

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA Politics and Language (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Chinese) <i>Final exit awards:</i> - BA Politics and French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese - OR - BA Politics with French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese / Korean / Chinese (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE, Cert HE
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year	Yes
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences (home); School of Creative Arts, Culture and Communication
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years); Part-time (4 years); Full-time with FY (4 years); Part-time with FY (6 years) October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for England</u>	Politics Languages, Cultures and Society
UCAS code	LL19, LL18_(with FY)
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBALNPO_C (full-time, 3 years) UBALNPOL_C (part-time, 4 years) UUBFLNPO_C (full-time with FY, 4 years) UBFLNPOL_C (part-time with FY, 6 years)
HECoS Code	100491 Politics 100329 Modern Languages Languages and area studies, inc: (100322) French studies (100324) German studies (100327) Italian studies (101143) Brazilian studies (100765) Iberian studies (101168) Japanese studies (101212) Korean studies (101164) Chinese studies
Start date of programme	October 2013
Date of programme approval	Autumn 2012
Date of last programme amendment approval	November 2023
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Date of last revision to document	01/12/2025

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

UCAS tariff: The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a [tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

BA Politics and Language: The UCAS tariff is set at 112 points. Students who fail to achieve this level may still be considered for entry if they demonstrate the required level of intellectual commitment and potential. We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

BA Politics and Language with Foundation Year: This programme is designed for people who can demonstrate the ability and motivation to complete the BA Politics and Languages but who do not currently meet the entry criteria for direct entrance onto the degree. Applicants will often be invited for interview to discuss their interests and future plans, and to assess their needs and aptitudes. For those students who already have Level 3 qualifications the expectation is that they will have qualifications equivalent to 48 UCAS tariff points. Given that students on the foundation year will be enrolled on degree programmes, applicants will be offered a place only if there is significant evidence to suggest they have the ability to complete the full degree.

Course aims

BA Politics and Language: The BA Politics and Language equips students with the tools to understand the nature of Politics in the modern world and a thorough grounding in one or more modern languages. It is taught with an emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of the study of politics and languages, drawing on history, sociology, economics, anthropology, human geography and psychology as well as politics. It also recognises the close connection between theoretical and empirical approaches, rejecting the artificial distinction that is often made between political theory and political science. Students are provided with a strong basis in British politics in years 1 and 2, but from the beginning are encouraged to think about Politics in comparative and international perspective. There is also a stress on the idea of politics as a practice, an activity engaged in not just by politicians, but by many different kinds of actors and institutions in modern societies. The study of politics is complemented by language training in all three years of the programme. Students can choose from French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean and Mandarin Chinese.

BA Politics and Language with Foundation Year: For the BA Politics and Language with Foundation Year programme, the purpose of the Foundation Year is to prepare students for successful completion of their undergraduate degree. The Foundation Year provides students the opportunity to explore their interests and build on their study skills, and on successful completion of the Foundation Year, students may progress onto year one of the programme. The final three years (full-time) or 4 years (parttime) of the 'with foundation year' programme is the same as the 3 or 4 year BA programme and students who successfully complete a degree programme with foundation year are awarded the same final degree title as students on the other BA degree routes.

Language - aims and distinctive features:

The aims of the Language component of the programmes are:

- to allow students to reach a reasonable to high level of competence in a modern foreign language (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean or Mandarin Chinese).
- to study the associated culture(s) of the language.
- to acquire advanced knowledge of a range of comparative cultural topics.

The distinctive nature of the languages component of the programmes lies in the flexibility of our languages offering, which extends to the full range of languages taught at Birkbeck (currently French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean and Mandarin Chinese) and allows entry at a variety of levels of language competence.

- For the European languages included in this programme, language entry levels are at one of five levels, as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Level A1 (Beginners); Level A2 (GCSE or equivalent); Level B1 (AS/A level or equivalent); Level B2 (A level + or equivalent); Level C1 (Proficiency).
- For Japanese there are four basic entry levels, all pegged to the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT): Beginners, Upper Beginner, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate.
- For Korean, there are three levels, pegged towards the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK): Beginners for Korean 1, Post-beginners for Korean 2 (entry with just under TOPIK 1), and Pre-intermediate for Korean 3 (entry with post-TOPIK 1 but under TOPIK 2).
- For Mandarin Chinese, there are three levels, pegged towards the Chinese proficiency test Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK): HSK1 for Chinese 1, HSK2 for Chinese 2, HSK3 for Chinese 3.
- After three years (full-time), students who start at approximately A-level standard language competence will attain a level which conforms to the 'typical' exit level equivalent to CEFR Level C1/C2, as defined in the QAA benchmark statement for 'Languages, Cultures and Societies', or JLPT Level N2.
- Those full-time or part-time students who start at CEFR A1 or JLPT N5 (Language 1) or fulltime students who start with CEFR A2 or JLPT N5 (Language 2) will exit with either CEFR B2 or JLPT N4-N3 (Language 3) or CEFR C1 or JLPT N3-N2 (Language 4).
- For Korean, students will start from beginners and exit after three years with close to TOPIK 2 (entry to Korean 1, exit with Korean 3).
- For Mandarin Chinese, students will start from beginners and exit after three years with close to HSK3 proficiency (entry to Chinese 1, exit with Chinese 3).
- PLEASE NOTE: All Language modules are taken over three terms (10+10+4 weeks, 2.5 hours per week)
- Students complete 180-210 (normally 210) credits on the Politics side of the programme and 150-180 (normally 150) credits on the Language side of the programme.
- If a student achieves the exit level of CEFR C2 (European Language 5) or JLPT Level N3 or above (Japanese 4/5) in their language, and has 150 credits on the Language side of the programme, the eventual award title is:
 - BA Politics and French
 - BA Politics and German
 - BA Politics and Italian
 - BA Politics and Japanese
 - OR
 - BA Politics and Spanish

- If a student completes at least 150 credits on the Language side but does not achieve CEFR C2 (European Language 5) or JLPT Level N3 or above (Japanese 4/5), the degree awarded is BA Politics with Language (either French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese / Korean / Chinese).
- If a student completes fewer than 150 (but at least 90) credits on the Language side, this constitutes a 'Minor' pathway, and the award title becomes, e.g., Politics with French, etc. Please note for the award of a language minor degree with 90 credits of language, ie Politics with Language (either French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese / Korean / Chinese), students must achieve a language level of at least 3.
- For Korean and Mandarin Chinese, **only the 'with Korean/Chinese' award title is currently available**, because we currently do not offer levels beyond Korean 3 or Chinese 3 for an exit level Korean/Chinese proficiency.

BA Politics and Language with Foundation Year: For the BA Politics and Language with Foundation Year programme, the Foundation Year will prepare you for successful completion of your undergraduate degree. The Foundation Year (one-year FT or two years PT) provides you with the opportunity to explore your interests and build on the study skills you develop in your Foundation Year. On successful completion of the Foundation Year, you will progress onto year one of the PT or FT programmes. The curriculum for the 'with foundation year' programme after the completion of the foundation year modules is the same as the full-time or part-time BA programme. When you successfully complete the BA Politics and Language with Foundation Year, you will be awarded the same final degree title as students on the regular full-time or part-time degree routes.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1					
4	SSPO017S4	Foundations of Social and Political Science	30	Comp	T1-3
4	SSPO265S4	Transformations in Modern Politics: Democracy, Conflict and Globalisation	30	Comp	T1
4	FFPO956S4	Comparative Government	30	Comp	T2
4		Language 1, 2, 3 or 4	30	Core	T1-3
Year 2					
5	SSPO151S5	Governing by Numbers	30	Comp	T1-3
5	POSO003S5	Contemporary British Politics	30	Comp	T2
5		Language 2, 3 or 4 OR	30	Core	T1-3
6		Language 5	30	Core	T1-3

5	Various ARLL012S5/ ARLL011S5	Language-specific survey module OR Comparative Themes in the Novel/ Themes in European and Japanese Cinema OR Comparative module e.g. ARCL022S5 Reading Transnational Cultures	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 3					
6	SSPO220S6	Doing Political and Social Research	30	Comp	T1
6	POSO013S6	Social and Political Theory	30	Comp	T2
6		Language 3, 4 or 5 OR	30	Core	T1-3
5		Language 'culture' module (if Language 5 taken in Year Two)	30	Option	T1 OR 2
6		Language 'culture' module(s)	30 OR 15+15	Option	T1 OR 2
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	SSPO017S4	Foundations of Social and Political Science	30	Comp	T1-3
4	FFPO956S4	Comparative Government	30	Comp	T2
4		Language 1, 2, 3 or 4	30	Core	T1-3
Year 2					
4	SSPO265S4	Transformations in Modern Politics: Democracy, Conflict and Globalisation	30	Comp	T1
5	SSPO151S5	Governing by Numbers OR	30	Comp	T1-3
5	Various ARLL012S5/ ARLL011S5	Language-specific survey module OR Comparative Themes in the Novel /Themes in European and Japanese Cinema OR Comparative module e.g. ARCL022S5 Reading Transnational Cultures	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
5		Language 2, 3 or 4 OR	30	Core	T1-3
6		Language 5	30	Core	T1-3
Year 3 (Students must take 30 credits at Level 6)					
5	POSO003S5	Contemporary British Politics	30	Comp	T2
5	SSPO151S5	Governing by Numbers OR	30	Comp	T1-3
5	Various ARLL012S5/ ARLL011S5	Language-specific survey module OR Comparative Themes in the Novel /Themes in European and Japanese Cinema OR	30	Option	T1, or T3

		Comparative module e.g. ARCL022S5 Reading Transnational Cultures			
5/6		Language 3, 4 (taken at Level 6 if final stage in pathway)	30	Core	T1-3
6		OR Language 5	30	Core	T1-3
5/6		OR Language 'culture' module(s) (if Language 5 taken in Year Two)	30 or 2x15	Option	T1 OR 2
Year 4					
6	SSPO220S6	Doing Political and Social Research	30	Comp	T1
6	POSO013S6	Social and Political Theory	30	Comp	T2
6		Language 3, 4 or 5	30	Core	T1-3
5		OR Language 'culture' module (if Language pathway completed)	30	Option	T3
6		OR Language 'culture' module(s)	30 OR 15+15	Option	T3
Full-time with Foundation year - 4 years					
Foundation Year (Year 0)					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study	30	Core	T1
3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	T2-3
3	SSSS001S3	Crossing Borders	30	Core	T1
3	SC04048S3	The Humanities and Social Sciences: Global Issues in Historical Perspective	30	Option	T2-3
4		OR Level 4 Language module			
Years 1-3 as for full-time route above					
Part-time with Foundation Year - 6 years					
Foundation Year 0a					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study	30	Core	T1
3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	T2-3
Foundation Year 0b					
3	SSSS001S3	Crossing Borders	30	Core	T1
3	SC04048S3	The Humanities and Social Sciences: Global Issues in Historical Perspective	30	Option	T2-3
4		OR Level 4 language option			
Years 1-4 as for part-time route shown above					

Note: the pathways shown in the structure above are indicative for the BA Politics AND Language joint awards. Students who choose to follow a minor award in language (BA Politics WITH Language) might replace some language culture or survey optional modules with politics, or other modules from the college, at the appropriate level as approved by the course director, provided they pass at least 90 credits of Language core modules and achieve a minimum language level of 3.

Core:	Module must be taken and passed by student
Compulsory:	Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)
Option:	Student can choose to take this module

Indicative list of Language survey/culture options:

Indicative options for level 5:

ARLL012S5 Themes in the European and Japanese Novel
 ARLL011S5 Themes in European and Japanese Cinema
 ARLL007S5 Contemporary Literature in French (Level 5)
 TBC Cultural Perspectives on German and Italian 19th and 20th Century History
 ARMC145S5 Popular Culture of East Asia
 ARLL005S5 Word and Image: Constructing the Other in the Hispanic World
 ARCL022S5 Reading Transnational Cultures
 LNLN024S5 Representations of Love, Desire and Sexuality

Indicative options for level 6:

ARMC187S6 Manga and Anime
 AREL003H6 Sensibility and Sociability in the Eighteenth-Century French Novel
 AREL049H6 The French Novel of Disillusionment
 ARCL054H6 The Twentieth-Century German Novel
 AREL086H6 Culture in the Weimar Republic
 ARCL078S6 Sex, survival and la dolce vita: Neorealist to Contemporary Italian Film
 ARCL057H6 The Spanish Noir: Crime and Detection in Contemporary Fiction

Indicative Politics options (for students aiming for a minor 'with' language award only)

Level 5			
Code	Title	Credits	Term
POSO029S5	Introduction to International Political Economy	30	T2
SSPO272S5	Digital Politics	30	T3
Level 6			
Code	Title	Credits	Term
POSO004S6	War and Modern Society	30	T2
SSPO122S6	Parliamentary Studies	30	T1

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Most teaching takes place in lectures and seminars, employing a variety of methods such as small group work, student presentations, debates, guest speakers and so on. Other forms of teaching are used where appropriate, including field-trips, the use of film, etc. Extensive use is made of audio-visual facilities and web-based learning tools such as Moodle.

For the languages, you can choose between French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean or Mandarin Chinese starting at the level of language learning that suits you, whether you are a complete beginner or a native speaker.

Language classes are normally 2.5 hours long. Activities are varied; the Languages department pioneered the use of learning software for languages, and this has now been extended to Moodle, which allows access to additional targeted language learning materials. Regular homework is given and returned to students, with extensive feedback, usually within a week. All classes are conducted in the target language.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

Level 4 modules employ a combination of short essays and in-class tests. Assessment at levels 5 and 6 is through coursework (essays), smallscale assessment tests (for example, quizzes, political blogging, writing policy briefs, seminar logs) and examinations. Where essays are used, they are compulsory. Written feedback on essays is provided within three weeks of submission, and students have the opportunity to clarify any feedback by contacting their lecturers and seminar leaders.

Assessment methods in Languages include a variety of exercises testing skills in writing, reading, speaking and listening, including (but not limited to) short coursework assignments, in-class written tests, oral and listening comprehension tests; at Level 5 students complete a self-reflexive essay; and at Level 6 they undertake a short project.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

On successful completion of the foundation year, you will be able to:

- Articulate at a foundational level key concepts in some of the disciplines offered by the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy.
- Undertake academic reading, writing, research and assessment skills appropriate to the study of those disciplines
- Understand other key learning skills required for university-level study and know of how to access support at Birkbeck to develop these.

On successful completion of the BA programme, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of politics in a number of different societies;
- Have advanced proficiency in at least one modern language other than English;
- Employ comparative analysis in the study of political institutions and practices across different societies and regions;
- Recognise the importance of political practice and how this shapes and is shaped by large scale political institutions and processes;
- Deploy skills of enquiry and analysis;
- Communicate clearly ideas and arguments about politics both orally and in writing; and
- Employ skills developed in the course of study in public and vocational settings.

Language modules

Additionally, on successful completion of the Language component of this programme a student will be expected to be able to:

French, German, Italian, Spanish:

A. Use of the target language

- Demonstrate appropriate use of the French, German, Italian and/or Spanish language. Our courses have been mapped to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as follows:

- Stage 1 A1-A2
- Stage 2 B1
- Stage 3 B2
- Stage 4 C1
- Stage 5 C1/C2

The aims and objectives for each of these stages can be found in each corresponding module proposal.

- Communicate fluently and appropriately, maintaining a high degree of grammatical accuracy, in the target language (TL), with competent or native speakers of the TL, to a level approximately equivalent to CEFR level B2 to C2, depending on starting level.
- Be able to exploit for a variety of purposes and, as appropriate, to contextualise a broad range of materials in written or spoken TL appropriate to the level attained.
- Be able to apply effectively and appropriately language skills in a professional context.

B. Explicit knowledge of language

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and effective understanding of the structures, registers and, as appropriate, varieties of TL.
- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and effective understanding of the linguistic principles required to analyse TL. (This aim applies to certain modules only.)

C. Knowledge of related studies

- Demonstrate an ability critically to evaluate through appropriate methodologies one or more aspects of the arts, cultures, histories, institutions or linguistic situation of the societies in which TL is spoken.
- Demonstrate a broad knowledge and, using appropriate methodologies, a critical understanding of the cultures and societies of countries in which TL is spoken gained through one or more of the creative media of TL.

D. Intercultural awareness and understanding

- Demonstrate a reasoned awareness and critical understanding of one or more cultures and societies, other than the student's own.

Japanese:

A. Use of the target language

- With a focus especially on advancing students' reception skills, to demonstrate experience at comprehending Japanese at natural speed using audio-visual materials; to use original texts from a variety of sources and subject fields to develop their reading techniques including scanning and skimming for key information, reading extended paragraphs and complex sentences, and in-depth reading; to sustain complex conversations in social, cultural, and business situations using appropriate speech forms and politeness registers; to begin to acquire academic-level verbal communication skills, including participation in discussions, and preparing and delivering presentations; to write substantial reports and short essays based on texts read and discussed in class, using their knowledge of between 800-1,000 kanji characters and of appropriate compositional structure.

- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in communicative exchanges in Japanese.

B-D. As above, and:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the key moments and concepts in the cultural/social history of modern Japan.

Korean:

A. Use of the target language

- With a focus especially on advancing students' reception skills, to demonstrate experience at comprehending Korean at natural speed using audio-visual materials; to use original texts from a variety of sources and subject fields to develop their reading techniques including scanning and skimming for key information, reading extended paragraphs and complex sentences; to sustain complex conversations in social, cultural, and business situations using appropriate speech forms and politeness registers; to begin to acquire verbal communication skills, including participation in discussions, and preparing and delivering presentations.
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in communicative exchanges in Korean.

B-D. As above, and:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the modern Korean society and culture.

Mandarin Chinese:

A. Use of the target language

- With a focus especially on advancing students' reception skills, to demonstrate experience at comprehending Mandarin Chinese at natural speed using audio-visual materials; to use original texts from a variety of sources and subject fields to develop their reading techniques including scanning and skimming for key information, reading extended paragraphs and complex sentences; to sustain complex conversations in social, cultural, and business situations using appropriate speech forms and politeness registers; to begin to acquire verbal communication skills, including participation in discussions, and preparing and delivering presentations.
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in communicative exchanges in Mandarin Chinese.

B-D. As above, and:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the modern Sinophone societies and cultures.

Careers and further study

A degree in Politics and Language prepares you for any role which benefits from skills in research, communication and engagement. You will find Politics and Language graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- research positions in universities and other public and private research bodies;
- jobs in central and local government, trades unions, political parties, NGOs and international organisations;
- (political) journalism;
- political/civic activism;
- political consultancy; and
- teaching in secondary education.

Birkbeck's BA Politics and Language graduates leave with a set of valuable attributes, including:

- The ability to work as part of a team

- High-level oral and written communication skills in English and at least one other modern language
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and make a compelling argument

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

Copyright, Birkbeck, University of London 2022 ©