

Government 90a CONTEMPORARY BRITISH POLITICS

Professor James Alt
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Tuesdays 2-4

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The seminar surveys modern British politics and policy. Fifty years ago British government was seen as a model of efficiency. Then for a time its troubled economy and domestic unrest dominated the news. Next came a renaissance. Then all was doom and gloom again. After that, soon-to-be Prime Minister Blair, never one to exaggerate, promised “The biggest programme of change to democracy ever proposed.” Have they done it? That is just one of many questions we look at.

Less than twenty years ago the Labour Party was given up for dead. Now there is New Labour, in office for more than a decade! How did all this come about? How real and permanent are the changes? We look at changing social structures and political institutions, Britain's internal wars, national and international relationships, and domestic political economy.

The course is designed to make students familiar with the contemporary political scene in Britain and able to discuss current issues there without feeling as though they got off the boat yesterday (even if they did!). Students thinking of spending some time in Britain doing research or those who are simply interested in Britain as a case for comparison with the US and other countries will find the seminar valuable. We juggle breadth and depth, building up some historical context for each issue while also attending to contemporary debates in order to end up with a feeling for how the country works, politically, culturally, socially. Readings, including a few photocopies of articles, are on reserve at Lamont and Hilles. Some sessions include supplementary readings from current (electronic) periodicals and other electronic sources. Copies of assigned readings marked "*" are on order at the Coop.

The seminar meets weekly. Students are expected to have covered assigned readings in advance. Whether a reading is essential for discussion, important for a paper, or optional is indicated below. Each week some discussion questions are provided. Each student will be responsible for preparing brief (six-pages-**maximum**) written answers to **one** of these questions not less than five times during the semester. The discussion questions will be posted at the course Website. The papers must be in not later than 6 pm the Monday before the seminar. Nearly all papers now come in as attachments to email.

February 5th

Course Introduction

The first meeting of the course will take place on Tuesday, February 5th at 2pm. This session will provide an introduction to the course, look at the question Why Study Britain?, and introduce the past half century of events, parties, personalities, and institutional changes. There are no discussion questions, and no written assignment for this week.

February 12th**British Politics: Where it's been**

- * Jonathan Hollowell (ed.) *Britain Since 1945*, Chs. 8, 12-15. (*essential*)
- * Michael Moran, *Politics and Governance in the UK*, Chs. 1-3 (*essential*)
- * Patrick Dunleavy et al. (eds.), *Developments in British Politics* 8, Chs. 1

February 19th**Political Institutions**

- * Hollowell *Britain Since 1945*, Ch. 2
- * Moran, *Politics and Governance* Chs. 5, 7-10 (*essential*)
- * Patrick Dunleavy et al. (eds.), *Developments in British Politics* 8, Chs. 2-3 (*essential*)
- Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, Chs. 1, 7 (*essential*)

February 26th**Parties and Public Opinion**

- * Hollowell *Britain Since 1945*, Ch. 3
- * Harold Clarke et al., *Political Choice in Britain*, Chs. 1-4 (5, 6 optional) (*essential*)
- * Moran, *Politics and Governance* Chs. 13-15 (*essential*)
- * Dunleavy, *Developments* 8, Chs. 4-6 (*essential*)
- Optional: Dunleavy, *Voices of the People*, pp. 12-24, 40-57

March 4th**Elections and the Media**

- * Hollowell, Ch. 11
- * Moran, *Politics and Governance* Chs. 16-18 (*essential*)
- * Dunleavy, *Developments* 8, Chs. 12-13 (*essential*)
- * Colin Seymour-Ure, *Prime Ministers and the Media*, Backwell Chs. 1-3, 6, 7. (*essential*)
- Pippa Norris, *Britain Votes 2001*, pp. 102-136 (*essential*)
- Optional: Cockerell, Hennessey, Walker, *Sources Close to the Prime Minister*, Chs. 2-4

March 11th**Britain and the EC/EU**

- * Andrew Geddes, *The European Union and British Politics* Chs. 1-7 (*essential*)
- * Moran, *Politics and Governance* Ch. 6 (*essential*)
- * Dunleavy, *Developments* 8, Ch. 9
- * Hollowell, *Britain Since 1945*, Ch. 4
- Anthony King, *The British Constitution*, Ch. 5
- Duncan Watts and Pilkington, *Britain in the European Union Today*, 3rd ed. Ch. 6
- Optional: * Norton, *British Polity*, Ch. 9
- Philip Norton, *New Directions in British Politics*, Chs. 6, 7
- Robert Hazell (ed.), *Constitutional Futures*, ch. 5

March 18th

New Labour, New Constitution?

The Constitution Unit, [Constitutional Update](#) (selections)

Anthony King, *The British Constitution*, Chs. 6, 10 (essential)

Danny Nicol, *EC Membership and the Judicialisation of British Politics*, chs 1, 9 (essential)

* Dunleavy, *Developments 8*, Chs. 7-8 (essential)

* Moran, *Politics and Governance* Chs. 22-23

Antony Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, Ch. 5 “The Meaning of Socialism” (essential)

Tony Blair, *New Britain: My Vision*, Chs. 14 “Social Justice”, 34-36 “Stakeholder Britain” (essential)

Optional: S. Driver and L. Martell, *Blair’s Britain*, Chs 3,7, Afterword or *New Labour: Politics after Thatcherism*, esp. Chs. 1,4
Gerald Taylor, *Impact of New Labour*, esp. Chs. 2-4

April 1st

The British Welfare State

* Howard Glennerster, *British Social Policy Since 1945*, 3rd ed., Chs. 1-3, 7-10 (essential for history)

* Dunleavy, *Developments 8*, Chs. 15 (essential)

Dunleavy, *Developments 7*, pp. 251-258 (essential)

Survey on the issues of “social insurance” from *The Economist*, October 1998

[Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#) [Part 4](#) [Part 5](#)

* Hollowell, *Britain Since 1945*, Ch. 23

Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State*, Cambridge, Ch. 6

Optional: Samuel Beer, *Britain Against Itself*, Norton, 1982, chs. 3.

J. Greenaway, *Deciding Factors in British Politics*, Chs. 4, 8

April 8th

Race and British Politics

* John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain*, 3rd ed. Chs. 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 (essential)

Blackstone et al., *Race Relations in Britain: A Developing Agenda* Chs. 4, 8 (essential)

Joel Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany*, pp. 1-61

* Dunleavy, *Developments 8*, Ch. 11

* Hollowell, Ch. 16

Optional: Z. Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, Blackwell Chs 1, 2, 4, 6, 8

Shamit Saggarr, *Race and British Electoral Politics*, Chs. 3, 8-10

Mike Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multiracial Britain*, Chs. 25-27

Panikos Panayi, *The Impact of Immigration in Post-War Britain* (Manchester),

Chs. 1, 4

April 15th

Northern Ireland, Part I: Background

A. Lijphart, "The Northern Ireland Problem." *British J. of Political Science* 1975, 83-106. (essential)

* Jonathan Tonge, *Northern Ireland* Chs. 1-5 (essential)

John Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland* (Oxford pb), Part I

R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, Penguin, Ch. 9, esp. Pt. II, pp. 203-211. (essential)

Arthur Aughey and Duncan Morrow, *Northern Ireland Politics*, Longman, pp. 3-28.

Optional: R. Rose, *Governing without Consensus*, Beacon, 1971, Chapters 3, 4

Sabine Wichert, *Northern Ireland since 1945*

Joseph Ruane and J. Todd, *Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland* Chs. 1-7

April 22nd	Northern Ireland, Part II: Here and now
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* Tonge, *Northern Ireland* Chs. 6-10 (essential)

Ruane and Todd, *After the Good Friday Agreement* (UCD pb), Chs. 2, 3, 5 (essential)

John McGarry, *Northern Ireland and the Divided World*, Chs. 8-12

Taylor, *Impact of New Labour*, Ch. 15

Optional: Rose, *Governing without Consensus*, Chapters 5-7

Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland* Parts II-III

Ruane and Todd, *Dynamics of Conflict*, Chs. 8-11

April 29th	Foreign & Defence Policy: the Road to Iraq
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* Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close: Blair, Clinton, Bush and the 'Special Relationship'*, 2004 edition, Chs. 1-3, 7-11 (essential)

Lawrence Freedman, *The Politics of British Defence* (St, Martins), Chs. 5-10

* Dunleavy, *Developments* 8, Ch. 10

Sir Robin Renwick, *Fighting with Allies*, Random House, Chs. 36-37

Greenaway, *Deciding Factors in British Politics*, Chs. 5, 9

Optional: P. Byrd, *British Defense Policy*, Chs. 1, 3

John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire*, Chs. 2-4

May 6th	Tea Break at the Inn
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Readings and questions (and cakes and sweets) to be chosen by you.