

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MSc Political Communication (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip Political Communication PG Cert Political Communication PG Cert Politics
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London, online, flexible
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for</u> <u>England</u>	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMSPOLIP_C - on-campus study TMSPOLON_C - online study TMSPOLMX_C - flexible study
HECoS Code	100489
Start date of programme	Autumn 2022
Date of programme approval	Spring 2022
Date of last programme amendment approval	June 2025
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Date of last revision to document	19/06/2026

Admissions requirements

A second class honours degree (2:2 or above) in a related area, or relevant experience combined with an adequate academic background (subject to interview).

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.

Course aims

This programme will provide advanced training in critical perspectives on a broad range of issues in political communication, including campaign and media effects, misinformation, comparative media systems, civic technologies. This will be done by delivering a diverse and inclusive curriculum across the core and optional modules, highlighting the contributions of scholars from structurally underrepresented groups in the field, as well as underrepresented fields of research such as political communication in the Global South.

Our selection of modules will showcase *methodological innovation* in political communication research, such as digital trace data, natural language processing, experimental methods, media ethnography, and will discuss 'decolonial' research methods. Students will thus be encouraged to embrace methodological diversity to interrogate the theory and practice of political communication.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communications: Media, Campaigns, and Citizens	30	Core	T1
7		Options (from programme option list below)	60	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option (free choice)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation	60	Core	T3
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communications: Media, Campaigns, and Citizens	30	Core	T1
7		Option	30	Option	T2 or 3
Year 2					
7		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Dissertation	60	Core	T3*

(Note: **Part-time students** also take 60 credits of options from a list provided by the department for this programme, and 30 as 'free choice' options, but can choose the year in which they take the free choice option)

*In term 3 of year 1, part-time students undertake initial preparatory work for their dissertation which is completed at the end of their second year.

Indicative options					
Programme option list					
7	POSO020S7	Power and Politics in the UK (hyflex)	30	Option	T2
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas & Institutions (hyflex)	30	Option	T1
7	ARMC237S7	Introduction to Investigative Reporting (hyflex)	30	Option	T1
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media (hyflex)	30	Option	T2
7	FDME011S7	Fast-track Practical Journalism Skills (hyflex)	30	Option	T1
7	ARMC178S7	Public Relations and Professional Communications (hyflex)	30	Option	T3
Free choice options					
<i>Another module from programme list above, or:</i>					
7	POSO022S7	Political Theory and Contemporary Politics (hyflex)	30	Option	T3
7	SC05004S7	International Negotiations and Conflict Resolution (in-person)	30	Option	T3
7	SC05003S7	Perspectives on Public Services & the Public Sector (hyflex)	30	Option	T2
7	SSPO120S7	Emerging Powers in World Politics (hyflex)	30	Option	T3
7	POSO044S7	Nationalism, Religion, & Conflict (in-person)	30	Option	T2
7	ARMC171S7	Advanced Layout and Design (hyflex)	30	Option	T3
7	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R (in-person)	15	Option	T2
7	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science (hyflex)	15	Option	T3
7	SSPO239H7	Introduction to Quantitative Social Research (in-person)	15	Option	T1
7	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design (hyflex)	15	Option	T2
7	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods (hyflex)	15	Option	T1
Note: Students may be able to take other relevant option modules from within or outside of politics on the agreement of the programme director.					

T1=Autumn, T2=Spring, T3= Summer

All compulsory modules are delivered via hyflex allowing in-person and online attendance.

Options planned for online or hyflex delivery are indicated.

Note: option choices for students taking a fully online route through the programme are restricted to those being offered with an online/hyflex seminar.

30 credits of options can be taken from the wider college, with some disciplinary restrictions.

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

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.

Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures (pre-recorded) and seminars. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

The programme is offered in person and there is also a fully online route. Students may also select to take some modules in-person and some online. Options for students taking the fully online route are restricted to modules offered in the School with an online/hyflex seminar. Pre-recorded lectures are provided online for both in-person and online modes. In-person and online classes run once a week.

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 mainly be through essays and online examinations (usually completed at home or in a workspace in college), but may also involve short written exercises, quizzes and multiple-choice questionnaires, practical assessments, case studies, or problems to solve.

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.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of issues and methodologies in political communication research;
- Apply advanced concepts and methodologies in political communication research to critically analyse current issues in British and global politics, political behaviour, digital democracy, and other fields;
- Understanding of the main approaches to research design, the purpose of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the generation of scientific knowledge;
- employ the analytical, evaluative and critical skills developed in addressing problems presented in other academic and non-academic work settings
- demonstrate the ability to conduct an independent research project
- obtain and analyse information from a wide array of sources.

Careers and further study

You will find Political Communication graduates in the following kinds of roles:

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

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](#).

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