

# POLS0016: British Politics (Academic Year 2018/19)

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274 items

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## Course Overview (1 items)

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Course Overview

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## Reading Guide (1 items)

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This reading list starts with some introductory and general readings and then provides specific readings organized by lecture/seminar topic. You are not expected to read everything on the list, but you should do some reading each week, and you should come prepared to discuss what you have read with others in the class. To prepare for the class you should follow at least the instructions in the "Required Reading" section for each topic. In fact you should aim to spend **around five hours reading for the class each week**, which is enough to read at least three chapters or articles. On top of this is the reading you will need to do for your presentation and essays.

Most of the readings – including all journal articles, blog posts, and reports, and also many books and book chapters – are available online, at least when you are logged into the UCL system. Readings that are not available online can be found in UCL library, although there are limited copies. Many items are also held in Senate House library and at the LSE library.

Please note that **the reading list is only a starting point**. If you are writing an essay on a topic, you should take the relevant parts of the reading list as your launching pad. But go beyond it: follow up on items that are cited in these readings that look like they might be interesting; use Google Scholar to find further academic writings; use a general search engine to find other relevant sources. The more you take control of the subject, working out what you think is important and following up interesting leads, the better you are likely to do. (But remember, while taking control, you should also listen to what others say: always be open to the possibility that they might change your view.)

## General Sources for the Module (41 items)

The readings here may be useful to you across all the topics and assignments.

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## Textbooks (5 items)

This module is NOT based upon a textbook. We will be seeking to develop our own collective understanding of British politics through the lectures, seminars, and other work, not following a template provided by someone else. Nevertheless, particularly if you have not engaged much with British politics before, you may find it useful to read the relevant sections of a textbook before you embark on the other readings, as those other readings often presume some background familiarity. The following textbooks all offer good introductions. It is worth noting, however, that, at the time of writing (summer 2018), none had been updated since the 2016 Brexit referendum, meaning that all are somewhat out of date.

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**Exploring British politics** - Mark Garnett, Philip Lynch, 2016

[Book](#)

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**Politics UK** - Bill Jones, Philip Norton, 2014

[Book](#)

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**British Politics** - Robert Leach, Bill Coxall, Lynton Robins, 2011

[Book](#)

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**Government and Politics in Britain** - John Kingdom, Paul Fairclough, 2014

[Book](#)

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**Politics and Governance in the UK** - Michael Moran, 2015

[Book](#)

## General Books (6 items)

The books here are not textbooks and are therefore not intended to provide comprehensive introductions to the debates. But they do give excellent overviews of many aspects of British politics.

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**The New British Constitution** - Bogdanor, Vernon, 2009

[Book](#)

| Vernon Bogdanor is one of the UK's leading constitutional scholars. Here he provides an overview of the various aspects of the British political system.

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**Who Governs Britain?** - Anthony King, 2015

[Book](#)

| This new book is intended for the general reader with an interest in British politics. That means that it presumes no knowledge of political science, but it does suppose a familiarity with what has been happening in the UK in recent years. That does not mean it won't be useful to those of you who haven't been following British politics, but you may find it a tougher read than will the core audience.

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**The British constitution** - Anthony Stephen King, 2009

[Book](#)

| Each chapter in this book explores a particular part of the British political system. Each one gives an excellent account of what the situation is now and how this has developed over time. The book is now a few years old, but most of its content remains accurate.

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**Developments in British Politics 10** - 2016

[Book](#)

| This is a latest in a long-running series of books that examine recent developments in British politics. It was published in September 2016, so it is more up-to-date than any of the textbooks. It contains many interesting chapters. The text

was, however, all but finalized before the EU referendum in June 2016, so it is already behind the most recent developments in various ways.

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### **Sex, Lies, and the Ballot Box: 50 Things You Need to Know about British Elections - 2014**

**Book** | This is an excellent, recent set of short, readable essays addressing many aspects of electoral politics.

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### **Brexit and British politics - Geoffrey Evans, Anand Menon, 2017**

**Book** | This is a really good introduction to Brexit and (what we can say so far about) the nature of British politics post-Brexit.

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## **Journals** (5 items)

Many academic journals contain articles that are useful for this course. This section contains only those that are most relevant. New issues appear several times a year, and new articles appear online throughout the year, whenever they are ready. So do check back regularly. In addition, you can use Google Scholar to search for articles on particular topics across all journals.

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### **The Political Quarterly**

**Journal** | This is the best journal for up-to-date discussion of key issues in contemporary British politics.

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### **Parliamentary Affairs -**

**Journal** | Parliamentary Affairs carries valuable articles on all aspects of contemporary British politics: while it is focused particularly on Parliament, it also often ranges more widely.

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### **British Politics**

**Journal** | British Politics is a bit less headline-chasing than the two journals above, so its articles often give a longer-term perspective on the key debates.

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### **Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties -**

**Journal** | JEPOP (as it is known) covers the topics in its title. It isn't just focused on the UK, but it does contain a lot of UK-specific analysis.

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### **Political Insight**

**Journal** | This is a magazine containing short scholarly articles on contemporary issues in (mainly) British politics. It is very accessible and often contains useful routes into current topics.

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## **Websites** (6 items)

The following provide a good starting point to some of the things you may want to look for:

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### **UK Parliament - Homepage**

**Website** | The Westminster Parliament's website is a vast and extremely useful resource. It includes the full text of debates in both Houses, committee reports, information on bills going through Parliament, and many other official documents and other useful materials.

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### **UK Parliament - Research Briefings**

**Website** | The libraries of the House of Commons and House of Lords produce huge numbers of useful reports on all political issues – including the sorts of issues that we will be exploring in the module. This is the portal page to all those reports.

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### How Government Works – gov.uk

**Webpage** | The www.gov.uk website is the gateway to the UK government, providing links to various departments, the devolved institutions, and lots of other useful information. The page that is linked to here provides a useful overview.

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### Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street – gov.uk

**Webpage** | The 10 Downing Street website gives details of recent initiatives and also includes general guides to government.

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### Palgrave Macmillan - Politics and Governance in the UK - Michael Moran

**Webpage** | This is the companion website for Michael Moran's book (see above). Even if you don't buy the book you can access the reading list and updates taking the material beyond the book's publication date. The most recent edition of the book was published in July 2015, so there are not many updates at the moment. But these will be added to as time goes by.

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### Constitution Unit

**Webpage** | This is the site of the Constitution Unit here at the School of Public Policy, which includes useful updates on recent constitutional reform as well as an archive of publications and a range of links.

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## Blogs (5 items)

The following blogs all provide useful commentary on major issues in British politics.

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### The Constitution Unit Blog

**Website**

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### LSE British Politics and Policy blog

**Webpage**

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### UK Constitutional Law Association blog

**Webpage**

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### Democratic Audit UK blog

**Website**

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### Open Democracy UK

**Webpage**

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## News Sources (14 items)

Regularly reading news sources is incredibly important for two reasons. First, it helps you to keep abreast of what is happening in British politics – and there is a lot happening just at the moment! Second, it allows you to see how the different parts of the media world portray politics and how other political actors engage with the media.

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## Broadcasters (3 items)

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### BBC News

[Webpage](#) | The BBC is by far the UK's biggest news provider in terms of the size of both its operation and its audience. This link takes you to the BBC News website. In addition, look out for programmes on BBC Television and BBC Radio. The Today Programme on BBC Radio 4 (6–9am on weekdays; 7–9am on Saturdays) is the most important news programme and plays a large part in setting the political agenda for the day.

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### Sky News

[Website](#) | Sky (which is part of the Rupert Murdoch media empire) offers a rather more populist, tabloidy take on the news. As well as the website linked here, see also the Sky News television channel.

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### Channel 4 News

[Website](#) | Channel 4 News is, like BBC News, a serious-minded source. It has much less content than the BBC, but a lot of it is good. Particularly useful is the FactCheck section, where claims that are currently prominent in political debate are carefully scrutinized.

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## Newspapers (8 items)

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### The Guardian

[Webpage](#) | The UK's premier serious-minded newspaper with a left-of-centre orientation.

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### The Times

[Webpage](#) | The UK's premier serious-minded newspaper to the right of centre (though also containing a diverse range of voices). Note that the website is behind a paywall.

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### Daily Telegraph

[Website](#) | The Telegraph is the most widely read right-of-centre newspaper. Given its steady loyalty to the Conservatives, it is sometimes known as the 'Torygraph'.

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### Financial Times

[Webpage](#) | The Financial Times has the most international approach of any British newspaper. You can read a small number of articles per month without having to pay.

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### Daily Mail

[Webpage](#) | The Daily Mail was traditionally known as a "mid-market" paper between the broadsheets and the tabloids. But it is now stuffed full of celebrity gossip. It pursues a strongly right-wing political agenda and is the bête noir of the liberal left for its decidedly illiberal stance on matters such as immigration.

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### Daily Express

[Website](#) | The Daily Express occupies a similar position in the market to the Daily Mail.

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### The Sun

[Webpage](#) | The Sun is the most widely read newspaper in the UK. It is a tabloid, full of celebrity news. It is to the right of centre politically.

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### Daily Mirror

[Website](#) | The Daily Mirror is another tabloid. It is the only low-brow newspaper on the left of centre politically.

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## Web-Only News Sources (3 items)

The main sources for political news in the UK are still the old broadcasters and newspapers – whether in their traditional formats or online. There are also now a few influential online-only news outlets.

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### The Huffington Post UK

**Website** | The Huffington Post UK edition is much the biggest online-only source of news and comment relating to British politics.

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### politics.co.uk

**Website** | The politics.co.uk website is also a good online-only news source.

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### Politico UK

**Webpage**

## Topic 1: Brexit Britain: Who Wants What Why? (23 items)

Brexit currently dominates politics in the UK. The course begins by examining how the UK electorate voted for Brexit and why voters remain split down the middle on this issue. By doing so, we explore some of the fundamental underpinnings of politics in the UK: What roles are played by national identities in the UK? What is the role of class and other related factors in UK politics today?

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Seminar Questions: What does the 2016 EU referendum campaign tell us about the nature of national identity in the UK today? Is education now the key dividing line in British politics? If so, why?

## Required Reading (2 items)

In advance of the seminar, everyone should read AT LEAST the two readings here AND two further readings from the sections below.

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**The new politics of class: the political exclusion of the British working class** - Geoffrey Evans, James Tilley, 2017

**Book** | Most of this book was written before the 2016 referendum, but contains crucial background material on the factors that shape political attitudes and voting patterns in the UK. The postscript then provides an analysis of the referendum. Please read AT LEAST Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 10 (Postscript).

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**'Why Leave Won the UK's EU Referendum'** - John Curtice, September 2017

**Article**

## Further Reading: The Brexit Referendum (13 items)

The readings in this section offer a variety of perspectives on the Brexit referendum. Most examine voting patterns, at least in part. Many also look at the nature of the campaign.

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**Britain After Brexit A Nation Divided** - Robert Ford, Matthew Goodwin, 2017

**Article**

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**The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent'** - Sara B. Hobolt, October 2016

[Article](#)

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**How Brexit was made in England** - Ailsa Henderson, Charlie Jeffery, Dan Wincott, Richard Wyn Jones, November 2017

[Article](#)

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**Who voted for Brexit? A comprehensive district-level analysis** - Sascha O Becker, Thiemo Fetzer, Dennis Novy, October 2017

[Article](#)

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**How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday... and why - Lord Ashcroft Polls** - Lord Ashcroft, 24 June 2016

[Webpage](#) | Most - though not all - of the political scientists who write about the UK and the EU favour the UK's EU membership. It is useful, therefore to see the perspective of someone who publicly announced that he would vote to leave. Lord Ashcroft is one such person, and he commissions and writes about many public opinion surveys. Here are the results of his referendum survey.

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**Why Britain Voted for Brexit: An Individual-Level Analysis of the 2016 Referendum Vote** - Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, Paul Whiteley, July 2017

[Article](#)

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**Taking back control? Investigating the role of immigration in the 2016 vote for Brexit** - Matthew Goodwin, Caitlin Milazzo, August 2017

[Article](#)

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**Pluralism, National Identity and Citizenship: Britain after Brexit** - Richard Ashcroft, Mark Bevir, July 2016

[Article](#)

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**Racism, Crisis, Brexit** - Satnam Virdee, Brendan McGeever, August 2018

[Article](#)

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**Immobility and the Brexit vote** - Neil Lee, Katy Morris, Thomas Kemeny, March 2018

[Article](#)

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**The malaise of the squeezed middle: Challenging the narrative of the 'left behind' Brexiter** - Lorenza Antonucci, Laszlo Horvath, Yordan Kutiyski, André Krouwel, June 2017

[Article](#)

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**"It's NOT the economy, stupid: Brexit as a story of personal values", LSE British Politics and Policy blog** - Eric Kaufmann, 7 July 2016

[Webpage](#)

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**EU Referendum Analysis 2016: Media, Voters and the Campaign** - July 2016

[Book](#) | This book came out just after the 2016 referendum. It contains lots of very short and very interesting analyses of the campaign. Feel free to read a selection of the chapters that most interest you.

**Further Reading: Explorations of the Nature of Britishness** (5 items)

We won't focus on these readings in the seminar. But you might find them useful: they all

date from before the Brexit referendum, so they give a less time-specific sense of debates about the nature of 'Britishness'.

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### **What is Britishness? Citizenship, Values and Identity, Red Pepper** - David Beetham, 2008

**Webpage** | This blog post is written from the position of a left-wing intellectual

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### **Britishness in the 21st Century** - Linda Colley, 8 December 1999

**Document** | This was a lecture given to the prime minister, Tony Blair, and guests, at 10 Downing Street. It was a response to growing government and public interest in the notion of "British identity".

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### **Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective** -

Krishan Kumar, 2000

**Article** | This essay gives useful comparative and theoretical perspective on the nature of Britishness.

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### **(Re)imagining Magna Carta: Myth, Metaphor and the Rhetoric of Britishness** - Judi Atkins, July 2016

**Article** | This very recent article looks at the very recent rhetoric of 'Britishness' used by political leaders in the UK.

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### **Roundtable on English Nationalism and Euroscepticism, British Politics, September 2015** -

Michael Kenny, Chris Gifford, Emma Vines, Ben Wellings

**Article** | These four very short articles are responses to a recent book on the relationship between English national identity and Euroscepticism. You don't need to read the book - you will get the gist of what it says by reading these responses, which say a lot about the ideas about nation that may have shaped the EU referendum of June 2016.

### **Further Reading: Class in British Politics** (2 items)

The stereotype of Britain is that it is a country in which social class matters. People's social class was clearly important in mid-20th century to their attitudes and how they voted. There is much debate about what has happened since then. The required reading above by Geoffrey Evans and James Tilley is a crucial recent contribution to this debate. The readings here offer useful perspectives.

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### **Symposium: James Tilley and Geoffrey Evans, The New Politics of Class** - Harold D. Clarke,

Eric Kaufmann, Rachel Reeves, Mike Savage, James Tilley, Geoffrey Evans, 2017

**Article** | The required reading above by Geoffrey Evans and James Tilley is a crucial recent contribution to this debate. This symposium continues the discussion. You will need to scroll down a bit to find the symposium. Once there, you will find four responses to Evans and Tilley's book - by Harold D. Clarke, Eric Kaufmann, Rachel Reeves, and Mike Savage - followed by a reply to these by Tilley and Evans. All of these are very short and all are worth reading.

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### **Class** - Fiona Devine

**Chapter** | This chapter examines the nature of class - and particularly class inequality - as it actually exists in British society, and at how this has changed over time.



## Topic 2: Gender and Race/Ethnicity in Contemporary British Politics (35 items)

In this second topic, we continue to explore the sociological underpinnings of politics in the UK by considering the roles played by gender and by 'race' or ethnicity.

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Seminar Questions: To what extent is politics in the UK less gendered today than in the past? What roles does ethnicity play in UK politics today?

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### Required Reading (2 items)

Please read AT LEAST the two readings in this section AND two further readings from the sections below.

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**More Stable than Strong: Women's Representation, Voters and Issues** - Emily Harmer, Rosalynd Southern, March 2018

**Article** | This is a study of the role of gender in the 2017 general election and provides a fascinating, up-to-date overview of many aspects of the topic.

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**Party Strategies and the Descriptive Representation of Ethnic Minorities: The 2010 British General Election** - Maria Sobolewska, May 2013

**Article**

### Further Reading: Gender (9 items)

Gender, of course, has many aspects and can influence politics in enormously many ways. The readings here offer a variety of ways of thinking about a range of aspects - though, of course, they cannot cover everything.

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**Gender** - Fiona MacKay

**Chapter** | This is a recent overview of and a good way into the topic of gender in British politics.

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**Women Acting for Women? An Analysis of Gender and Debate Participation in the British House of Commons, 2005–2007** - Ana Catalano

**Article** | One of the key issues in debates about women's representation is whether having more women in Parliament (more 'descriptive' representation for women) leads to debates and policy outcomes that better reflect women's interests and concerns (more 'substantive' representation). This article offers empirical analysis of that issue.

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**Politics and Parenthood: An Examination of UK Party Leadership Elections** - Jessica C. Smith, January 2018

**Article**

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**The Gender of News and News of Gender: A Study of Sex, Politics, and Press Coverage of the 2010 British General Election** - Karen Ross, Elizabeth Evans, Lisa Harrison, Mary Shears, Khursheed Wadia, January 2013

**Article** | Gaining perspective across multiple elections is valuable. This article provides a good analysis of media reporting of the 2010 general election.

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**Men Writing about Men: Media and the UK General Election 2015** - Emily Harmer, 22 May 2015

**Webpage** | This blog post provides the results of detailed media analysis of the degree to which women were present in reporting of the 2015 general election campaign.

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## UK Election Analysis 2017: Media, Voters and the Campaign

**Website** | This is a book published shortly after the 2017 general election containing lots of very short chapters analysing different aspects of the election. Please read chapters 21, 39, 51, 52, 53, 87, 88, and 89, all of which explore gender in different ways.

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## Gender and the Development of a Political Persona: The Case of Scottish First Minister

**Nicola Sturgeon** - Michael Higgins, Fiona M. McKay, 2015 (online-first pre-publication)

**Article** | Three out of the four executive leaders in the UK - the Prime Minister and the First Ministers of Scotland and Northern Ireland - are now women. This article examines the degree to which writing about one of them remains gendered.

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## Intimidation in Public Life: A Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life - December 2017

**Document**

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## World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2017 - 2017

**Document** | You may be interested in seeing how the UK compares to other countries in terms of levels of gender inequality. This report offers one perspective on that issue - though you might want to consider whether it measures gender inequality in the ways that you consider most important.

## Further Reading: Sexuality in British Politics (4 items)

We are unlikely to have much time in the seminar to explore the issues in these readings, but they nevertheless raise important and fascinating questions.

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## Public Opinion toward Homosexuality and Gay Rights in Great Britain - Ben Clements, Clive D. Field, June 2014

**Article** | This is a fascinating analysis of changes in public opinion.

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## Partisan Attachments and Attitudes towards Same-Sex Marriage in Britain - Ben Clements, 2014-01-01

**Article** | This is a useful and quick overview of attitudes on this issue.

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## "Institutionally Homophobic? Political Parties and the Substantive Representation of LGBT People: Westminster and Regional UK Elections 1945-2011" - Paul Chaney, January 2013

**Article** | This article examines the policies of the various political parties on LGBT matters, as reflected in their election manifestos.

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## Partisan and religious drivers of moral conservatism: Same-sex marriage and abortion in Northern Ireland - Jocelyn Evans, Jonathan Tonge, 13/07/2016 - online-first publication, 2018

**Article** | Most of our readings focus on UK-level politics or on attitudes in Great Britain. This article looks at the very different situation in Northern Ireland.

## Further Reading: Race and Ethnicity in British Politics (11 items)

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### Is Racial Prejudice Declining in Britain? - Robert Ford, December 2008

**Article**

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The politics of nationalism and white racism in the UK - Magne Flemmen, Mike Savage,

2017

[Article](#)

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**Candidate Ethnic Origins and Voter Preferences: Examining Name Discrimination in Local Elections in Britain** - Michael Thrasher, Galina Borisjuk, Colin Rallings, Richard Webber, April 2017

[Article](#)

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**The Politics of Voluntary and Involuntary Identities: Are Muslims in Britain an Ethnic, Racial or Religious Minority?** - Nasar Meer, February 2008

[Article](#)

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**Ethnic minorities in British politics: candidate selection and clan politics in the Labour Party** - Parveen Akhtar, Timothy Peace, March 2018

[Article](#)

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**Ethnic Heterogeneity in the Social Bases of Voting at the 2010 British General Election** - Anthony F. Heath, Stephen D. Fisher, David Sanders, Maria Sobolewska, May 2011

[Article](#)

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**Minority-Ethnic MPs and the Substantive Representation of Minority Interests in the House of Commons, 2005-2011** - Thomas Saalfeld, Daniel Bischof Bischof, April 2013

[Article](#)

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**The Multicultural State We're In: Muslims, 'Multiculture' and the 'Civic Re-balancing' of British Multiculturalism** - Nasar Meer, Tariq Modood, October 2009

[Article](#)

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**The democratic engagement of Britain's ethnic minorities** - David Sanders, Stephen D. Fisher, Anthony Heath, Maria Sobolewska, January 2014

[Article](#)

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**Challenging the Civic/Ethnic and West/East Dichotomies in the Study of Nationalism** - Stephen Shulman, June 2002

[Article](#)

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**Toward a More Pragmatic Multiculturalism? How the U.K. Policy Community Sees the Future of Ethnic Diversity Policies** - Peter Taylor-Gooby, Edmund Waite, April 2014

[Article](#)

## Further Reading: Race and Ethnicity in British Society (4 items)

The readings in the preceding section focus mostly on the impact of race/ethnicity on high-level politics. But politics also includes what happens in wider society, and it is important to consider these broader perspectives. The readings here are all valuable. You will find more by searching online.

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**Brit(ish): on race, identity and belonging** - Afua Hirsch, 2018

[Book](#)

| This book has been very widely discussed. If you can't get hold of a copy or you don't have time to read it, you will find numerous reviews and interviews with the author online.

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**The reality of being black in today's Britain', Guardian** - David Olusoga, 29 October 2016

**Article** | This is an excerpt from a book. You are, of course, welcome to read the book too. Available below in the library.

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**Black and British: a forgotten history** - David Olusoga, 2016

**Book**

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**Multicultural Britain in the 21st Century - Opinium research** - James Crouch, Priya Minhas, 2017

**Document** | This report sets out evidence from public opinion research on the attitudes and perceptions of white and BAME Britons on matters of race/ethnicity and culture.

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### **Further Reading: Intersectional Approaches** (4 items)

The concept of 'intersectionality' has received less attention in the UK than in the US, but some studies looking (particularly) at gender/ethnicity intersectionality are now available and are well worth reading.

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**Intersecting Inequalities: Britain's Equality Review** - Judith Squires, December 2009

**Article** | The issue of "intersectionality" – relating to the problems of belonging to multiple cross-cutting minority or disadvantaged groups – has received less attention in the UK than in the United States. This article provides a fairly rare exception to that.

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**Diversity Matters: Intersectionality and Women's Representation in the USA and UK** -

Elizabeth Evans, 2016-07

**Article**

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**Intersectionality and Press Coverage of Political Campaigns** - Orlanda Ward, January 2017

**Article**

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**Intersectional institutions: Representing women and ethnic minorities in the British Labour Party** - Mona Lena Krook, Mary K Nugent, September 2016

**Article**

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### **Topic 3: Power at the Centre: Westminster and Whitehall** (24 items)

This week we begin an exploration of the institutions of British politics. We begin at the centre, with the core relationship between the legislature (the UK parliament, based in the Palace of Westminster) and the executive (the UK government, based around Whitehall). We look at how these have been theorized, introducing the concepts of the parliamentary system and the 'Westminster model'. And we look at who they operate in practice.

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Seminar Questions: Does the UK's parliamentary system of government make the prime minister less powerful than a president would be? Is the role of the UK Parliament in shaping new laws too weak?

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### **Required Reading** (3 items)

Ahead of the seminar, everyone should read each of the readings in this section AND at least one reading from each of the following sections.

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**Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries** -

Arend Lijphart, 2012

**Book** | Chapters 2 ("The Westminster Model of Democracy. pp 9-29") and 3 ("The Consensus Model of Democracy pp 30-45") are both essential reading - the latter because you can't fully understand something unless you also understand what it isn't.

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**"The Policy Power of the Westminster Parliament: The 'Parliamentary State' and the Empirical Evidence"** - Meg Russell, Philip Cowley, May 2015

**Article**

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**'Westminster versus Whitehall: Two Incompatible Views of the Constitution', UK Constitutional Law Association blog** - David Howarth, 10 April 2019

**Webpage**

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## Further Reading: Parliamentarism and the Prime Minister (9 items)

The UK political system is a parliamentary one rather than a presidential or semi-presidential one. The readings in this section will help you understand this distinction and how the British parliamentary system operates in practice.

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**"The Prime Ministerialisation of the British Prime Minister"** - Keith Dowding, July 2013

**Article** | This is a response to authors such as Heffernan and Webb, and Foley, so it would be good to read at least one of them first. Note that there are also three short responses to the article immediately following in the same issue of the journal, and these are well worth reading too.

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**Prime Ministerial Predominance? Core Executive Politics in the UK** - Richard Heffernan, August 2003

**Article**

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**The British Prime Minister: Much More Than 'First Among Equals'** - Richard Heffernan, Paul Webb

**Chapter** | This chapter examines changes in the role of the British prime minister, and whether the notion of "presidentialization" of that role is useful.

The e-book is also available below.

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**The British Prime Minister: Much More Than 'First Among Equals'** - Richard Heffernan, Paul Webb

**Chapter** | Recommended

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**Exploring (and Explaining) the British Prime Minister** - Richard Heffernan, November 2005

**Article**

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**Prime Ministers, Presidentialism and Westminster Smokescreens** - Mark Bevir, R. A. W. Rhodes, December 2006

**Article**

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**Cameron as Prime Minister: The Intra-Executive Politics of Britain's Coalition Government** - Mark Bennister, Richard Heffernan, October 2012

**Article**

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**Understanding the power of the prime minister: structure and agency in models of prime ministerial power'** - Christopher Byrne, Kevin Theakston, March 2018

Article

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**The British Presidency: Tony Blair and the Politics of Public Leadership** - Michael Foley, 2000

Book | This is a classic analysis of the rise of the so-called British "presidency". It is some years old now, so it will be good to consider whether its analysis is still accurate today (if it ever was).

**Further Reading: The Influence of Parliament** (11 items)

The UK parliament has often been characterized as a weak institution that is dominated by the executive. But many more recent studies suggest otherwise - partly because of changes in the way parliament operates. The readings here discuss.

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**Modes of UK Executive-Legislative Relations Revisited** - Meg Russell, Philip Cowley, January 2018

Article

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**Actors, Motivations and Outcomes in the Legislative Process: Policy Influence at Westminster** - Meg Russell, Daniel Gover, Kristina Wollter, Meghan Benton, January 2017

Article

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**Fitting the Bill: Bringing Commons Legislation Committees into Line with Best Practice** - Meg Russell, Bob Morris, Phil Larkin, June 2013

Document

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**"Never Allow a Crisis Go To Waste: The Wright Committee Reforms to Strengthen the House of Commons"** - Meg Russell, October 2011

Article

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**A Stronger Second Chamber? Assessing the Impact of House of Lords Reform in 1999 and the Lessons for Bicameralism** - Meg Russell, December 2010

Article

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**Audit 2017: How effective is the Westminster Parliament in scrutinising central government policy-making?' : Democratic Audit UK** - Patrick Dunleavy, 31 August 2017

Webpage

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**Majoritarianism Reinterpreted: Effective Representation and the Quality of Westminster Democracy** - Felicity Matthews, January 2018

Article

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**Rubber Stamp or Cockpit? The Impact of Parliament on Government Legislation** - Susanna Kalitowski, October 2008

Article

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**Prime Minister's questions as political ritual** - Joni Lovenduski, December 2012

Article

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**More of the Same or a Period of Change? The Impact of Bill Committees in the Twenty-First**

**Century House of Commons** - Louise Thompson, July 2013[Article](#)**Debunking the Myths of Bill Committees in the British House of Commons** - Louise Thompson, February 2016[Article](#)**Topic 4: Political Parties and the Place of Ideology in British Politics** (53 items)

The basic character of British politics is shaped not only by the official institutions of the state, but also by the unofficial institutions that occupy state office: political parties. We will have looked at some aspects of parties in topic 3. Here, we focus on the organizational structures of political parties in the UK and on those parties' agendas. What are parties like as organizations, and how does that shape what they do? What ideological families do they belong to? Do they compete for votes mainly on the basis of ideology or more on other grounds? Do voters adhere to particular ideologies or are they interested in other things?

Seminar Questions: What is the power of party members in the UK? Is this good or bad for British politics? What is the place of ideology in British politics today?

**Required Reading** (2 items)

In advance of the seminar, everyone should read the articles in this section AND at least one reading from the first two Further Reading sections below.

**The Labour party, Momentum and the problem with intra-party democracy: Democratic Audit UK** - Fabio Wolkenstein, 31 October 2016[Webpage](#)

| This is just a short blogpost. It focuses on the current Labour Party, which has seen huge change since 2015. It will be important for you to think about whether what it says can be extended beyond the time in which it was written and whether it also applies to other parties

**Brexit and the 2017 UK General Election** - Sara B. Hobolt, September 2018[Article](#)

| Full analyses of what shaped peoples votes in the 2017 general election is yet to emerge, but this article offers a useful account of what we know so far.

**Further Reading: Political Parties and Their Members** (10 items)

The role of party members has varied a lot over time and between political parties. It has long been debated in the UK and is in other countries. It is useful to embed our discussions in these longer discussions, so some of the readings here are quite old and others are comparative rather than focusing specifically on the UK. It will be important for you to consider whether and how they are relevant to the UK today.

**Membership of UK political parties - House of Commons Library report** - Lukas Audickas, Noel Dempsey, Richard Keen, 3 September 2018[Document](#)

'Grassroots: Britain's party members: who they are, what they think and what they do' -

**Mile End Institute report** - Tim Bale, Paul Webb, Monica Poletti, January 2018

[Document](#)

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**The 'how' of election manifestos in the British Labour Party'** - Robin T Pettitt, May 2018

[Article](#)

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**'The Longest Suicide Vote in History': The Labour Party Leadership Election of 2015** - Peter Dorey, Andrew Denham, 2016

[Article](#)

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**British Party Members: An Overview** - Patrick Seyd, Paul Whiteley, 2004

[Article](#)

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**Power in British political parties: Iron law or special pleading?** - Dennis Kavanagh, July 1985

[Article](#)

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**No man can serve two masters** - Richard S. Katz, March 2014

[Article](#)

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**May's Law of Curvilinear Disparity Revisited** - Pippa Norris, 1995

[Article](#)

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**Intra-Party Democracy and Party Responsiveness** - Ron Lehrer, November 2012

[Article](#)

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**Mandatory reselection: lessons from Labour's past** - Eric Shaw, 8 November 2018

[Webpage](#)

## Further Reading: Valence Politics (5 items)

One view of the role of ideology in British politics is that it really does not matter: at elections, voters do not choose between parties on the basis of ideology. This idea rose to prominence in the first fifteen years of the 21st century, but has been severely challenged since then. The readings here explore that approach.

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**"Valence Politics': How Britain Votes Now"** - David Denver, May 2005

[Article](#)

| This review article focuses on the degree to which ideology is a factor shaping voting behaviour. There is one key book that has transformed the debate on this issue. That book is, however, an extremely difficult read. This review of the book provides a short, readable summary and assessment of the main argument.

E-book available below

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**"Valence Politics and Electoral Choice in Britain, 2010"** - Harold Clarke, David Sanders, Marianne Stewart, Paul Whiteley, May 2011

[Article](#)

| The authors of this article are the leading exponents of the 'valence politics' view of voting. Here they apply that to the 2010 election.

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**Valence Politics** - Harold D. Clarke, et al

[Chapter](#)

| **Recommended**

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**Owning the Issue Agenda: Party Strategies and Vote Choices in British Elections** - Jane



Green, Sara B. Hobolt, September 2008

**Article** | This article goes further in considering the importance of ideology and other factors in shaping who voters vote.

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**A Directional Theory of Issue Voting** - George Rabinowitz, Stuart Elaine Macdonald, March 1989

**Article** | This reading isn't directly about the valence model. Rather, it offers an alternative perspective on voting, according to which ideological differences between parties remain important. It isn't specifically about the UK, but is still very useful for thinking about how party politics works here.

## Further Reading: Ideology and Voters' Relations with Parties (5 items)

Some of the readings here come from before 2015 and, even then, disputed the 'valence politics' thesis. Others are more recent and seek to understand developments in the last few years.

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**The Declining Representativeness of the British Party System, and Why It Matters** - Heinz Brandenburg, Robert Johns, December 2014

**Article** | This fascinating article argues that the weakness of ideology's role in British electoral politics has negative consequences.

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**Ideological Quietism? Ideology and Party Politics in Britain** - Katharine Dommett, September 2014

**Article** | This article has a different take on the issues, looking at why it \*appears\* that ideology is not important.

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**Downs and Two-Party Convergence** - Bernard Grofman, 2004

**Article** | This article is not focused specifically on the UK. But it provides a good overview of big theoretical debates about whether we should expect parties to converge on the ideological centre ground in the context of two-party politics.

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**The Marriage of Politics and Marketing** - Jennifer Lees-Marshment, September 2001

**Article** | This is an interesting take on the ways in which parties can use marketing techniques during election campaigns.

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**Brexit or Corbyn? Campaign and Inter-Election Vote Switching in the 2017 UK General Election** - Jonathan Mellon, Geoffrey Evans, Edward Fieldhouse, Jane Green, Christopher Prosser, October 2018

**Article**

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## Further Reading: The Conservative Party and Conservatism (14 items)

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**Ideological Change in the British Conservative Party** - Ivor Crewe, Donald D. Searing, June 1988

**Article**

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**Margaret Thatcher and Thatcherism: Dead but not buried** - Bob Jessop, April 2015

**Article**

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**Ideology Matters: Party Competition, Ideological Positioning and the Case of the**

**Conservative Party under David Cameron** - Steve Buckler, David Dolowitz, 2012

Article

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**Theorising Cameronism** - Peter Kerr, Christopher Byrne, Emma Foster, May 2011

Article | This is quite an early take on the question of whether it is meaningful to talk of 'Cameronism'.

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**Constructing a New Conservatism: Ideology and Values** - Richard Hayton

Chapter

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**Cameron's Conservative Party, social liberalism and social justice** - Richard Hayton, Libby McEnhill, June 2015

Article

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**Cameron and Liberal Conservatism: Attitudes within the Parliamentary Conservative Party and Conservative Ministers** - Timothy Heppell, August 2013

Article

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**From big society to small state: Conservatism and the privatisation of government** - Martin Smith, Rhonda Jones, June 2015

Article

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**The Conservative Party: From Thatcher to Cameron** - Tim Bale, 2016

Book | The best recent analysis of the modern Conservative Party.

The earlier 2010 edition is also available in the library

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**The weaker-willed, the craven-hearted : the decline of One Nation Conservatism** - Peter Dorey, Mark Garnett, 2015

Article |

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**Theresa May's speech shows that free-market ideas are in decline** - Daily Telegraph - Allister Heath, 5 October 2016

Webpage

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**Theresa May promises bright future for all in conference speech** - Daily Express - Macer Hall, 6 October 2016

Webpage

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**Theresa May's Conference Speech Gave a Monstrous Ideology a Human Face**, Vice UK - Sam Kriss, 5 October 2016

Webpage

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**Theresa May's speech to the Conservative Party Conference, 5 October 2016**

Audio-visual document

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**Further Reading: The Labour Party and Its Ideology** (10 items)

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**New Ideologies for Old?** - Andrew Vincent, January 1998

Article

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**The Ideology of New Labour** - Michael Freeden, January 1999

Article

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**"Labour's New Labour Legacy: Politics after Blair and Brown"** - Richard Heffernan, May 2011

Article

| A useful review of the impact of the Blair-Brown years on the Labour Party. It is particularly interesting to read this in light of the recent Labour leadership contest, and to consider what each says about the other.

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**Narrating One Nation: The Ideology and Rhetoric of the Miliband Labour Party** - Judi Atkins, February 2015

Article

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**The Longest Suicide Vote in History: The Labour Party Leadership Election of 2015** - Peter Dorey, Andrew Denham, September 2016

Article

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**Labour's ideology: towards common ground** - Ben Jackson, 2015

Article

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**What does Jeremy Corbyn think?** - The Guardian - Nadia Khomami, 12 September 2015

Webpage

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**What did Corbyn say in his Conference speech?** - Prospect Magazine - Tom Quinn, 28 September 2016

Webpage

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**Jeremy Corbyn pledges socialism for 21st century as he plans business tax hike and benefits free-for-all.** - Michael Wilkinson, 28 September 2016

Webpage

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**Jeremy Corbyn's speech to the Labour Party conference, 28 September 2016**

Audio-visual document

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## Useful websites (6 items)

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**The Conservative Party**

Website

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**Labour Party**

Webpage

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**The Liberal Democrats**

Webpage

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**SNP (Scottish National Party)**

Website

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## UKIP (the United Kingdom Independence Party)

[Website](#)

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## UK Polling Report

[Website](#) | This very useful website summarizes and intelligently analyses the latest polls on party support (and some other key issues) in the UK. It also includes links to the main polling organizations, which you might like to follow.

## Topic 5: The Media in British Politics (19 items)

The traditional media in the UK – print and broadcast – have some striking features when compared with the media in most other democracies: the tabloid newspapers can be unusually vitriolic; the regulation of broadcasting is unusually tight; and the BBC is unusually dominant. By contrast, the rising digital media raise challenges and opportunities in the UK that are common to those in many other countries. This topic examines the implications of both of these patterns for politics and democracy.

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Seminar questions: Do the UK's tabloid newspapers strengthen or weaken British democracy? Does the requirement for political neutrality in broadcasting strengthen or weaken British democracy? Is the rise of digital media strengthening or weakening British democracy?

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## Required Readings (1 items)

In advance of the seminar, please read AT LEAST the reading here AND two further readings from the sections below.

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**How well does the UK's media system support democratic politics and represent citizens' interests? - Democratic Audit UK** - Ros Taylor, 30 August 2018

[Webpage](#)

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## Further Reading: Traditional Media - Print and Broadcast (9 items)

Even if they are declining in importance, the traditional (print and broadcast) media remain at the heart of British politics. The readings here offer a wide variety of perspectives.

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**Do tabloids poison the well of social media? Explaining democratically dysfunctional news sharing'** - Andrew Chadwick, Cristian Vaccari, Ben O'Loughlin, April 2018

[Article](#)

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**Out with the Old, In with the New? The Media Campaign** - Stephen Ward, Dominic Wring, March 2018

[Article](#)

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**Tony Blair's Reuters Speech on the Media and responses** - Tony Blair and others, October–December 2007

[Article](#) | This is a speech that Tony Blair delivered in 2007 shortly before stepping down as Prime Minister. He offered a sharp critique of the impact of the media on British politics. The issue of the journal also contains some interesting responses.

See below.

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**The Political Quarterly : Vol 78 , No 4**[Article](#) | Recommended

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**Public Service and Commercial Broadcasting: Impacts on Politics and Society** - Ken Newton, January 2016[Article](#) | This offers comparative perspective on the value of public-service broadcasting. Of course, you should not take for granted that its rosy view necessarily provides the whole picture!

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**Why the BBC Matters: Memo to the New Parliament about a Unique British Institution** - Steven Barnett, Jean Seaton, July–September 2010[Article](#)

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**May the Weak Force Be with You: The Power of the Mass Media in Modern Politics** - Kenneth Newton, March 2006[Article](#) | Most studies argue that the media are powerful. This article provides a striking counterpoint to that, offering a very different, rigorously researched perspective.

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**Why the British Press Is Brilliant** - Stein Ringen, 2003-09-01[Article](#) | This is a short think piece by a highly respected scholar rather than a piece of careful scholarship in itself. It offers an unusual and thought-provoking perspective.

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**Sketching Muslims: A Corpus Driven Analysis of Representations Around the Word 'Muslim' in the British Press 1998–2009** - Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos, Tony McEnery, July 2013[Article](#) | This article explores the question of whether media representations of Muslims skew public perceptions.**Further Reading: New Media** (8 items)

The rise of digital media, especially social media, has begun to change fundamentally the nature of political communications in the UK. This is a fast-moving area, but the studies here offer some valuable recent analyses.

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**Russian Involvement and Junk News during Brexit – Oxford Internet Institute** - Vidya Narayanan, Philip N. Howard, Bence Kollanyi, Mona Elswah, 2017[Webpage](#)

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**Social Media and News Sources during the 2017 UK General Election – Oxford Internet Institute** - Monica Kaminska, John D. Gallacher, Bence Kollanyi, Taha Yasseri, Philip N. Howard, 6 June 2017[Webpage](#)

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**Out with the Old, In with the New? The Media Campaign** - Stephen Ward, Dominic Wring, March 2018[Article](#)

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**Digital Campaigning: The Rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns** - Katharine Dommett, Luke Temple, March 2018[Article](#)

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**The echo chamber is overstated: the moderating effect of political interest and diverse media** - Elizabeth Dubois, Grant Blank, May 2018

[Article](#)

**"“Enemies of the people”": Populist performances in the Daily Mail reporting of the Article 50 case'** - Ruth Breeze, October 2018

[Article](#)

**Data and Democracy in the Digital Age, The Constitution Society** - Julianne Kerr Morrison, Ravi Naik, Stephanie Hankey, 10 July 2018

[Document](#)

**House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 'Disinformation and "Fake News": Interim Report', Fifth Report of Session 2017-19** - 29 July 2018

[Document](#) | This is quite a long report, so feel free to be selective in your reading.

## Topic 6: The Judiciary and Human Rights (21 items)

Judges have traditionally had a weaker role in British politics than in the politics of many other democracies, but that has been changing in recent years. This topic explores some of the particular features of judges' place in British politics, focusing particularly on the degree to which political decision-making is constrained by measures designed to ensure protection of human rights.

Seminar Questions: Are declarations of incompatibility in the UK any different in practice from declarations of unconstitutionality in other countries? How will Brexit affect the role of the courts in British politics?

## Required Reading (1 items)

In advance of the seminar, please read the reading here AND at least two further readings from the sections below

**Human rights and the UK constitution, British Academy** - Colm O'Cinneide, 2012

[Document](#) | This pamphlet provides an overview of the role of the judiciary, particularly in respect of human rights, and how that has changed in recent years.

## Further Reading: The Judiciary in British Politics: The Big Picture (5 items)

The first two articles in this section provide contrasting surveys of the changing role of the judiciary in British politics. The remaining readings give broad and very helpful overviews.

**The Westminster Model, Governance and Judicial Reform** - Mark Bevir, October 2008

[Article](#) | In this article, Bevir looks at the role of the judiciary under the traditional Westminster Model and then argues that recent reforms have seen a substantial move away from that.

**"Labour's 'Juridification' of the Constitution"** - Roger Masterman, July 2009

[Article](#) | Masterman here gives a sceptical response to Bevir, arguing that there are important checks on the 'juridification' process.

**The Judges Come Out** - Anthony King

[Chapter](#) | **Recommended** | This is now a few years out of date, but it still provides an excellent and very readable account of the development of the role of the courts in the

British governing system, giving more detail on the period before the Human Rights Act of 1998 than do many other sources.

The e-book is also available below.

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**The Judges Come Out** - Anthony King

**Chapter** | Recommended

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**Human Rights and the UK Constitution** - Colm O'Cinneide

**Chapter** | This chapter provides a very good overview both of the historical development of the role of the courts in human rights matters in the UK and of more recent processes.

## Further Reading: The Human Rights Act and Declarations of Incompatibility (9 items)

The Human Rights Act of 1998 is argued by many to have marked a fundamental shift in the role of the judiciary in the British governing system, particularly through the introduction of 'declarations of incompatibility'. But just what its impact has been remains hotly contested.

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**Ministry of Justice, 'Responding to Human Rights judgments: Report to the Joint Committee on Human Rights on the Government's response to Human Rights judgments 2016-17', December 2017**

**Document** | This is the latest in a series of annual reports on judgements made under the Human Rights Act. The most useful part is the list at the end of 'declarations of incompatibility'.

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**The Human Rights Act and Parliamentary Democracy** - K.D. Ewing, January 1999

**Article** | In this early assessment, the author argued that the Human Rights Act would have a profound effect on the British political system. Note that his later publications (below) take a very different view.

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**The Continuing Futility of the Human Rights Act** - K.D. Ewing, Joo-Cheong Tham, 2008

**Article** | Here, in contrast to Ewing's early work (above), the authors argue that the Human Rights Act has in fact had little effect. The reasoning is very interesting!

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**The Resilience of the Political Constitution** - K.D. Ewing, 2013

**Article** | Ewing here develops further the argument introduced in Ewing and Tham. You will probably find it quite a tough read, but try at least to read sections A, G, and H, which contain most of the key points for our purposes.

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**What's so Weak About 'Weak-Form Review'? The Case of the UK Human Rights Act 1998** - Aileen Kavanagh, 2015

**Article** | This very fresh article provides probably the best detailed analysis of how the Human Rights Act operates in practice.

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**What's so weak about "weak-form review"? A reply to Aileen Kavanagh** - Stephen Gardbaum, October 2015

**Article** | This isn't as readable as Aileen Kavanagh's article, but it is useful to see a different view.

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**The Atrophy of Constitutional Powers** - Adrian Vermeule, Autumn 2012

**Article** | This article takes a more comparative perspective and makes the interesting argument that Parliament's ability to ignore declarations of incompatibility may be very limited.

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**Prisoners' voting rights: developments since May 2015 - House of Commons Library briefing paper CBP-7461** - Neil Johnston, 11 February 2019

**Document** | The most contentious clash between parliament and the courts has related to prisoner voting. This briefing paper sums up recent developments.

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**'Prisoners' Voting Rights: Case Closed?', UK Constitutional Law Association blog** - Elizabeth Adams, 30 January 2019

**Webpage** | The most contentious clash between parliament and the courts has related to prisoner voting. This short blogpost analyses the most recent developments.

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**Further Reading: Brexit and the Courts** (5 items)

This is a big topic and, as yet, it is difficult to know what the future might hold. The following readings offer a variety of relevant perspectives. The report by Vernon Bogdanor offers the most direct analysis of the question.

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**Brexit and our unprotected constitution - The Constitution Society** - Vernon Bogdanor, February 2018

**Webpage**

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**The Constitutional Implications of Brexit** - Young, Alison L., 2017

**Article** | This is quite a long article, so feel free to skim over the sections that do not relate to 'constitutionalization' and the role of the courts.

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**The European Court of Justice and its political impact** - Michael Blauberger, Susanne K. Schmidt, July 2017

**Article** | In order to understand the impact of leaving the EU, we need to understand the impact of being in the EU. This is a very useful study of the impact of the court of the European Union - the European Court of Justice. It is not focused specifically on the UK.

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**ECJ Judges Read the Morning Papers. Explaining the Turnaround of European Citizenship Jurisprudence'** - Michael Blauberger, Anita Heindlmaier, Dion Kramer, Dorte Sindbjerg Martinsen, Angelika Schenk, Jessica Sampson Thierry, Benjamin Werner, February 2018

**Article** | It is sometimes claimed that judges rule within the EU. This interesting study suggests that judges are actually strongly influenced by what happens in the world of politics.

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**The UK and the European Court of Human Rights - Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 83** - Alice Donald, Jane Gordon, Philip Leach, 2012

**Document** | This detailed report contains a wealth of useful information and analysis. The statistics in Chapter 4 and the analysis of impact in Chapter 5 are particularly useful for our purposes. When reading it, remember that the European Court of Human Rights is NOT an institution of the EU, and the UK's relationship to it will therefore not formally change as a result of Brexit. This is therefore a useful piece for helping us think about the way in which the European judicial dimension will remain relevant post-Brexit.

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## Topic 7: The Vertical Dimension in UK Politics I: Devolution and Local Government (20 items)

The UK is governed today by multiple actors operating at multiple levels: not just central government, but also (for now) the European Union, the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and local government. This week we look at devolution and (to a lesser extent) local government.

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Seminar Questions: How has devolution affected central government and how is this changing? Does the 'English question' need to be answered? If so, how?

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### Required Reading (2 items)

Ahead of the seminar, please read the two items here AND at least two further readings from the sections below.

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**English Question or Union Question? Neither Has Easy Answers** - Robert Hazell, Mark Sandford, January–March 2015

[Article](#) | The "English Question" poses one of the fundamental challenges for the future constitutional structure of the UK. This article provides an almost-up-to-date assessment.

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**Intergovernmental relations and the English question: options for reform. Constitution Unit Blog** - Jack Sheldon, 16 August 2018

[Webpage](#)

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### Further Reading: Devolution and Central Government (10 items)

These readings look at how the system of devolution to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland has developed, at implications for the structure of the UK as a whole, and at current efforts to reform that structure further.

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**Intergovernmental relations in the United Kingdom, House of Commons Library briefing** - David Torrance, 24 July 2018

[Document](#)

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**House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Devolution and Exiting the EU: Reconciling Differences and Building Strong Relationships, Eighth Report of Session 2017-19** - 31 July 2018

[Document](#) | This is the report discussed in the required reading by Jack Sheldon. It is well worth reading in its own right, and cuts across both of our seminar questions.

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**John Bull's Other Lands** - Anthony King

[Chapter](#) | This chapter reviews the development of the UK's devolved structures over time.

The e-book is also available below.

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**The British constitution** - Anthony King, 2009

[Book](#) | **Recommended**

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**A Stronger or Weaker Union? Public Reactions to Asymmetric Devolution in the United Kingdom** - John Curtice, January 2006

[Article](#) | This article examines public perceptions of the UK's asymmetric devolved structures. Much has happened since it was published, but it is nevertheless useful to see

how things appeared before the last couple of years.

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**Still better together? Purpose and power in intergovernmental councils in the UK** - Nicola McEwen, October 2017

[Article](#)

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**As devolution has progressed the centre has failed to imagine a new rationale for the union, UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Charlie Jeffery, 6 October 2015

[Webpage](#)

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**The Political Quarterly** - April-June 2015

[Journal](#) | **Recommended** | This special issue of the journal contains a series of short articles exploring the many implications of the outcome of the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. Read the introductory article by Paul Cairney, and then pick out further articles on topics that you find particularly interesting

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**Devolution in the Round: Can Britain Continue to Muddle through?** - Alan Trench, December 2014

[Article](#) | A quick survey of the state of the union in the immediate wake of Scotland's independence referendum.

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**The Smith Commission** - 2014/15

[Webpage](#) | The Smith Commission was established immediately after the Scottish independence referendum to agree the devolution of further powers to the Scottish Parliament. Here you will find links to the Commission's two reports, as well as other materials.

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## Further Reading: The 'English Question' (7 items)

The 'English Question' is the question of how England should be governed when the other parts of the UK all have their own legislatures. Should there be a separate English Parliament too? Should there be devolution within England? Or some other innovation? Or are current arrangements the best option? The readings here discuss.

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**House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Devolution and Exiting the EU: Reconciling Differences and Building Strong Relationships, Eighth Report of Session 2017-19** - 31 July 2018

[Document](#) | This is the report discussed in the required reading by Jack Sheldon. It is well worth reading in its own right, and cuts across both of our seminar questions.

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**Options for an English Parliament - UCL Constitution Unit report** - Meg Russell, Jack Sheldon, 2018

[Document](#) | This report explores the idea of establishing an English Parliament in fascinating detail. If you don't have time to read it all, do read at least the introduction and conclusion. If you are really pushed for time, you will find a link to a summary blogpost at the bottom of the webpage.

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**Campaign for an English Parliament**

[Website](#) | This is the website of the main group campaigning for an English Parliament.

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**A nation divided? The identities, politics and governance of England, openDemocracy UK**

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**blog** - John Denham, 16 August 2018

**Webpage** | John Denham (a former Labour MP, now a university professor) is a moderate voice arguing for an English Parliament. His arguments are well worth considering.

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**The English Question** - Robert Hazell, 2006

**Book** | This book goes into much more detail than the recent article by Hazell and Sandford (see Required Readings). It is now over ten years old, but much of what it says remains highly relevant. It is essential reading if you want to go into the issue of the English Question in depth.

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**English votes for English laws - House of Commons Library briefing** - Richard Kelly, 20 June 2017

**Article**

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**One year of EVEL: evaluating 'English votes for English laws' in the House of Commons - The UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Daniel Gover, Michael Kenny, 28 November 2016

**Webpage** | This summarizes a report on how 'English votes for English laws' has worked over the first year since it was introduced in November 2015. It also contains a link to the full report, which you are welcome to look at should you wish.

## Topic 8: The Vertical Dimension in UK Politics II: the European Union (18 items)

To understand the current dynamics of UK politics, it is still important to understand the European Union: what it does and how the UK relates to it. How much power does it exert? And why has the UK's relationship with the EU been so difficult?

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Seminar questions: To what extent is the sovereignty of the UK parliament constrained by EU membership? To what extent – and why – has the UK been the EU's awkward member?

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### Required Readings (1 items)

Please read AT LEAST the readings here AND two others from the lists below.

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**How much legislation comes from Europe? – House of Commons Library Research Briefing** - Vaughne Miller, 13 October 2010

**Document**

### Further Reading: The Impact of the EU in British Politics (4 items)

One of the crucial points of debate in the referendum in 2016 concerned the impact of the EU in British politics, and particularly the degree to which the EU (allegedly) constrained the UK's state institutions. We looked at the judicial role of the EU in topic 6, so the readings here focus on the issue of how much the EU constrains the UK parliament.

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**The Europeanization of UK Government: from Quiet Revolution to Explicit Step-Change?** - Simon Bulmer, Martin Burch, December 2005

**Article**

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**A more informed public? The impact of the Brexit debate** - John Curtice, Sarah Tipping, 2018

**Chapter**

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**HMG, Review of the Balance of Competences - 2012, 2012-2014**[Book](#)

| This link takes you to the portal page for a major review conducted by the government between 2012 and 2014 of what the EU does in every major policy area and whether the balance is right between EU and national competence. No overall analysis across the policy areas was produced (a point on which the government has been widely criticized - see the next reading). But you can gain a lot from dipping into some of the reports, particularly in relation to policy areas that you find most interesting.

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**United Kingdom: Parliamentary Sovereignty under Pressure - Mark Elliott, 2004**[Article](#)

| This article gives the perspective of a leading legal scholar on our topic.

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**Further Reading: The UK as the EU's Awkward Partner (12 items)**

To what extent has the UK always been a semi-detached member of the EU? What explains the UK's approach to EU membership? The studies here explore these and related issues. The first four readings look at public opinion towards the EU. Then there are four readings debating whether the UK is (or was) an 'awkward partner' to the EU. The remaining four readings explore further important aspects of the topic.

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**Euroscepticism - John Curtice, 2016**[Chapter](#)**A more informed public? The impact of the Brexit debate - John Curtice, Sarah Tipping, 2018**[Chapter](#)**Eurobarometer - European Commission**[Webpage](#)**You Should Hear What They Say about You, Lord Ashcroft polling report - Lord Ashcroft, February 2016**[Document](#)**Britain as an Awkward Partner: Reassessing Britain's Relations with the EU - Jim Buller, 1995-02**[Article](#)**A Reply to Buller - Stephen George, February 1995**[Article](#)**Britain and Europe: An Awkward Partner or an Awkward State? - Stuart Wilks, September 1996**[Article](#)**A not so awkward partner: the UK has been a champion of many causes in the EU, LSE Brexit blog - Oliver Daddow, Tim Oliver, 15 April 2016**[Webpage](#)**Procedural democracy in the EU: the Europeanization of national and sectoral policy-making processes' - Vivien A. Schmidt, August 2006**[Article](#)

**The UK media and 'Europe': from permissive consensus to destructive dissent** - Oliver

Daddow, November 2012

[Article](#)**Have we reached a tipping point? The mainstreaming of Euroscepticism in the UK** -

Nicholas Startin, June 2015

[Article](#)**Britain's Place in the European Union** - Lori Thorlakson[Chapter](#)

| This is not quite as closely related to our seminar topic as the other readings in this section, but it does give useful background on how the EU plays in British political debate.

**Topic 9: The Brexit Process** (18 items)

The process of leaving the European Union will dominate British politics throughout the academic year. In this topic, we will explore this process as a way of seeing how policy-making in the UK really works. What roles are being played by the various key parts of the system that we have studied: the executive, legislature, judiciary, devolved institutions, EU, media, and voters?

Seminar questions: Does the Brexit process show that power lies primarily in the hands of the executive or primarily in the hands of the legislature? "Brexit shows that, ultimately, it is the people who are in charge in British politics." Discuss.

**Required Readings** (1 items)

Please read AT LEAST the readings here AND two further readings from the section below.

**Europe and the Sovereignty of the People** - Vernon Bogdanor, July 2016[Article](#)**Further Reading: Diverse Views on the Brexit Process** (16 items)

It is clearly too early to make definitive judgements on the Brexit process, but the items here offer lots of useful perspectives. Some are from earlier in the process, others from later. Many are blogposts or reports rather than academic articles.

**Parliamentary Sovereignty and Brexit** - Deborah Mabbett, April 2017[Article](#)**Brexit and Parliamentary Sovereignty** - Keith Ewing, July 2017[Article](#)**Preparing Brexit: How ready is Whitehall?** - Institute for Government report - Joe Owen,

Lewis Lloyd, Jill Rutter, 10 June 2018

[Article](#)**Brexit: six months to go** - Institute for Government report - Joe Owen, Tim Durrant, Lewis

Lloyd, Jill Rutter, 17 September 2018

[Article](#)

**Do voters still want to leave the EU? How they view the Brexit process two years on - UK in a changing Europe report** - John Curtice, 7 September 2018

[Webpage](#) | This isn't about the Brexit process as such, but it gives useful insights into public opinion in relation to that process.

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**The Brexit Endgame: A Short Guide - UK in a Changing Europe report** - Matthew Bevington, Jack Simson Caird, Alan Wager, 29 September 2018

[Document](#)

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**House of Commons Exiting the EU Committee, 'Parliamentary Scrutiny and Approval of the Withdrawal Agreement and Negotiations on a Future Relationship', Sixth Report of Session 2017-19** - 28 June 2018

[Document](#)

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**Constitution Unit Blog - Brexit theme**

[Webpage](#) | A series of readings below are all blogposts from the UCL Constitution Unit blog. This carries many valuable and relevant analyses, so do click on the link here to see if there are any other posts that also interest you.

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**Monitor 64: Brexit and the transformation of British politics. UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Alan Renwick, Meg Russell, 24 October 2016

[Webpage](#)

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**The process of Brexit: what comes next? UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Alan Renwick, 8 February 2017

[Webpage](#)

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**Divided but influential? The Exiting the European Union select committee. UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Philip Lynch, Richard Whitaker, 10 May 2018

[Webpage](#)

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**Crisis, headache, or sideshow: how should the UK government respond to the Scottish parliament's decision to withhold consent for the Withdrawal Bill? UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Nicola McEwen, 30 May 2018

[Webpage](#)

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**The executive's Brexit: the UK Constitution after Miller. UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Mark Elliott, Jack Williams, Alison Young, 21 August 2018

[Webpage](#)

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**Brexit and the territorial constitution: déjà vu all over again? UCL Constitution Unit Blog** - Daniel Wincott, 11 September 2018

[Webpage](#)

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**The Mechanics of a Further Referendum on Brexit. UCL Constitution Unit report** - Jess Sargeant, Alan Renwick, Meg Russell, October 2018

[Webpage](#)

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**Brexit: the impact on government and parliament - seminar at the LSE** - Vernon Bogdanor, Dominic Grieve, Joe Owen, Tony Travers, 23 October 2018

[Webpage](#)

## Topic 10: The Future of British Politics

In this final, lecture-only topic, we look into the future. What can we say about where British politics is heading? Will Brexit happen? Will the UK hold together? Will politics swing left or right? What other key questions need to be asked?

There are no specific readings for this topic. Please simply come to the lecture having thought about all you have learnt over the course of the term and what they might suggest about the questions just listed.