

Programme Specification

1	Awarding body	University of London				
2	Teaching Institution	Birkbeck College				
3	Programme Title(s)	MSc Political Communication				
4	Programme Code(s)	TMSPOLCM_C (Oct start) TMSPOLCJ_C (Jan start)				
5	UCAS code	N/A				
6	Home Department	Politics				
7	Exit Award(s)	PG Cert, PG Dip				
8	Duration of Study (number of years)	1 year FT, 2 years PT				
9	Mode of Study	FT	x	PT	x	DL
10	Level of Award (FHEQ)	7				
11	Other teaching depts or institution	Film, Media, and Cultural Studies				
12	Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details	N/A				
13	QAA Benchmark Statement	N/A				

14	Programme Rationale & Aims
	<p>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. In addition, 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.</p>

15	Entry Criteria
	Honours degree at 2.2 or better.

16	Learning Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the main approaches to research design, the purpose of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the generation of scientific knowledge; • Enhancement of generic intellectual skills, particularly relating to clear and persuasive communication of ideas, and engagement with political arguments, in addition to field-specific skills, such as public relations, campaign and communication using media technologies, depending on specialisation.
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17	Learning, teaching and assessment methods
	The programme uses the established teaching and assessment methods on the Politics MSc programmes, consisting of lectures and seminars for taught modules, along with a dissertation. Depending on the module, students submit essays (in the core modules this takes the form of critical review and tool evaluation), research projects, take-home exams and unseen exams, and also take quizzes, participate in online forums and maintain seminar logs during the teaching period.

18	Programme Description
	<p>This programme provides exposure to key issues in political communication such as campaigns and media effects, misinformation, media systems, and civic technologies; combined with additional modules in research design, and further specialisation in subjects including British politics and public policy, and a range of media-focused modules including practical skills (social media, journalistic skills, PR).</p> <p><i>Students take 30 credits of compulsory modules, choose a further 60 credits from a defined list, and have a free choice for the remaining 30 credits of taught modules. They write a 60 credit dissertation.</i></p> <p><i>Note on composition of restricted 'option' list: We use this space to draw students' attention to the most relevant research methods, politics (across British politics, public policy, and political sociology modules), and media modules that complement the degree well. However, using the 'open optional' 30 credit block, they can be complemented with any other Politics, Media, and related departmental offers.</i></p>

19	Programme Structure			
Full-Time programme – 1 year, October start				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	SSPO225H7	Political Communication	15	Core
7	SSPO226H7	Digital Technology in Governance and Politics	15	Core
7		Options to the value of 60 credits from list below	60	Options
7		Free choice 'open' option(s) from Politics, Media or related areas	30	Option
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation	60	Core

Year of entry: 2022/23



Part-Time programme – 2 years, October start				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	SSPO225H7	Political Communication	15	Core
7	SSPO226H7	Digital Technology in Governance and Politics	15	Core
7		15 or 30 credits from the list of options below	15	Option
7		0 or 15 'open' credits	15	Option
Year 2				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7		30 or 45 credits from the list of options below	30	Option
7		15 or 30 'open' credits	30	Option
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation	60	Core
Indicative programme options list				
7	SSPO239H7	Introduction to Quantitative Social Research	15	Option
	SSPO240H7	Intermediate Quantitative social research	15	Option
7	SSPO241H7	Advanced Quantitative social research	15	Option
7	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15	Option
7	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15	Option
7	SSPO243H7	Qualitative research design	15	Option
7	SSPO227H7	British Politics: Participation, representation, and deliberation	15	Option
7	SSPO228H7	Divided power in British politics	15	Option
7	SSPO237H7	Theories of Public Policy-making	15	Option
7	SSPO238H7	The Puzzles of Policy: Policy in Politics and Practice	15	Option
7	SPPO221H7	Political Sociology of the Modern State	15	Option
7	SSPO222H7	Contemporary Political Sociology	15	Option
7	ARMC178S7	Public Relations and Professional Communications	30	Option
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Option
7	ARMC268S7	User Experience Design	30	Option
7	FDME014S7	Web-based Journalism and Online Media Production	30	Option
7	ARMC246S7	Social Media and Online Branding	30	Option
7	ARMC238S7	Journalism by numbers: Working with data	30	Option
7	ARMC222S7	Digital Culture	30	Option

January 2023 start routes:

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year, January 23 start					
7	SSPO226H7	Digital Technology in Governance and Politics (Spring term '23)	15	Comp	Spring
7		Option 1 (politics or methods: 15 credits, Spring term '23)	15	Option	Summer

Year of entry: 2022/23



7		Option(s) 3/4 (Spring or Summer term '24). EITHER; a single 30 credit module in spring, from Politics or Media modules; AND/OR a combination of x 1 [for those taking the 30 credit above], or x3, 15 credit Methods modules [in place of the above] in Spring and Summer.	45	Option	Spring, summer
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation - Research Dissertation (supervision would begin in summer term and submitted early Jan)	60	Core	Summer, Autumn
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communication and Citizen Engagement in a Digital World (Autumn term 23)	30	Comp	Autumn

Part-time – 2 years, Jan 23 start

Year 1 - (taught) Spring 23, Summer Term 23 and Autumn 2023 - 75 Credits

7	SSPO226H7	Digital Technology in Governance and Politics (Spring term '23)	15	Comp	Spring Y1
7		Option 1 (politics or methods: 15 credits, Spring term '23)	15	Option	Spring Y1
7		Option 2 (Comprising 1x15, Summer Term '23)	15	Option	Summer Y1
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communication and Citizen Engagement in a Digital World (Autumn term '23)	30	Comp	Autumn Y1

Year 2 – Jan 24 (taught options 45 credits + dissertation 60 credits)

7		Option(s) 3; Spring or Summer term '24). from Politics or Media modules <i>(Note – there is flexibility to take an extra 15 credit option in year 1, and take 30 credits of options in year 2)</i>	45 (30+15, or 3x15)	Option	Spring, Summer Y2
7	SSPO244D7	Research Dissertation (supervision would start in summer term with submission-early January)	60	Core	Summer, autumn Y2

Status*

CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; COMPULSORY – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; OPTIONAL – Student can choose to take this module

20	Programme Director	Dr Laszlo Horvath
21	Start Date <i>(term/year)</i>	October 2022
22	Date approved by Education Committee	Spring 2022
23	Date approved by Academic Board	Spring 2022
24	Date(s) updated/amended	Sept 2022