



Welcome to the Politics Department!

“ONE OF THE PENALTIES
OF REFUSING TO
PARTICIPATE IN
POLITICS, IS THAT YOU
END UP BEING
GOVERNED BY YOUR
INFERIORS...”
PLATO

Politics at A Level

This **highly topical** and **relevant** subject will attract those with **enquiring minds** who want to understand the organisations and processes which produce **democratic government** in the UK and USA. The strengths and weaknesses of both systems will be analysed through detailed study and analysis of relevant **case studies** from each country.

UNIT 1: Government and Politics of the UK



British Constitution

How were the rules surrounding British government formed?

How much power does the London government have compared to what the EU had, or compared to the Welsh and Scottish governments?



Core Executive (Prime Minister and Cabinet)

Prime
Minister –
first
amongst
equals?

Or an
elected
dictator?



Parliament

Talking shop?

Law making
body?

Watchdog?



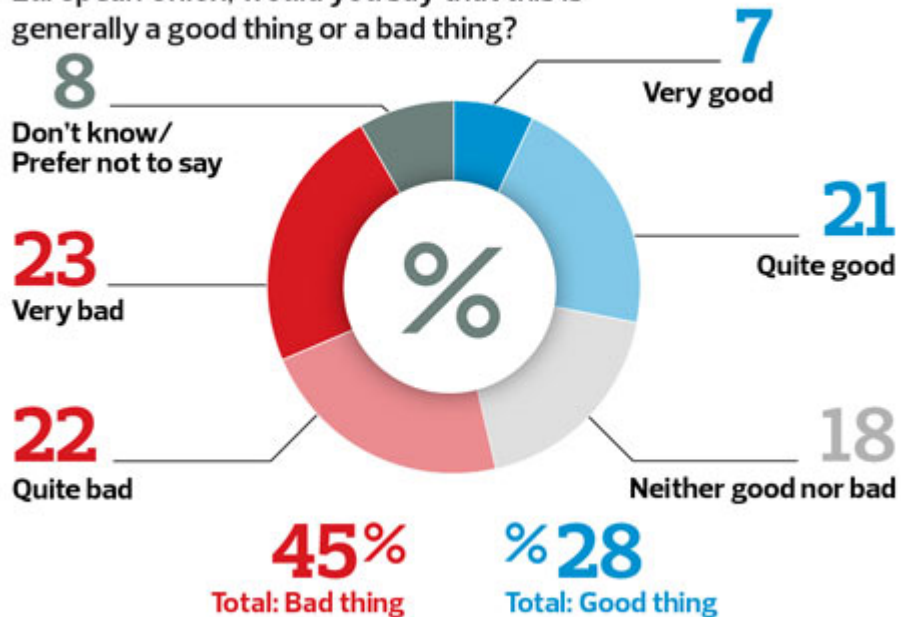
Multi-level governance

*Should Scottish
MPs have
voting rights
over English
issues?*

*Should more
power be
devolved to the
North?*

ON THE UK'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU

Thinking about the UK's membership of the European Union, would you say that this is generally a good thing or a bad thing?



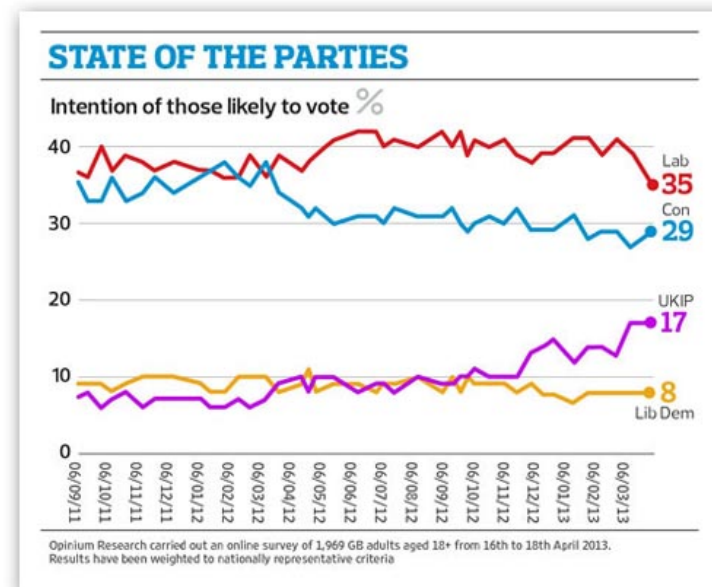
Opinium Research carried out an online survey of 1,957 GB adults aged 18+ from 13 to 15 November 2012. Results have been weighted to nationally representative criteria

Participation and Voting Behaviour

Who votes?

*Who do they
vote for?*

Why?



Electoral Systems

*First Past the Post or
Proportional
Representation?*

*What are the
implications of each
system?*

*What is the value of
referendums?*



Political Parties

*What are
they for?*



*How are
party
policies
decided?*



*How are
party
leaders
elected?*

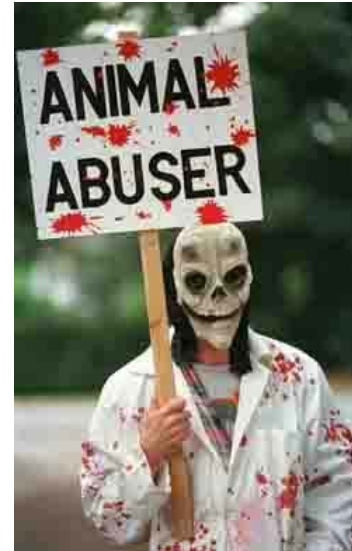


Pressure Groups and Protest Movements

Why do they exist?

How do they influence policy?

What is the role of the media?



UNIT 2: Government of the USA (Synoptic)



The Constitution

Who has the most power – President, Congress or state governments?



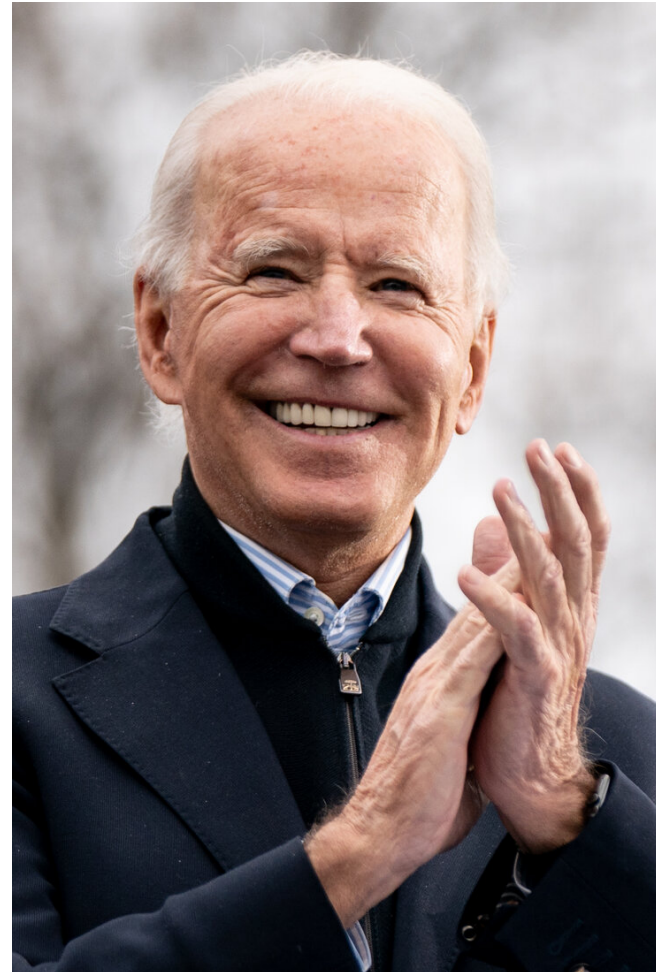
How are the rights of US citizens protected?



The Presidency

The limits
to
presidential
power

Presidents
vs Congress



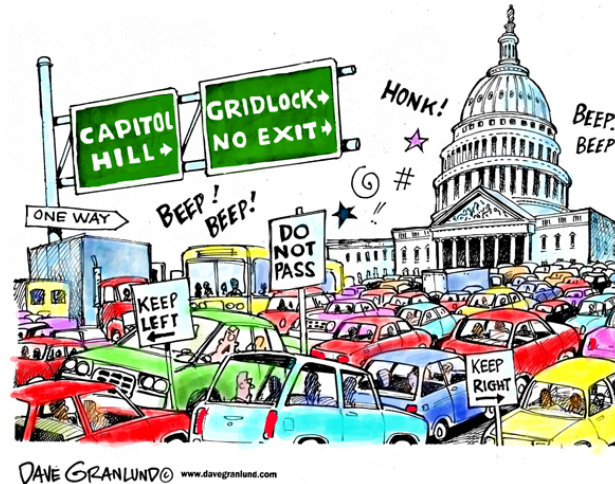
Congress

*House of
Representatives*

Senate

*Making laws – or
not*

Gridlock



The Supreme Court and civil rights

Guardian of the constitution

How judges are appointed

Controversies and changes

How have civil rights changed over time



Electoral Process and Direct Democracy

Why the US has so many elections

What primary elections are all about



Campaigning

Financing all those elections



Political Parties

Why only two?

Are they really that different?

Why can't they ever agree?

Why do presidential candidates come across as being so extreme?



Electoral systems

*How is the
House and
Senate elected?*

*How is the
President
elected?*

*What is the
electoral
college?*

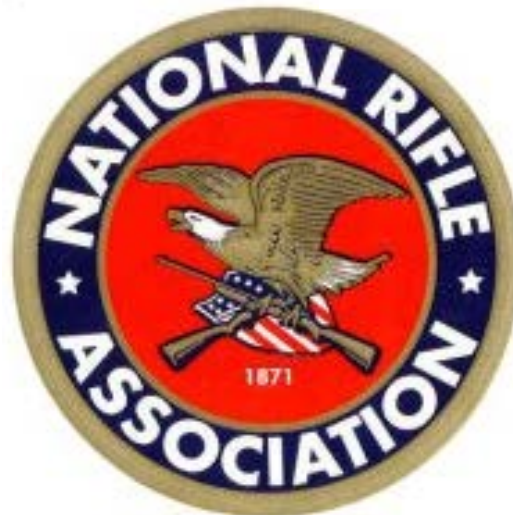


Pressure Groups

*Why are there
so many in the
US?*



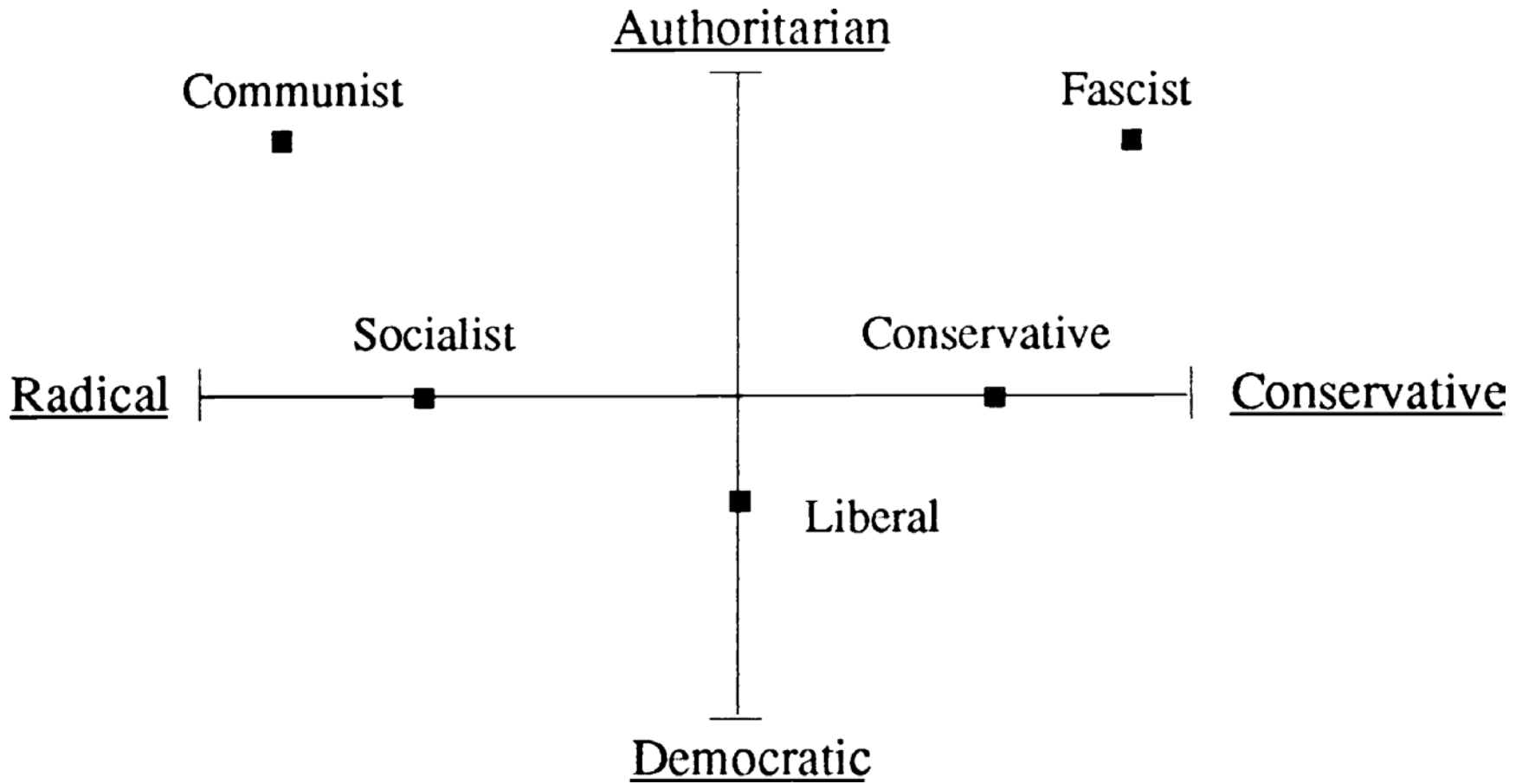
*Are they
stronger than
parties?*



*What
difference do
they make?*



UNIT 3: Political ideas



Political theories



Political theories



Assessment

- Three 2 hour exams (33 % each)
- Combination of essay questions, source analysis and comparative essays
- All sat at the end of Year 13

Source based analysis

Party funding: there is an alternative to murky donations from the super-rich

There are fundamental problems arising as the traditional two-party system collapses. Party memberships are crashing – the paid-up support the Conservatives had when Cameron became leader has declined by over half, which was itself barely one-fifth of the number when Margaret Thatcher took over the Tories. The average age of members is almost 70.

The 2011 Kelly review saw the solution as more state funding, yet this would only shore up organisations that are clearly failing. It feels often that the main parties think their history gives them an unquestionable right to survive. If so, it's a misguided belief, with the digital age disrupting politics as it does so many other areas of life. Public contempt would also be fuelled if voters saw more of their taxes going to political parties at a time of spending cuts.

Far more sensible would be to adopt the review's other key suggestion of a £10,000 cap on individual donations – then throw in a ban on funding from any other sources. For the reason most of these businesses, unions and wealthy people hand over huge sums is to buy influence, along with baubles and titles – all profoundly anti-democratic.

Extract taken from an article written by the journalist Ian Birrell in *The Guardian* newspaper (07 October 2016)

4

Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above article over a cap on individual donations to political parties.

[25 marks]

Progression from Politics

Politics students go on to study a wide range of humanities, social science or business-related subjects at **university**, or enter into a wide range of **careers** in administration, management, local government or the civil service. Both **David Cameron** and **Ed Miliband** read Politics at university, alongside Philosophy and Economics.



GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH OFFICER
Government research officers help to inform the policy decisions of ministers. To do this, they conduct research and evaluation activities, providing government departments and local authorities with the evidence required for the preparation, execution and assessment of policies.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (MP)
MPs represent the residents of their local community in national affairs.

ROLES WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE
You could choose from a variety of political jobs in government departments, agencies or non-departmental government bodies.

POLITICAL ASSISTANT
Political assistants are employed by elected MPs or political candidates to carry out administrative and secretarial tasks.

DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OFFICER
As a diplomatic service officer, you'd live in another country, representing the interests of your home nation and its citizens. You'd also provide advice and support to ministers developing foreign policy.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSULTANT
Public affairs consultants offer valuable political and public policy guidance to clients using their knowledge of the political system, as well as media resources and personal contacts.

POLICY ADVISOR
Formulate, manage and establish the policies and direction of an agency or administrative office.

POLITICAL JOURNALIST
You'll cover controversies, campaigns and debates, and offer insights on possible outcomes, incentives and trends. You might work in just one field of journalism (print, online, TV, radio), or across a combination of these.

CAREERS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHARITIES
Look for openings in central and local government bodies; worldwide governmental and non-governmental organizations; charities, pressure groups and campaigning organizations; academia and law. You could work in communications and campaigns, helping to raise awareness about human rights issues and abuses.

POLICY ANALYST
A policy analyst researches, collects, classifies and analyses a variety of data concerning policies.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER
Run the show for the years leading up to an election. They're what you would call operations managers in a business environment. They lead an array of volunteers and staff through the planning and execution of the campaign strategy and report to the candidate or party with results, polls and panning.

MEDIA STRATEGIST
The media strategist is the person responsible for the overall image of the agency or administration. Under their direction, the media strategy indicates who the office holder will interview with, in what tone and to which end the media presence serves.

STATISTICIAN
From polling numbers to economic figures, a statistician is essential in the political life of a country. They crunch numbers to calculate probability, possibility, votes, and socio-political and economic trends.

SOLICITORS AND BARRISTERS
As in large organisation, political entities and governments have their own legal counsels. Lawyers are ever present in politics, acting as upholders of laws to helping to formulate bills and amendments, developing policy and authoritatively deciding the legality of policies and actions.

VOTE FOR A CAREER IN POLITICS

What do I need to get onto the course?

- Grade 5 in English Literature
- 5 in History/Geography is strongly recommended.
- An active and passionate interest in current affairs.
- Ability to communicate clearly on paper and in class discussion.
- Determination to learn and get better at writing.
- Entry requirements for the Academic Pathway