hermetically sealed from one another, but they are different (quite apart from the differences within each discipline). This introduction is framed in terms of political concepts and the skills necessary to work fruitfully with them. That means being able to negotiate between different arguments, different theories, and different bodies of evidence in making one’s own judgements. In short, it means thinking for oneself.

Aims
The module aims
• to introduce the study of politics and government;
• to outline some of the main concepts and theories used in the study of politics;
• to explore and practice different forms of argumentation in the study of politics;
• to examine the different kinds of evidence appealed to in studying politics; and
• to foster understanding of the relations between theory and evidence in the study of politics.

Learning Outcomes
On completion of the module, you should be able to:
• demonstrate an understanding of different approaches to the study of politics and government and of some of the main concepts involved in them;
• make a critical assessment of the kinds of arguments advanced in the study of politics;
• appraise the evidence advanced in such arguments;
• understand the relationship between theory and evidence in the study of politics;
• display all the above in practising the skills of research, critical thinking and essay writing.

Background Reading
HarperCollins.

Assessment

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<th>Bibliographical Exercise</th>
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<td>Essay Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>Coursework</td>
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**Introduction to Global Politics**

**Module Code: SSPO118S4 AAA**  
**Monday Term 2**

Global politics is a complex arena where a vast number of actors, including nation-states, multinational corporations, and inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, pursue often conflicting agendas. This module is designed to provide students with an overview of global politics by looking at both its historical development and the relevant contemporary issue areas in the light of various analytical approaches to international relations. Among the topics to be covered are the historical trends in international politics, the dynamics of international security, international law and organisations, processes and consequences of economic globalisation, and the changing architecture of global governance.

**Aims**

The module aims to:
• Introduce the main concepts and the key theoretical approaches employed in the study of global politics;
• Provide a broad overview of the historical evolution of the interstate system;
• Examine the debates over various contemporary issue areas in global politics;
• Foster an understanding of the relationships between actors, norms and institutions in global politics today.

**Learning Outcomes**

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:
• Critically apply the theories, concepts, and approaches employed in the study of global politics and international relations to both historical and contemporary events and processes.
• Demonstrate a broad understanding of the major historical developments in global politics and international relations;
• Understand, analyse and critically engage a variety of sources and data relating to the
study of global politics and international relations;

- Demonstrate practical and transferable skills of critical evaluation, analytic investigation, written argument, oral communication.

**Background Reading**


**Assessment**

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**The Evolution of the International System**

**Module Code: FFIN903S4 ACB Tuesday Term 1 Class A**

**Module Code: FFIN903S4 BCB Wednesday Term 1 Class B**

*The Evolution of the International System* provides an introduction to the study of the historical evolution of the international state system and an examination of contemporary regional international relations. The first part of the course reviews the emergence of the modern state system and the workings of the balance of power, before exploring the causes, course, and consequences of World War I, World War II, and the Cold War, concluding with an exploration of the nature of the post-Cold War international order. The second part of the course reviews the contemporary regional international politics of East Asia, Central Eurasia, the Euro-Atlantic region, the Greater Middle East, the Americas, and Africa. Where appropriate, an historical perspective is employed.

**Aims**

- To introduce students to the study of the historical evolution of the international state system
- To enable students to examine analytically contemporary regional international politics, employing where appropriate an historical perspective

**Learning Outcomes**

- On completion of the module, students should:
  - Have an understanding of the broad historical evolution and current workings of the international state system
  - Have knowledge of the international politics of the major regions
• Be able to analyse critically contending analytical and theoretical frameworks

**Background Reading**


**Assessment**

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**International Organisations**

**Module Code:** FFIN909S4 ACB

**Wednesday Term 2**

This module provides a framework for the understanding and analysis of the politics of international organisations. The history of the thinking and processes that led to the creation of international organisations will be outlined. Distinctions will be drawn between different types of international organisations and different types of decision-making within organisations. The implications of these distinctions will then be examined. A range of diverse types of organisations will be surveyed, including the UN, IMF, EU, NATO, AU and ASEAN. Evaluation of these organisations will be undertaken, including the introduction of methods for explaining and measuring the success of each.

**Aims**
• To introduce students to the concept of international organisation
• To introduce students to knowledge about a range of international organisations
• To acquaint students with different theories about international politics and institutions that can be used in the analysis of international organisations
• To understand of the role of international organisations in the international system and their impact on international politics
• To help develop students’ abilities to acquire, organise and present information in writing

**Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the Module, students should:
• Possess a broad understanding of the role of international organisations in global politics
• Have knowledge of the activities and politics of several international organisations
• Be able to critically evaluate the activities of a number of international organisations
• Be familiar with academic literature and debates about international organisations and international relations
• Have improved their transferrable research and writing skills

Background Reading

Modern Political Analysis
Module Code: POS0084S4
Tuesday Term 1

Aims
The course aims to provide students with an understanding of the main theoretical approaches to the analysis of politics by drawing on ideas from political sociology, political science and political theory. Students will employ these theoretical approaches in order to understand and explain modern political institutions, processes and relations.

Outcomes
Students completing this course will:

• Understand the main approaches to politics in classical political sociology and contemporary political science and political theory;
• Be able to apply theoretical approaches to the analysis of political institutions, processes and relations;
• Have developed an understanding of the key role played by the concept of power in political analysis, and appreciate the variety of ways in which power is conceptualised in political discourse;
• Have developed an appreciation of the central role played by theory in the analysis of politics;
• Recognise the importance of employing theoretical and empirical approaches in
concert in the study of politics.

**Background Reading**

A classic work of political sociology is Tom Bottomore’s *Political Sociology*. Robert Dahl’s *Modern Political Analysis* isn’t, as the title may suggest, the template for the course, but it nonetheless provides an invaluable insight into the subject. Another classic, now out of print, but well worth looking at if you can find it, is W. J. M. Mackenzie’s *Politics and Social Science*. On political theory see John Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*, and W. G. Runciman, *Social Science and Political Theory*. Excellent text books on the state and democracy are Patrick Dunleavy and Brendon O’ Leary, *Theories of the State* and David Held’s *Models of Democracy*. Adrian Leftwich’s, *What is Politics?* (2nd edition, 2004) is a very good collection of introductory essays on that subject. A more recent primer examining some of the topics we will cover is David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.) *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. In the third part of the course, we’ll be using a number of chapters from Terence Ballet a! (eds.), *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*.

**Assessment**

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**The Practice of Politics**

**Module Code:** SSPO016S4  
**Tuesday Term 2**  
**Dr Edwin Bacon**

Admire any political figures?

Find yourself shouting at the television when other politicians are interviewed?  
Thinking of engaging in politics more yourself?

Students who study politics often do so not just because they have a theoretical interest, but because they are driven, inspired, and motivated by engaging in the stuff of politics themselves.

*The Practice of Politics* is a different sort of module. It’s about doing politics – exploring personal motivations and values; asking how to successfully practice politics; strengthening competence in different modes of political behaviour; and engaging with a range of political careers and activities, and with those who do such things now in, for example, parliament, NGOs, lobby groups, the EU, local government, think tanks, BBC journalism, and so on.

The motivation of many students entering a politics degree programme is an interest in
engaging with politics, as opposed to simply studying it. Many Birkbeck politics students either work in politics-related roles and wish to improve their prospects, or have ambitions to work or volunteer in political life, broadly defined. This module will improve employability by providing an awareness of the practice of politics in a range of job roles, as well as developing awareness of, and improving competence in, relevant modes of political behaviour, and exploring personal motivations and values.

The module covers issues such as:
- personal awareness: considering values, motivations, priorities and development needs as they relate to the practice of politics;
- political communication: such as, public speaking, formal debates, different forms of formal written communication (for example, position papers), informal written communication (for example, blogs, wikis, podcasts), lobbying;
- political leadership: the study of positive and successful political leaders, in terms of their characteristics, values, approaches, life path, and so on;
- political activity: sessions on a variety of roles through which political activity occurs, be that careers, voluntary activity, elected politics, or other relevant approaches. Outside speakers from these areas of activity will speak and answer questions.

Teaching methods move beyond the lecture and seminar model, with guest speakers invited, and the intention being to develop a community of interested and aspiring practitioners. Assessment similarly differs from many other modules in the politics department. There is no examination, but instead a set of varied tasks, in-class and at home, such as an assessment of your own political values, analysis of inspiring political leaders, and engagement with e-politics.

Assessment

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<td>Practicals (inc laboratory, computing)</td>
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<td>Working with others - peer assessment</td>
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Politics of Identity, Culture & Conflict

Module Code: FFIN938S4 ACB
Tuesday Term 2

This course explores the politics of core social identities in the modern world. We will especially examine the politics of social identities based on nationality, ethnicity, gender and class within the context of political and cultural conflict. Combining the study of the main theoretical approaches with the analysis of specific case studies, the course aims to provide an overview of the main debates and manifestations of identity politics.

Aims
• To introduce students to the principal identity-forming ideas and agents
• To present students with debates around these ideas
• To enable students to question what they may have hitherto taken to be facts of nature
• To enhance students' abilities to use and present information in writing and orally

Learning Outcomes
On completion of the Module, students should:
• Be familiar with role of main ideas that seek to explain how our identities are formed
• Understand that these are ideas and be able to counter them with other ideas
• Be able to critically assess the impact of various agencies on identity formation

Background Reading

Bocock & Thompson, eds. (1992) Social & Cultural Forms, London, OUP


Assessment

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Comparative Government
Module Code: FFPO956S4
Thursday Term 2

Comparative government introduces students to the comparative study of political institutions and systems. It focuses on a number of states from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, including large, small, rich, poor, democracies, one-party systems, monar- chies, republics, unitary and federal systems.

Subjects covered include constitutions, legislatures, executives, the judiciary, bureaucracy, parties, elections, political movements, and political communication.

Aims
• To introduce students to the principal institutions and systems of government and politics
• To present students with knowledge about different kinds of political institutions and systems from across the world
• To enable students to acquire theories and methods for researching and comparing differences and similarities in political institutions and systems between states
• To enhance students' abilities to use and present information in writing and orally

Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of the module, students will:

• have a broad understanding of the diversity of political institutions and systems across the world
• be familiar with the role of political institutions in different political systems
• have engaged with academic literature and debates about comparative government and politics
• be able to critically analyse comparative cases

Background Reading
• Daniele Caramani (2011) Comparative Politics, Oxford University Press

Assessment

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<td>Coursework</td>
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<td>Essay 2 - 2000 words max</td>
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Assessment for Level 5 & 6 modules

PLEASE NOTE that assessment this year the majority of our Politics Level 5 & 6 modules will be 25% essay and 75% exam unless otherwise stated after the module details.

Module Selection

This year you will receive an e mail inviting you to choose your modules via our On Line Module Selection, which will be in mid-May. Any problems please contact the office via e mail at ugpolitics@bbk.ac.uk

Level 5 Modules

Contemporary British Politics
Module Code: POS0003S5
Tuesday
Dr. Ben Worthy/Dermot Hodson

This module aims to provide students with an understanding of British politics and government, its key institutions and actors, and the main issues of controversy and contestation. The module outlines the main institutions and processes of government and the state in the context of contemporary British politics, particularly the arrival of Coalition government and financial crisis.

The first half of the course examines the basic political institutions in Britain, such as Parliament, central government and local government, and some of the key forces and pressures, from the electoral system to the media. The second half looks in more detail at key aspects of British governance through case studies and ends by analysing the political future of the United Kingdom in an increasingly globalised world, examining the influence of the EU and changing British foreign policy. Students graduating from the module will:
• be familiar with the main theories and models applied in the study of British politics and government, their ambitions, achievements and limitations;
• have a good understanding of British political institutions and processes, and how they relate to one another;
• develop a critical approach to current debates and issues in British politics;
• develop practical skills of communication, evaluating and analysing argument; and
• develop transferable skills, including critical evaluation, analytical investigation, written presentation and oral communication.
**Background Reading**

To understand British politics *Developments in British Politics* 9 (2011) by Richard Heffernan, Philip Cowley is recommended as good introductory text. This textbook is used as a basis for the course. It begins with chapters sketching out the changing nature of British politics with the arrival of the Coalition government, constitutional reform and a strengthening Executive. It then moves on to look at the wider political system from the EU to the media and ends by looking at the financial crisis and what it means for the future. Another recommended book is Robert Leach et al. (2011) *British Politics*, 2nd edition which offers an overview of the British political system dealing thematically with institutions and policies, offering a historical overview of how British politics has developed. Tony Wright's *British Politics: A Very Short Introduction* (2013) is also an excellent, readable overview of how British Politics works and some of the key themes and issues.

Students are encouraged to find up to date resources. To follow developments in the Coalition see Hazell and Yong's research on how the Coalition really operates (2011) ‘Inside Story: How Coalition Government Works’ (available online [here](#)) and this House of Commons Research Briefing (2013) 'Coalitions at Westminster' which explains where Coalitions come from, how they work and why and how they end [here](#). For the financial crisis, Colin Hay’s 'Things can only get worse' *British Politics* Vol. 5, 4, 391–401 (available [here](#)) looks at some possible future scenarios for British politics in a time of severe austerity while Sukhdev Johal et al’s 'The future has been postponed: The Great Financial Crisis and British politics' *British Politics* 7, 69-81 (2012) offers some thoughts as to what the crisis means for British politics and why it is so hard to resolve—see [here](#).

**Democracy and Authoritarianism**

**Module code:** POS0012S5  
**Thursday**  
**Dr. Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos and Dr. Edwin Bacon**

The aim of this course is to equip students with knowledge of political institutions and processes in democratic and non-democratic states through an understanding of the conceptual and theoretical approaches applied to those processes and institutions, and through the substantive investigation of relevant cases.

Students graduating from the course should:
- be familiar with the main theories and models applied in the study of democratic and non-democratic regimes and politics, their ambitions, achievements and limitations;
- have substantive knowledge of political institutions, processes and debates concerning models of democracy, theories of democratisation, the operation of democratic and non-democratic regimes in a variety of economic, social and cultural settings;
- have developed a critical approach to current debates and issues concerning democratic and non-democratic politics;
- be able to conduct comparative analysis of political systems and processes;
- have developed practical skills of communication, evaluating and analysing argument;
- have developed transferable skills, including critical evaluation, analytical...
investigation, written presentation, oral investigation, and communication.

**Preliminary Reading**
No single book can cover all the material relevant to the course. However, for the first part of the course, useful books are:


**Authoritarianism**
Although there is no key book for the course you are encouraged to buy

- Paul Brooker, Non-Democratic Regimes, 2nd ed. (Palgrave, 2009)
- For historical background see Hobsbawm, Eric, Age of Extremes (Abacus 1998) or overviews such as Brown, Archie, The Rise and Fall of Communism (2010)
- To gain an understanding of how totalitarian regimes work, you are strongly advised to read (or re-read) Orwell, George, Nineteen Eighty Four (Penguin numerous reprints)

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**Introduction to International Political Economy**

**Module Code: POS0029S5**
**Monday**
**Dr. David Styan**

Are ‘market forces’ more powerful than national governments? What role does politics play in the shaping of global markets for the clothes and food you buy, or the banks you use? How do bodies such as the World Trade Organisation or the International Monetary Fund influence peoples’ lives? The aim of this module is to provide students with knowledge of international political and economic processes through an understanding of the conceptual and theoretical approaches applied to such questions, processes and institutions by the study of International Political Economy.

By the end of the module, you should be familiar with key theories and models applied in the study of international political economy, their ambitions, achievements and limitations. Hopefully you will have gained a substantive knowledge of political processes and debates concerning: the emergence and breakdown of order in the global economy; international cooperation; and the role of the state in the economy. Through reading and argument in seminars, you should develop a critical approach to current debates and issues concerning trade, finance, inequality, poverty and global governance.

**Introductory Reading:**

Robert O’Brien and Marc Williams, *Global political economy: Evolution and dynamics* (3rd
Political Transformations
Module code: POS0010S5
Wednesday
Dr. Jason Edwards/Eric Kaufmann

This course aims to provide students with the skills to understand and explain the major structural transformations in social and political processes and systems since the early modern period. Students will be introduced to a range of theoretical perspectives, with the objective of providing students the tools to engage critically in debates concerning: the rise of the modern state; modern political ideologies; the formation and development of the international state system; colonialism and its impact, including the changing nature of north-south relations in the contemporary era; and challenges to the future role of the nation-state and the inter-state system.

Students graduating from the course will:

- be familiar with an array of techniques for analysing large-scale historical shifts;
- have detailed knowledge of key milestones in the development of the modern political institutions;
- have developed a critical approach to debates concerning the role of ideologies in shaping the range of options within which political choices are made;
- have developed transferable skills, including critical evaluation, analytical investigation, giving oral presentations, communication and teamwork.

Preliminary Reading
For understanding what the modern state is – that is, to grasp its distinctive features – the best place to begin is with Roger King, *The State in Modern Society* (1986). This, as well as H. Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors*, introduce both domestic and international influences on state formation. Brief and accessible introductions to the state and other basic political concepts can also be found in Andrew Gamble’s *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1981) as well as in David Held’s edited volume *States and Societies* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983).

As regards the character and development of political ideologies, a good place to start is Andrew Heywood’s *Political Ideologies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; various editions) or J.S. McClelland’s *A History of Western Political Thought* (London: Routledge, 1996). More extensive engagements with liberalism as a political ideology can be found in: Arblaster’s *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) or in Bellamy’s *Liberalism and Modern Society: An Historical Argument* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992). For a more detailed, yet accessible, account of socialism, see: Tony

There are, finally, some useful introductions to the phenomenon of globalisation: David Held et al. Global Transformations (Cambridge: Polity, 1999); Paul Hirst and Graham Thompson, Globalisation in Question (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996). For a more comprehensive discussion of the relationship between globalisation and the state, see also: Georg Sorensen, The Transformation of the State: Beyond the Myth of Retreat (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003). David Harvey’s A Brief History of Neoliberalism (Oxford: OUP, 2005) is a useful critical account of neoliberal globalisation.
Level 6 Modules

British & Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis
Module Code: SSPO129S6
Dr David Styan
Friday

This module explores both the academic analysis and the practical experience of formulating foreign policy in the UK and other states. It identifies the diverse actors and pressures influencing foreign policy-making, including domestic political pressures and multilateral bodies. While the core focus of the lectures will be the UK, the module aims to provide students with the conceptual and analytical tools to analyse policy making in a variety of states, including emerging powers. While the course is grounded in theory, practical sessions will focus on detailed case-studies and draw on the direct experience of practitioners of policy in the UK and elsewhere.

On successful completion of this module a student will be expected to be able to:
• analyse the origins and evolution of the principal theories and approaches within foreign policy analysis.
• compare and contextualise such approaches within the broader fields of international relations and public policy.
• Critically apply such approaches to analyse specific aspects of, and decision-making within, foreign policy formulation.
• demonstrate an detailed knowledge of the mechanisms of UK foreign policy making, be able to engage in comparative analysis with other states’ foreign policies, and demonstrate familiarity with, and analysis of, key primary sources of such policies.

Introductory Reading:
• C. Alden and A. Amnon, Foreign Policy Analysis – new approaches, Routledge, 2011.
• Paul Williams, British Foreign Policy under New Labour, Palgrave 2005

Challenges of Contemporary Politics
Module Code: POSO034S6
Day: Friday  
Professor Diana Coole

This option focuses on some of the major social and political challenges that are confronting contemporary developed societies and the liberal-democratic state. The course is designed to help students look critically and analytically at some of the profound normative and structural changes that are affecting politics, economics, society and culture in the C21st. The approach is interdisciplinary and mainly theoretical but it also engages with current events by examining specific case studies and policy documents. The subject matter is structured by focusing on a number of key themes and issues.

The 5 principal themes for this year’s course are:
1. The development of new forms of power and governance, such as biopower and social capital, and corresponding challenges to freedom.
2. Resistance to new modes of power, as manifest in the emergence of new and contemporary social movements. Case studies here will be the women’s movement and contemporary feminism; the environmental movement and the changing nature of green politics, and the anti-globalisation and Occupy movements.
3. The changing nature of the economy and its social and political significance, in particular as this is manifest in the global ‘postmodern’ economy of post-Fordism, the idea of the risk society and the neoliberal emphasis on free markets.
4. The significance of demographic change, in particular regarding population size (related to declining fertility, increased immigration and the impact of growing affluent populations on the environment) and age profiles (notably, the significance for developed countries’ of ageing populations).
5. Different models of democracy and citizenship, especially as these pertain to the emergence and vitality of the public sphere and civil society; deliberative democracy and citizen governance; individual, group and citizenship rights; inclusion, exclusion and social cohesion; identity politics and the politics of difference; gender and multiculturalism.

Introductory and Background Reading

- April Carter & Stokes, Democratic Theory Today. Challenges for the 21st Century
- E. Isin & P. Wood, Citizenship and Democracy
- David Harvey, Neoliberalism
- David Held, Democracy and the Global Order
- Mary Kaldor, Global Civil Society
Contemporary American Politics

Module Code: SSPO132S6

Dr Robert Singh

Wednesday

This course aims to introduce students to the key scholarly debates about US government and politics since 1945. The emphasis is expressly contemporary but it is also designed to ensure that a clear historical grounding is achieved in order better to analyse the US today. It provides a critical account of the distinctive institutional and societal features of American government and politics, especially the federal government (the presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court), elections, voting behaviour and political parties. It applies this account to topical issues including abortion, gun control, capital punishment, health care and immigration.

On successful completion of this module a student will be expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive and critical understanding of the social base, governing institutions and intermediary organisations of the United States, and the interaction between them.
- Offer a balanced, clear and critical understanding of the recent (post-1968) history and nature of political conflict in the United States.
- Offer a balanced, clear and critical understanding of a series of contemporary issues and controversies in American politics, including abortion, gun control, capital punishment, health care and immigration.

Digital Politics

Module Code: SSPO134S6

Thursday

Dr Antione Bousquet & Dr Ben Worthy

The module aims to familiarise students with the character of societies increasingly organised by the production and distribution of information and its impact on the conduct and study of politics within them. The module will provide an overview of the theories of the information society and the wider historical context of socio-technical change. Students will learn about the debates on the political, social and cultural effects of information technology and the differing views as to the extent to which they are best understood as revolutionary or continuous with previous trends. By reference to specific case studies, students will also be familiarised with online research skills and the relative strengths and weaknesses of such research.

From the Wikileaks scandal to the NSA spying scandal and the ‘Facebook’ revolutions of the Arab Spring, the ‘information age’ appears to be changing how we think about politics and
challenging long establishes notions of power, privacy and participation. But what sort of change is it? Who benefits and who loses? Above all, where does power lie in the digital age?

This module proposes to examine the nature and conduct of politics in the information age in which societies are increasingly organised according to informational principles and characterised by the ubiquitous diffusion of technologies of computation and telecommunication. How are new do the digital societies emerging in the early twenty-first century differ from their predecessors? How is governance and conflict being transformed by the new social morphology of information networks? Do they make government more transparent or more invasive? Is new technology a tool of liberation or a weapon of oppression?

The first part of the module will examine the broad political, economic, and cultural features of information societies with a wide historical overview of their emergence. The second part of the module will then offer a tighter focus on particularly salient issues and debates animating the politics of information societies.

Learning objectives

On successful completion of this module a student will be expected to be able to:

• Demonstrate knowledge of the competing theories of information society and the emerging social and political issues related to the growth of information and telecommunication technologies.
• Demonstrate knowledge of the context in which technological change takes place and the ways in which technology and society shape each other.
• Demonstrate an understanding of how various disciplinary approaches drawn from the social sciences and humanities contribute towards the understanding of information societies.
• Make use of online research skills and demonstrate familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of online sources.
• Apply the methods and techniques they have learned to assess competing theories and empirical evidence as to the nature and scale of the social and political changes induced by information and telecommunication technologies.
• The main topics covered by module will include:
  • Theories of the information society
  • The historical development of information and telecommunication technologies
  • Governance and state power in the information age
  • Political participation and political protest
  • The political economy of information
  • War and conflict in the information age
  • Censorship
  • Privacy and surveillance
  • Big data and simulation
Questions surrounding the production, supply, consumption and disposal of food have over the past decade become central to the study of politics and society. This module draws on existing interest and expertise among Politics faculty in this field, and aims to translate this into a cross-disciplinary option course that allows the application of various skill sets to the specific domain of food, politics and society. It aims to offer students a comprehensive overview of the main themes concerning the inter-relationship between food, politics and society. It will combine theoretical coverage of key debates surrounding the origins of agricultural production, the sociology of consumption, civilizational development and our contemporary industrialised global food system, with more concrete explorations of the historical, sociological and political dimensions of (mal)nutrition, regulation of food markets, struggles and conflict over, and the cultural meanings of food. The module is self-consciously cross-disciplinary in incorporating political-theoretical, historical-sociological and public policy literatures into the syllabus.

Learning Objectives

Students taking this course will be able to:

• Understand the main theoretical debates about the relationship between food, politics and society
• Demonstrate a critical understanding of key subjects in the historical and political sociology of food production and consumption
• Critically analyse current issues and problems around the production and consumption of food, such as malnutrition, regulation of food markets, food security, etc.
• Demonstrate an understanding of how various disciplinary approaches drawn from the social sciences and humanities contribute towards the understanding of food production and consumption
• Demonstrate skills of analysis and critique that can be transferred to further study in the social sciences and humanities
Gender, Politics and Power
(Formerly Feminism and Social Relations)

Dr Sam Ashenden & Dr Rosie Campbell

Gender is currently being rewritten: by legislative developments, technological transformations, and by new waves of political activism. Notwithstanding longstanding campaigns and much legislative activity both in the UK and across the globe, gender inequality remains a feature of every society. Gender based movements have recently become more visible once again, sparking debate about a ‘fourth wave’ of feminism driven by technological change, but new movements are also fragmented and sometimes short-lived. There is also a voluble backlash against demands for gender equality.

This course aims to provide the tools and a forum for the analysis of some of these developments. To this end, we draw on a wide range of materials, from history, philosophy and anthropology to political science, public policy debates, as well as activist pamphlets, blogs and tweets. We look at some classically political debates concerning gender and representation, as well as examining broader questions of the relationship between knowledge, identity and experience, intersectionality, legal and economic inequality, pornography and representation, the meaning of participation, and violence.

Students successfully completing the course will:

- Have a firm grasp of the concepts and theories used to study gender
- Have detailed knowledge of the gendering of political institutions and of the relationship of gender to public policymaking
- Have the tools with which to assess the intersection of gender, politics and power
- Have developed a critical approach to current debates concerning gender and politics, and have developed their skills of critical evaluation, analytical reasoning, oral presentation and essay writing.

Preliminary reading


Butler, J (1989) Gender Trouble Routledge

Cochrane, K (2013) Rebel Women: the rise of the fourth wave of feminism Guardian Shorts Originals ebook


Squires, J (1999) Gender in Political Theory Polity
**International Migration and Transnationalism**

**Module Code: SSPO109S6**

**Thursday**

**Dr. Matthijs van den Bos**

This course aims to explore the essential debates and key facts and historical developments involved in modern-day international migration and transnationalism. In the field of international migration, the module addresses global historical trends; the different trajectories of Europe and the United States; debates on (im)migration motives and policy; and the UK reality. In the field of transnationalism, the focus is on the relation between (im)migration and integration. Topics will be addressed such as deterritorialization and citizenship, assimilation and multiculturalism, and transnationalism in relation to dual or long-distance nationalism.

**Learning Outcomes**

On successful completion of this course students will be expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key debates, facts and historical developments in modern-day international migration and transnationalism;
- In the field of international migration, demonstrate knowledge of global historical trends and regional specificity;
- In the field of transnationalism, demonstrate understanding of dilemmas regarding deterritorialization and citizenship;
- Marshal and appraise critically other people's arguments; formulate research questions independently; and produce logical narratives and arguments supported by relevant evidence.

**Recommended Reading**

Any background reading you are able to accomplish will be extremely useful. No single book covers all the material relevant to the course. However, for introductions to international migration (studies), useful books are:

- For historical and geographic overview articles on international migration:
- For the topics of integration and citizenship:
Nationalism, Ethnicity and Religious Conflict

Module Code: POS0030S6

Wednesday

Professor Eric Kaufmann and Dr. Barbara Zollner

This course aims to enable students to develop a good understanding of the concepts of ethnic group and nation, and their performative correlates, ethnicity and nationalism; to acquire an understanding of a range of models for analysing ethnic, national and religious conflict, and to apply these analytical models to case studies across space and time.

Learning Objectives:

Students graduating from the course will be able to:

- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the dominant theories of nationalism, ethnicity and religious conflict
- Critically apply these theories to concrete historical and contemporary cases
- Demonstrate detailed substantive knowledge of national, ethnic and religious conflicts in several settings
- Demonstrate cognitive skills, including critical evaluation and analytical investigation
- Make presentations and engage in critical discussion

Supplementary information:

- We have been fortunate to welcome the occasional guest speaker to address the class.

Recommended Reading:

This course uses a wide variety of texts. However, the following may be useful as introductory works, and will bear on significant sections of the course:

- Smith, A.D. & Hutchinson, J. (eds), Ethnicity (Oxford: OUP)
- Ozkirimli, Umut. 2010. Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction (Basingstoke: Macmillan)
Parliamentary Studies

Module Code: SSPO122S6
Wednesday
Dr. Ben Worthy

This course offers a unique opportunity to understand how Parliaments work by learning from Parliamentary officials themselves. Birkbeck is one of only a handful of universities able to offer this course in conjunction with officials in Parliament. Five of the weeks of the course will be taught by Parliamentary officials with the other weeks taught by academics, including guest speakers.

The course will examine the theory and practice of Parliament's role within the British system. It reflects on Parliament as a key symbolic and functional element in our democracy and considers how parliaments around the world differ. Topics include the work of select committees and other scrutiny instruments, reform of the House of Lords and Commons, Parliament and the media and new developments in public participation. Students graduating from the course will:

- understand the theoretical relationship between the government, parliament and people within differing concepts of power
- critically assess ideas around the role of legislatures in the modern world, particularly the idea that parliaments have 'declined' and have little influence
- understand how Westminster compares with other bodies within the UK and elsewhere in terms of role, power and influence
- have developed a range of independent research skills through analysing parliamentary records, statistics and online resources
- have developed transferable skills, including critical evaluation, analytical investigation, giving oral presentations, communication and teamwork

Preliminary Reading and Viewing


In addition parliamentary papers and articles covering course themes can be accessed online. Particularly good are briefing notes and research papers from the House of Commons and Lords. See for example background papers on [how the House of Commons works](#) e.g. this
2012 paper on traditions and customs of the House and how the House of Lords works.

The Parliamentary Outreach team also offers regular public lectures on different aspects of Parliaments. These two lectures by the most senior official in the House of Lords and Commons can be viewed here ‘An Insider's Guide to The House of Commons’ by Robert Rogers (Clerk of the House of Commons) and ‘An Insider's Guide To The House of Lords’ by Clerk of the Parliaments, David Beamish, (the most senior official in the House of Lords).

Assessment

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Politics and the Middle East

Module Code: POSO036S6
Day: Friday
Dr. Barbara Zollner

This course provides an introduction to the contemporary politics of the Middle East. It aims to bridge International Relations and Area Studies perspectives in order to critically engage with political developments and conflicts in the region.

The focus of the course will be to

- develop a broad understanding of how the contemporary Middle East has evolved since 1918.
- identify and examine the key issues dominating politics in the region, including great powers’ relations with the region and its peoples.
- put the politics of the Middle East in the broader perspectives of International Relations and Area Studies
- place the politics of the region within the wider comparative perspective of the developing world, highlighting similarities and differences.

By the end of the course, students should have gained knowledge of the evolution of Middle Eastern polities and societies, as well as external powers’ interactions with them. They should also have developed a detailed knowledge of key concepts and texts used in the analysis of the region; and relevant historical and contextual knowledge, including on the international relations of the region.

Preliminary Readings

Halliday, F. The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology: (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Fawcett, L (ed) International Relations of the Middle East (Oxford University Press, 2004)


S. Bromley, Rethinking Middle East Politics: State Formation and Development, (Polity,1993).
Halliday, F. 100 Myths About the Middle East, (Saqi Books 2005)

Russian Politics and Society, from 1905 to today

Module code: POS0008S6
Day: Friday
Dr. Edwin Bacon

Russia – the world’s biggest country, sitting between East and West in terms of its political culture, between democracy and authoritarianism, between modernisation and stagnation. In the last hundred years or so Russia has experienced upheavals on a scale beyond most other nations – revolutions, staggering war deaths, dictatorships, empire building and collapse, superpower status, unprecedented decline and partial renewal. Its society has repeatedly experienced radical transformation. Its politics have been key to the way our contemporary world has developed. Today Russia stands as a prominent player in world affairs, one of the emergent ‘BRIC’ nations set to challenge US hegemony and Euro-centric conceptualisations.

Aims and Objectives

This course provides students with a thorough knowledge of modern Russian politics and society. It examines political thought in Russia, the processes of profound social and political change that have taken place since 1905, and Russia’s place in the world. Students will also develop critical abilities and analytical skills to help weigh competing approaches to key questions and communicate conclusions clearly.

• For most of the 20th century Russia – in the Soviet Union – was seen by many as being on the cutting-edge of a new global political order. In its first part the course deals with the rise of the Communist regime and the Soviet Union, from workers on the streets in the 1905 revolution to superpower status within 50 years. We examine the tensions between ideology and reality, between holding onto power and creating a new and fairer society. We analyse an attempt to build a ‘new’ state from scratch and explore different social and political perspectives on this experience.

• The second part of the course looks at contemporary Russia, since the Soviet Union collapsed. We investigate how to move from an authoritarian to a democratic regime, and whether Russia under Putin, Medvedev, and Putin again has moved back towards authoritarianism. Through considering Russia, we ask questions about the impact of a state’s history and culture on notions of democracy and governance today. We look at sudden cultural and economic transformation in Russian society, and consider what Russia’s insistence that it is a ‘great power’ means in global terms.

On this course you will learn a good deal about Russia, its remarkable history and continuing importance. Through the study of Russia, the course aims also to develop students’ facility to answer wider and deeper questions. Can political theory change country? How should we
balance the requirements of individuals, society, and great political movements? How aware are we of the narratives which shape our world views?

Students successfully completing this course will:

• have substantive knowledge of Russia’s political, economic, and social development 1905 to the present day;
• be familiar with the models, theories and concepts applied in studying Russia and the Soviet Union
• be familiar with the major debates among both Russian and Western analysts concerning key events and themes in Russian affairs, and have developed a critical approach to these debates, based on an understanding of a wide variety of perspectives and a sensitivity to standards of argument and evidence; and
• have developed transferable and cognitive skills, including critical evaluation, analytical investigation, written and oral presentation and communication.

Background Resources

For an introduction to Russia today, which includes an outline of the historical background, the course tutor’s own textbook – Edwin Bacon, Contemporary Russia (2nd edition 2010, 3rd edition to be published in 2013-14) – provides a decent overview. It has chapters on most aspects of Russian life today (politics, society, the economy, culture, international relations) and provides essential background which clearly will reflect the approach taken on this course.


A good pre-course read is Archie Brown’s The Rise and Fall of Communism (2009).
The course this year is designed to give students an opportunity to read some of the great classic works of modern political thought in detail. Emphasis will be placed throughout the course on reading primary sources, on developing capacities to read challenging texts in a critical and analytical way, and on abilities to discuss complex arguments in seminars. Besides identifying the main arguments and principles each thinker advanced, it will also therefore be important to analyse underlying assumptions, the guiding themes and logic, the inconsistencies and sometimes the absences, in their work.

The authors we have selected all wrote in a context where Europe was a developing region in which the foundations of the modern state and the political doctrines and ideologies that would guide modern thinking were being constructed for the first time. This was occurring against the background of profound social and economic transformations, with the emergence of liberal individualism and industrial capitalism giving rise to reformist and revolutionary ideas as both new opportunities and new forms of inequality evolved. The authors we will study in the course were all responding to novel questions about how the more populous and productive, but also more atomized and self-interested, societies of the modern world would work, as well as how states could work together in the new international system.

They asked questions such as: how is social order to be maintained while also accommodating the new emphasis on individuality? What sort of political institutions would best serve the people as a collectivity and what sort of social arrangements would be most just? How much authority should the state have and what is its basis? Why are citizens obliged to obey the state and under what circumstances can they legitimately refuse to do so? What kind of controls should be placed on state power? Addressing such questions raised other kinds of inquiry, such as what is human nature and what is the good life? Does freedom mean being left alone or does it require a rich collective culture and a society that enables everyone to thrive, if necessary by constraining the freedom of some or by redistributing their assets? How are such political questions related to new economic forms in which different classes and gender roles, and with them new forms of injustice, are arising?

Such questions yielded some of the principal concepts and disagreements of modern political discourse: concepts that are still being debated and contested in the twenty-first century, not least because they are inseparable from strongly-held ideological positions on ideas like the nature of justice, the scope of freedom, and the meaning attributed to the political itself. By examining their early evolution and the contexts in which they evolved, the course aims to develop a rich, provocative and critical understanding of the central concepts and social theories that students encounter in their other courses.

Some of the primary texts we will examine on the course include:

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*
Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

Before you start the course, it would also be useful to take a look at an overview of the history of modern political thought. A few of the more helpful ones are listed below and most of them also have chapters on individual thinkers we’ll be looking at. Particularly helpful here are:

D. Matravers et al., *Reading Political Philosophy*. Machiavelli to Mill (Routledge 2001)  

**The Politics of European Integration**

**Module code: POS002156**

**Tuesday**

**Dr Dionyssis G. Dimitrakopoulos**

This course examines critically the debates regarding the establishment, development, actual operation and the future of the European Union (EU). Particular attention is paid to the development of the EU from an *international organisation* to a novel, complex *political system*, the operation of that system, its policies, their development over time and its implications for the member states.

**Part A** examines the *history* and the *theories* of integration. The key aims here are twofold: the creation and the development of the EU are placed in their wider historical context which has shaped them; attention then shifts to the competing theoretical approaches developed by political scientists in an attempt to explain the emergence and the evolution of the Union. **Part B** examines the *institutional structure* of the EU up until (and including) the Treaty of Lisbon. How is the EU governed and why? Who holds power and how is power exercised? These are the main questions that permeate this part of the course. **Part C** examines the activity of the EU in a number of *policy areas* including macro-economic policy, the single market, socio-economic regulation, the Common Foreign and Security Policy etc. The **final part** of the course is, in a sense, a return to the ‘basics’. It seeks to discuss the evolving relations between the EU and its member states (particular emphasis will be placed on the UK), the origin, nature and implications of Euroscepticism and, finally, the issue of the EU’s increasingly visible and explicit politicisation.

Students graduating from the course will:
be familiar with the history of European integration, the theories and models applied in the study of European integration, their ambitions, achievements and limitations;
• have substantive knowledge of the EU’s political institutions, processes and debates concerning their operation, the policies of the EU and the dynamics of the EU’s relationship with its member states;
• have developed a critical approach to current debates and issues concerning the operation of the EU;
• have developed practical skills of communication, evaluating and analysing argument
• have developed transferable skills, including critical evaluation, analytical investigation, written and oral presentation, and communication.

Readings

Although there are no set textbooks for this course, the combination of the following books (all of which are available in the College library) will allow students to cover a very large part of the material. For a good overview of the history of European integration, students can refer to either D. Dinan’s Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration (4th edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010) or his edited collection entitled Origins and Evolution of the European Union (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2006).


The most comprehensive analysis of the policies of the EU in a number of sectors can be found in H. Wallace et al., eds. Policy-Making in the European Union (6th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
The United States in International Politics  
Module Code: SSP0131S6  
Dr Robert Singh  
Tuesday  

This course aims to introduce students to the key scholarly debates about US government and politics since 1945. The emphasis is expressly contemporary but it is also designed to ensure that a clear historical grounding is achieved in order better to analyse the US today. As well as dealing with governing institutions and standard features of US government (presidency, Congress, courts, political parties) it focuses through the second term of study on issues of topical interest from gun control to immigration.

- Advance a comprehensive and critical understanding of the role, influence and changing approaches of the United States to international affairs.
- Provide a balanced, clear and critical understanding of the recent (post-1945) reciprocal effects of the US on the international system and the effect of international affairs on domestic US politics.
- Provide a balanced, clear and critical understanding of a series of contemporary issues and controversies about US foreign policy, including terrorism and counter-terrorism, the ‘Israel lobby’, policy towards Iran and the Middle East, Russia, China, and the issue of American ‘decline’.

War and Modern Society  
Module code: POS004S6  
Monday  
Dr. Antoine Bousquet  

War is one of the oldest features of social life and one whose recurrence seems to endure in spite of all the political, social and cultural transformations it has traversed. Yet war is simultaneously never quite the same since its various manifestations are necessarily conditioned by the characteristics of the societies that wage it. This course goes beyond the narrow confines of strategic thought to a broad consideration of the complex relationships and dynamics which have interwoven the experience and practice of warfare to the past, present, and future development of states, societies, and the individuals who inhabit them.

Particular consideration will be given to the role of war in shaping political, social and cultural modernity through an exploration of its interplay with processes of state formation, its relationship to the industrialisation of societies and their uses of science and technology, its place within political and international relations theory, and its role in shaping historical consciousness and both individual and group identities. The personal and collective experience of war, its mediation and representation, and the uses of memory will also be considered. While the course will seek to contextualise war within its wider historiography, present issues such as the War on Terror, weapons of mass destruction, the revolution in military affairs, asymmetric warfare, humanitarian war, and genocide will also be covered.

Students taking the course will therefore acquire both a deeper understanding of the role of armed conflict in the history of the modern world than that provided by traditional accounts focused on great battles and military leaders as well as a set of conceptual tools and lenses
with which to grasp and analyse the multi-faceted manifestations of war today.

Preliminary Reading
Paul Hirst, *War and Power in the 21st Century* provides an excellent introduction to many of the themes discussed in the course. John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* offers a highly readable account of war throughout world history with particular attention paid to its cultural dimension. William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000* does pretty much what it says on the tin, differing from Keegan in that the central focus is wider social change and war’s role within it. Lawrence Freedman, *War* is an edited volume with contributions covering a variety of relevant topics, from strategy and total war to ethical questions, the experience of war, and conflict in the developing world. Finally, Michael Howard. *Clausewitz* is a short but insightful introduction to the thought of the most pre-eminent philosopher of war.
Dissertation

What is a dissertation?
A dissertation is a long piece of written work (8,000–10,000 words) that offers a detailed, sustained and critical treatment of a chosen topic. The aim of the dissertation is to enable students to advance their knowledge of the disciplines they have studied on their BA programme by pursuing an independent research project on a chosen topic within one or more of these fields. Students completing the dissertation will have examined a subject in substantial depth, shown evidence of an ability to undertake sustained critical analysis, developed and improved their research skills, and produced a long piece of written work that demonstrates understanding of an area relevant to your degree.

Who writes a dissertation?
BA students are not required to do a dissertation but they can choose to do one in their final year in lieu of a Level 6 option module (see programme handbooks for more details). The dissertation involves independent study, but it is in no way an ‘easy option’: students writing a dissertation should expect to dedicate at least the same amount of hours per week to researching, reading and writing as they would in any other Level 6 taught module. In many respects, the dissertation offers a taste of postgraduate study and throws up distinctive intellectual and logistical challenges associated to independent learning.

Proposing a dissertation topic
A copy of the dissertation proposal is available here along with further information: UG Dissertation Guidelines 2015-16.docx. The proposal, which must be relevant to your degree programme and approved in advance, should contain a provisional title and subtitle with the keywords identifying the theme of the dissertation. It also requires a 1,000-word outline description detailing the proposed structure and tentative content of the dissertation, including around a dozen key bibliographical references.

The purpose of this form is to present a dissertation topic for approval by the undergraduate dissertation coordinator Dr Alex Colás, who will then help you identify a suitable supervisor. Once students have chosen to do a dissertation, they must e-mail the dissertation proposal to Dr Colas at a.colas@bbk.ac.uk by 31 August in their penultimate year of study.

Assessment Criteria
The dissertation is assessed according to the following criteria, with credit given to the extent that:

• the research question is well-defined, and contextualised
• an argument is specified, coherently presented and supported by evidence;
• alternative arguments are analysed
• the approach is critical, not descriptive
• a relevant methodology is employed
• relevant sources have been consulted;
• knowledge of relevant literature, issues and debates is demonstrated
• the style and presentation is clear and careful, and appropriate academic conventions have been observed.
History Module Information

Please follow links for more information on these modules and check if there are any pre-requisites. Please contact the History Department for more information:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/history/current-students

David Jones is the administrator, e mail-david.jones@bbk.ac.uk and is based in 28 Russell Square Room G10.

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Philosophy Module Information

**NB: level 6 philosophy modules are 15 credits; if you choose a 15 credit module in one term you MUST choose a second 15 credit module in the other term.**

Some level 6 options have prerequisites; please check the more detailed course descriptions to ensure that you are eligible for courses you wish to choose via the following web site:

[http://www.bbk.ac.uk/philosophy/current-students/ba-philosophy/ba-philosophy](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/philosophy/current-students/ba-philosophy/ba-philosophy)

You can contact the Philosophy Department for more information, the administrator is:

Hervé Lucas

Email:  h.lucas@bbk.ac.uk

Tel: 020 7631 6385

30 Russell Square Room G05.
**Philosophy Optional Modules 2015/16 (maybe some changes)**

Below is a list of optional modules available to BA students in 2015/16 followed by a more detailed description of each individual module. The list does not include descriptions for all option modules as some descriptions are not available yet. A finalised document will be circulated as soon as it is ready.

**Philosophy of Art - SSPL087H6**  
Dr. Stacie Friend  
*Autumn, Wednesdays 6-8 pm*

Is art a domain entirely autonomous from other aspects of our lives, such as religion or politics? Does it matter to the value or interpretation of an artwork who made it or why? Are immoral works of art less valuable as art? In this module we address such questions by focusing on our evaluation of art. Artworks may have different kinds of value: financial, sentimental, cognitive, historical, anthropological, ethical, political, and so on. Yet we typically deny that an artwork is great solely because it costs a great deal or is very old. So what explains the value of art *qua art*? Since the eighteenth century philosophers have argued that a work’s quality turns on its *aesthetic value*, including its beauty, traditionally conceived as an autonomous value determined by our experience of the work’s perceptual or intrinsic features (a view known as ‘aesthetic empiricism’). More recently, the traditional view has come under attack by those who argue that the aesthetic or artistic value of an artwork cannot be separated from contextual considerations, including the artist's intentions, the ethical character of the work, its potential to enhance our understanding of the world, and so forth. After some discussion of the nature of art, we consider arguments for the traditional view, and then examine several different objections to that view. We also look at alternative conceptions of the value of art.

Assessment: One essay of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary Reading:

- Helpful overviews of many of the topics covered in this module may be found in the *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics, 3rd edition*, edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Routledge, 2013).
Advanced Topics in Epistemology - SSPL077H6
Dr. Keith Hossack

Spring, Tuesdays 6-8 pm

Epistemology studies the problem of knowledge. Students taking this module should already have some familiarity with basic epistemological theory on the general relation between knowledge and belief, and the issues of justification and scepticism. In this module we go on to study recent work on specific kinds of knowledge, including what a priori knowledge is and whether we have any; how we acquire knowledge through perception; and whether we can acquire knowledge from induction, the inference from what we have observed to what we have yet to observe.

Prerequisite: Level 4 Introduction to Epistemology and Metaphysics. Level 5 Epistemology and Metaphysics would also be an advantage.

Assessment: A two-hour exam.

Evolution and Philosophy - SSPL081H6
Dr. Robert Northcott

Autumn, Mondays 2-4 pm

After getting straight on the basics of Darwin’s theory of evolution, we will take a critical look at a whole range of fascinating philosophical and scientific issues and their bearing on each other:

— Weighing the influences of nature and nurture, and whether they can be disentangled
— Where does morality come from?
— The design argument for the existence of God
— How can evolutionary hypotheses be tested?
— What is the evolutionary role of female orgasm?
— Evolution in human history
— What is life?

Assessment: Two essays, to a combined total of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary Reading:

• Philosophy of Biology, by Elliott Sober (Westview Press)
Fiction and Language - SSPL082H6
Dr. Stacie Friend

Spring, Mondays 2-4pm

When we go to the bookstore to buy a novel, we look for the sign leading us to fiction; if we want a history of the twentieth century, we go to the non-fiction section. Given how common is our traffic with fictional narratives, it may come as a surprise that the concept of fiction has been the source of numerous philosophical puzzles. In this module we focus on puzzles in the philosophy of language. One is whether fiction is constituted by a special use of language. For example, when Jane Austen wrote, ‘Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence’, she does not seem to be referring to anyone or asserting anything that we are supposed to believe. So what exactly is she doing? And what are readers doing when they talk about fiction? The critic who writes ‘Emma Woodhouse is a well-drawn character’ appears to make a true claim, but how can that be if there is no Emma? In this module we consider debates over such topics as the interpretation of authorial utterance, the possibility of reference to fictional characters, and the truth of statements about fiction. We will start by working through some relevant background in the philosophy of language, before moving to the issues in fiction.

Prerequisite: Level 4 Introduction to Logic. This module also assumes some intermediate-level metaphysics; those without such a background are advised to contact the module coordinator before registering.

Assessment: One essay of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary Reading:


Philosophy and Gender - SSPL085H6
Prof. Jennifer Hornsby and Prof. Susan James

Spring, Thursdays 6-8 pm
The module will explore key topics in feminist philosophy and the philosophy of gender. These may include: ideas of gender in the history of philosophy; gender and the metaphysics of the self; gender in epistemology and the philosophy of science; gender and ethics; and gender in political philosophy. It will also often involve the study of key historical texts, such as: Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* and Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*.

**Assessment:** Two essays, to a combined total of around 3,000 words.

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**The Idea of Freedom - SSPL092H6**

Dr. Michael Garnett

*Spring, Fridays 6-8 pm*

The focus of this module is the concept of political liberty. It explores each of the three major traditions of theorising freedom: the ‘negative’ tradition (in which freedom is understood as the absence of external obstacles), the ‘republican’ tradition (in which freedom is understood as independence from dominating power), and the ‘positive’ tradition (in which freedom is understood as the pursuit of a particular form of life), looking along the way at key figures such as Hobbes, Bentham, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx. It also goes on to consider broader political questions such as: What is the relation between freedom and poverty? Does subjection to propaganda reduce freedom and, if so, how? Can processes of enculturation and socialisation themselves be oppressive and undermining of freedom?

**Assessment:** One essay of around 3,000 words.

**Preliminary Reading:**


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**Advanced Topics in Metaphysics - SSPL078H6**

Dr. Keith Hossack

*Autumn, Thursdays 2-4pm*

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that attempts to study reality at the most general level possible. It asks what is real, and what is only philosophical fancy; and it
asks what the fundamental kinds are into which the things that are real divide. In this module we study recent advanced work in metaphysical theory on topics such as what it is for a material being to persist through time, what constitutes the identity of a person, and what events are, if there really are such entities as events.

**Prerequisite:** Level 4 Introduction to Epistemology and Metaphysics. Level 5 Epistemology and Metaphysics is also recommended; those without such a background are advised to contact the module coordinator before registering.

**Assessment:** A two-hour exam.

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**Morality, Nature and Evolution - SSPL083H6**

Dr. Cristian Constantinescu

*Spring, Mondays 2-4pm*

Evolutionary science is often interpreted as painting a rather bleak picture of nature: an aggressively competitive arena, “red in tooth and claw”, in which organisms are pitted against each other in a battle for survival of the fittest. Morality, on the other hand, seems centred on benevolence, cooperation and other kinds of altruistic behaviour that promote the survival of the *unfittest*. This might be taken to generate a puzzle: Where does morality, with its emphasis on helping those less fit, belong in the seemingly amoral economy of an environment hospitable only to the fit? The course will begin by exploring Darwin’s own answer to this question, which centres on the idea that morality itself is the product of evolution - an adaptation designed to foster social behaviour and to promote the interests of the group. Subsequent lectures will introduce some new elaborations of this idea by contemporary evolutionary thinkers, and will then pit them against some of the powerful criticisms recently levelled at the neo-Darwinian understanding of morals. Along the way, we will consider various studies that provide fascinating evidence of (proto-)moral conduct in non-human animals. This evidence can shed much light on philosophical questions, suggesting a deep continuity between human and animal behaviour. In the second half of the course, our focus will turn to wider questions about the philosophical implications of evolutionary science for both normative ethics and metaethics. On the normative side, for instance, we will ask whether our understanding of human nature as the product of evolution has any particular implications concerning the kinds of virtues that we should try to cultivate in ourselves and in others, and the kinds of societies that we should attempt to construct. On the metaethical side, we will explore the ways in which an understanding of morality as an evolutionary adaptation has wider
implications concerning the nature of moral reasoning and the existence of objective moral truths.

Assessment: One essay of around 3,000 words.

Recommended reading:


**Moral Responsibility**

Dr. Michael Garnett

*Spring, Tuesdays 2-4pm*

The idea that people can be held responsible or accountable for their actions is central to our moral thinking. Yet a little reflection reveals a number of deep philosophical problems. Foremost among them is the problem of whether any of us are ever ultimately responsible for anything, given the extent to which what we do (and who we are) is determined by our upbringings, environments and genes. More generally, this is the problem of whether our ordinary ideas about moral responsibility are compatible with a modern, scientific picture of the world and our place within it. Other problems include whether we can be collectively, as well as individually, responsible; the relationship between responsibility and associated notions such as blame, praise, pride, shame and guilt; and the extent to which it is fair to blame past people for living according to the moral thinking of their day. This module explores some contemporary research on these questions.

Assessment: One essay of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary reading:


**Philosophy, Business and Society - SSPL086H6**

Prof. Hallvard Lillehammer

*Spring, Thursdays 6-8 pm.*

Business managers, civil servants, advertisers, sales representatives and employers
are all practical philosophers. They may not think explicitly in terms of philosophical arguments and theories, but every strategic decision they make is based on philosophical assumptions that can be articulated and assessed. This module examines some of the central philosophical issues that arise in the course of professional life, including truth; manipulation; trust; freedom; integrity; responsibility; and detachment.

No prior philosophical training is required to take this module. Each topic will be introduced without theoretical prerequisites, and the discussion of each topic will be illustrated with concrete examples from actual professions and real life.

Assessment: One essay of around 3,000 words.

**Philosophy of Science - SSPL089H6**
Dr. Robert Northcott

*Spring, Wednesdays 6-8 pm*

We take our children to medical doctors rather than faith healers; we pay NASA rather than astrologers to send rockets to the moon; and no one’s volunteering for a return to medieval dentistry. But exactly what is it that makes science special? Answering this question turns out to be surprisingly tricky. In seeing why, we’ll look at scientific method, paradigm shifts, whether we should really believe in invisible entities like genes and Higgs bosons, and critiques of science from, e.g., feminists. We’ll look at other topics too: evolution versus creationism; why modern science only came into being recently and in the West; and in what sense science progresses. Along the way, finally, we’ll also cover a fair amount of the history of science and indeed of science itself.

Assessment: A two-hour exam.

Preliminary Reading:


**Political Power - SSPL090H6**
Prof. Susan James

*Autumn, Wednesdays 2-4 pm.*

Some of the most pressing political questions we confront are about the nature and extent of political power.

- What makes power political? For example, is there a defensible distinction between political and personal power?
Who (or what) exercises political power? Does political power lie, for instance, with sovereigns of states and state officials, or is it more widely distributed?

Is political power inherently violent or does it also take non-violent forms?

Can we distinguish political power from political authority, and what might we gain by doing so?

As these questions indicate, political power is not a free-standing notion, and a full investigation of it would have to take account of its relation to a range of political phenomena, including the state, sovereignty, legitimacy, ideology, discrimination, oppression and freedom. This would be a huge project, and the course does not aim to be comprehensive. In any given year we shall focus on a manageable set of interconnected questions related to political power, and will use a specific set of philosophical texts (some historical and some contemporary) to help us investigate them. We shall draw on our own experiences of political power to test and deepen our philosophical conclusions.

Assessment: Two essays, to a combined total of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary Reading:


**Topics in Ancient Philosophy - SSPL095H6**

Prof. Anthony Price

*Autumn, Tuesdays 2-4 pm.*

This option will focus upon a selection of topics within Greek philosophy that are both central and perennially interesting, and whose treatment (whether by Plato, Aristotle, or a Stoic or Epicurean) requires really careful reading and analysis.

The topics will fall within metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and ethics. Their selection will vary from year to year.

Some previous study of Greek philosophy is desirable, but not essential; those new to this field are advised to contact the module co-ordinator in advance.

Assessment: Two essays, to a combined total of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary Reading:

- Anthony Kenny, *Ancient Philosophy*, within his *A New History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford University Press), especially the chapters on metaphysics, soul and mind, and ethics.
**Twentieth Century Continental Social Philosophy - SSPL096H6**
Dr. Andrew Huddleston  
*Autumn, Fridays 6-8 pm*

This module focuses on two important strands in 20th Century Continental Social Philosophy. In the first half of the course, we look at the work of the Frankfurt School (especially that of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer). We consider the ambitions of “Critical Theory” as a philosophical enterprise and its application in the criticism of social ills. The second half of the course will be devoted to the work of Michel Foucault. We will look at Foucault’s attempts to explain social phenomena (e.g., sexual practices and identities, the treatment of mental illness, prisons and other forms of punishment) in a genealogical fashion.

*Assessment:* Two essays, to a combined total of around 3,000 words.

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**Nietzsche - SSPL058H6**
Prof. Ken Gemes  
*Autumn, Thursdays 6-8 pm*

This course seeks to explain and examine Nietzsche’s philosophy, concentrating particularly on his critique of morality and his moral psychology. While focusing on Nietzsche’s texts, principally his *On the Genealogy of Morality*, we will be examining his key ideas including, the death of God, nihilism, life affirmation, the ascetic ideal, perspectivism, the will to power, the eternal recurrence, and his criticisms of the ascetic ideal, the will to truth and Judeo-Christian morality.

*Assessment:* One essay of around 3,000 words.

*Preliminary Reading:*


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**Philosophical Logic - SSPL084H6**
Dr. Florian Steinburger  
*Autumn, Fridays 6-8 pm*
Modern symbolic logic has thrown light on a great many philosophical problems, but gives rise to deep and challenging questions of its own. We say an argument is ‘logically valid’ if it is necessary that its conclusion is true if its premisses are: but what exactly is ‘necessity’, and what is ‘truth’? How do we know that the ‘rules of inference’ used by modern logic give rise to all and only valid arguments? This module provides an introduction to questions like these, which are central to contemporary philosophical reflection about the way thought and language connect with the world.

Prerequisite: Level 4 Introduction to Logic.

Assessment: Two essays, to a combined total of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary Reading:

- Quine, W. V. *From a Logical Point of View* (Harvard University Press, 1953).

The Biology of Evil
Prof. Ken Gemes

Spring, Thursdays 2-4pm

In enlightenment rhetoric, as developed by philosophers such as Descartes and Kant, evil is typically configured as a species of error, a failure or misapplication of the faculty of reason. As such, evil is treatable, indeed it may be ultimately eradicated, through the ever widening influence of education and the light of reason. In the 19th century a new medical/biological model of evil became prominent. On this model evil is seen as some kind of bodily infection which needs to be isolated or destroyed before it further infects the greater populace.

The first aim of this course is to trace the rise of this new model of evil and its embodiment in the 19th century discourse on degeneration. The second aim is to examine through case studies how elements of the discourse of degeneration were inflected in literature, philosophy and psychology.

Assessment: One essay of around 3,000 words.

Preliminary Reading:


Philosophy of Psychology
Dr. Sarah Patterson

Spring, Wednesdays 2-4pm

In this course we will examine some philosophical questions raised by recent work in psychology, the science of the mind. We will consider questions such as these: Is the mind a computational system? What is a mental module? How much can evolutionary theory tell us about the way the mind works? Can we make sense of the idea that some knowledge is innate in the mind? Do we have some innate knowledge of language? What can psychology tell us about the nature and extent of human rationality?

Assessment: One essay of around 3,000 words.
Preliminary reading:

  [www.rci.rutgers.edu/~stich/Publications/Papers/PHILOSOPHYofPSYCHOLOGY.pdf](www.rci.rutgers.edu/~stich/Publications/Papers/PHILOSOPHYofPSYCHOLOGY.pdf)

Philosophy of Action

Prof. Jennifer Hornsby

*Autumn, Tuesdays 6-8pm*

The course will treat the philosophy of action as a part of the philosophy of mind, in which questions both in metaphysics and epistemology crop up. What light can be cast on thinking about the mind’s place in nature by taking account of the fact that human beings *do things for reasons*? What idea of *causality* is needed for human agency to be understood? Is there a kind of *explanation* which has application specifically where there is human agency? Must one *know* that one is doing something if one is doing it intentionally?

Much recent debate in philosophy of action has been focused on the causal theory of action which took root in the late twentieth century. We’ll consider whether or not the account of human agency given in that theory should supplant a different account, which has recently gained adherents and which has its roots in Aristotle. And we’ll see how answers to these questions bear on questions about free agency and responsibility.

*Assessment:* Two essays, to a combined total of around 3,000 words.

*Preliminary Reading:*