********

Politics

**Course Handbook**

**A-Level Politics**

British politics, political ideologies and global politics or American politics

**NAME:**

**CONTENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2 | Introduction to the course |
| 3 | Staff and Student Expectation |
| 4 | Overview of the Course and Assessment |
| 5-9 | Content |
| 9-11 | Assessment Explained |
| 12 | Mark Scheme |
| 13-15 | History and Politics Assessment Policy |
| 16-17 | How to Revise Effectively in Politics |
| 18 | 50/50 Advice Sheet |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Introduction**

Welcome to Politics A-level. We hope that you enjoy your time in the department and find the process of studying politics within Britain and the wider world interesting.

The purpose if this guide is to provide you with a range of information and advice to help you organise your programme of study, learn independently outside of the classroom and prepare for the final exams. Please place this guide at the start of your folder and keep checking it regularly for help and support.

Politics at Godalming College is part of the **History and Politics Department** located in the 200s. This is one of the largest department’s in college having over 600 students studying courses within it at any time. The History and Politics office is located in room **214** and there are pigeon holes outside the office where work can be left.

**Politics Staff:**

* Laurie Huggett-Wilde
* Trish Shepherd
* Imogen St George
* Ed Sylvester

**Head of History and Politics:**

* Laurie Huggett-Wilde

**Director of Faculty (Humanities and Social Sciences):**

* Deborah Haggar

Along with the names above, the following departments and places will be useful during your time in Politics:

**The ILC** – your go-to place to complete work and independent study outside of lessons. The Silent Study area provides an area to work individually, whilst the library contains an excellent selection of wider reading. Make sure that you have familiarised yourself with the ILC when you start the course

**The Exams Office** – for any questions you have about your exam entries, exam timetable or remarks and script requests.

**Learning Support** – for any extra support or advice you need to help you study in general. If you are struggling to organise and manage your workload; need help refining your essay-writing technique; help with revision; or if you think you might be entitled to any exam concessions, learning support are the people to talk to.

**Careers** – when you start to think about your options after college and possibly applying for a history-related degree, careers can give you advice on where to apply and help in producing a personal statement.

**Expecations**

**What is expected of students?**

1. **Attendance and punctuality** – learning cannot begin if you are not in lessons or if you arrive late to them and miss important content. Students should maintain full attendance and punctuality. Any unavoidable and legitimate absences should be accounted for properly, meaning that students get a parent or a guardian to contact college and then email their teacher(s) to catch up on missed work
2. **To maintain a mature and respectful learning environment** – this means behaving in and out of lessons in a way expected of a Sixth-Form student: listening carefully to the views of others and offering constructive contributions in class
3. **To stay up-to-date** – you will be set weekly structured homework tasks and it is essential that these are completed on time and in the required level of detail. We use structured homework to consolidate particular content or to set up lessons to come. If work is incomplete your understanding will be incomplete and you will under-perform. If you arrive at a lesson having not completed preparation work then your teacher may also ask you to leave and complete this elsewhere.
4. **To stay organised** – managing the demands of a minimum of three subjects is challenging, especially when you are being taught more than one unit in each. You need, therefore, to stay organised. This means preparing a folder for each of your units, bringing the correct materials to each lesson and recording homework in the same place every time (whether this is your planner or the homework grids at the back of lesson materials)
5. **To meet the 50/50** – students are expected to conduct 4.5 to 6 hours of independent study a week. This will include structured homework tasks set by your teachers along with proactive tasks you complete yourself to consolidate and extend your understanding. See the advice late in this booklet for more help on doing this.
6. **To make the most of feedback and support** – you will get a lot of feedback during your time on the course. This will come as written feedback on assessed work, verbal feedback on general class or homework, and targets set at formal 1-1s. Feedback needs to be recorded carefully by you and acted upon. When you get back assessed work, for example you will be asked to record two targets of your own and also to update your progress log
7. **To be resilient** – any A-level subject will at times be very challenging. At times you will not do as well as you want or will struggle to understand a new topic or idea. You need to be prepared to spend more time on areas such as these and to seek out extra help when needed. These experiences of finding areas where you are not doing so well and improving them are what lead to A-Level success.

**What can you expect of your teachers?**

1. **To deliver structured and engaging lessons** – the backbone of your lessons will be the booklets you receive, one for each topic. Your teachers will deliver lessons designed to challenge your understanding whilst also helping you to gradually build up your knowledge and skills
2. **Regular assessment and feedback** – in addition to your benchmark assessments (four in the first year and three in the second) your teachers will regularly set you exam-style questions to give you opportunities to practice and improve. Feedback will be given on standardised sheets which include the relevant mark scheme and clear developmental targets
3. **Structured weekly work** – you should expect to be given a significant amount of work to do by your teachers each week. You will be given guidance on how long this should take and completed work will be checked and/or taken in
4. **Additional support** – your teachers will be happy to provide extra help outside of lessons either informally, by responding to emails, or more formally through departmental workshops

**Politics – Overview**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **YEAR ONE** | **Political Participation (U1)** | * **One 30 mark essay from a choice of two** * **One 30 mark source essay question from a choice of two** |
| **UK Government (U2)** | * **One 30 mark essay from a choice of two** * **One 30 mark source essay question from a choice of two** |
| **Core political ideas – liberalism and conservatism (U1)** | * **One 24 mark essay from a choice of two (each question asked on one of liberalism, conservatism or socialism)** |
|  |  |  |
| **YEAR TWO** | **Core political ideas – socialism** | * **One 24 mark essay from a choice of two (each question asked on one of liberalism, conservatism or socialism)** |
| **Non-core political idea – feminism (U2)** | * **One 24 mark essay from a choice of two** |
| **Global politics (U3)**  ***OR***  **Government & politics of the USA (U3)** | * **One 12 mark examine question from a choice of two** * **One 12 mark compulsory analyse question** * **Two 30 mark essay questions from a choice of three** |

**The Exams**

At the end of your second year you will take three exams in Politics:

**UK Politics and core political ideas (2 hours / 84 marks / 33%)**

* **Section A:** Political participation; democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour and the media.
* **Section B:** Core political ideas; conservatism, liberalism, socialism.

**UK government and non-core political idea (2 hours / 84 marks / 33%)**

* **Section A:** UK Government; the Constitution, Parliament, Prime Minister and Executive, relationships between the branches.
* **Section B:** Non-core political ideas; feminism

Depending on the choice you will make at the end of your first year, the third exam with either be:

**Global politics (2 hours / 84 marks / 33%)**

* Sovereignty and globalisation, global governance: political and economic, global governance: human rights and environmental, power and developments, regionalism and the European Union, comparative theories.

**OR Government & Politics of the USA (2 hours / 84 marks / 33%)**

* The US Constitution and federalism, US Congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court and US civil rights, US democracy and participation and comparative theories.

**Politics – the different topics**

**British topics**

In the first year you start by looking at British Politics and how the political system works in the UK. This is split in to two areas. Firstly, with one teacher, you will look at political participation. You consider how people interact with politics and how democratic our system is. With your other teacher you consider UK government, and how our system functions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Political Participation** | | |
| *TOPIC* | | *CONTENT* |
| **1** | **Democracy and participation** | * Representative and direct democracy * The extension of the franchise * Pressure groups and other influences on politics * UK rights in context |
| **2** | **Political parties** | * A background to political parties – their functions and features * The development of the two main parties and their current and historical beliefs * Emerging and minor parties * Why different parties are successful? |
| **3** | **Electoral systems** | * Different electoral systems, including FPTP, AMS, STV and SV * Referendums * Electoral systems in context – why are they used and what impact do they have |
| **4** | **Voting behaviour and the media** | The importance of below factors in determining electoral results:   * Socioeconomic factors * Party policies and manifestos * Class * The media |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UK Government** | | |
| *TOPIC* | | *CONTENT* |
| **1** | **The constitution** | * The nature and sources of the UK constitution * How the constitution has changed since 1997 * The role and powers of devolved bodies * Debates on further reform of the constitution |
| **2** | **Parliament** | * Structure and role of the House of Commons and House of Lords * The comparative powers of the House of Commons and House of Lords * The legislative process * The ways in which Parliament interacts with the Executive |
| **3** | **Prime Minister and Executive** | * The structure, role and powers of the Executive * The concept of ministerial responsibility * The power of the Prime minister and the Cabinet * Their ability to dictate events and determine policy |
| **4** | **Relations between branches** | * The Supreme Court and its influence over the legislative and policy-making processes * The relationship between the Executive and Parliament * The aims, role and impact of the European Union (EU) on UK government * The location of sovereignty in the UK political system |

**Political ideas**

At the end of your first year and the beginning of your second year you will move on to looking at political ideas. These ‘isms’ consider the way in which the political world works. You look at the key themes of the state, society, the economy and human nature through the lens of the different political ideologies.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Core political ideas** | | |
| *TOPIC* | | *CONTENT* |
| **1** | **Conservatism** | * Core ideas and principles, including pragmatism, tradition, human imperfection, organic society/state, paternalism * Differing views and tensions. Differences between traditional conservatives, one-nation conservatives and the new right. * Conservative thinkers and their ideas: Hobbes, Burke, Oakeshott, Rand and Nozick |
| **2** | **Liberalism** | * Core ideas and principles, including individualism, liberty, state, rationalism, equality, liberal democracy * Differing views and tensions: Differences between classical liberalism and modern liberalism * Liberal thinkers and their ideas: Locke, Wollstonecraft, Mill, Rawls and Friedan |
| **3** | **Socialism** | * Core ideas and principles, including collectivism, common humanity, equality and class * Differing views and tensions. Differences between revolutionary socialism, social democracy and the Third Way. * Socialist key thinkers and their ideas; Marx, Webb, Luxemburg, Crosland and Giddens |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Non-core political idea** | | |
| *TOPIC* | | *CONTENT* |
| **1** | **Feminism** | * Core ideas and principles, including sex and gender, patriarchy, equality and difference feminism and intersectionality * Differing views and tensions. Differences between liberal feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism and post-modern feminism * Feminist key thinkers and their ideas; Perkins Gilman, de Beauvoir, Millett, Rowbotham, hooks |

In your **second year you will have a choice** between studying global politics or the politics of the USA. You will be asked to make this choice at the end of your first year.

**Global politics**

This involves a wider assessment of how geopolitics takes place. You consider different institutions and the impact they have, how power is wielded by both states and non-state actors, alongside key topics in international relations, such as poverty, the environment and human rights.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Global politics** | | |
| *TOPIC* | | *CONTENT* |
| **1** | **The state and globalisation** | * The state: nation-state and of national sovereignty * Globalisation: the process of globalisation and its impact on the state system * Debates about the impact of globalisation |
| **2** | **Global governance: political and economic** | * Political – the UN and NATO * Economic – IMF, the World Bank, WTO, G7/8 and G20 * The impact of global economic governance on poverty * Reform of these institutions |
| **3** | **Global governance: human rights and environment** | * Human rights – origins and development of international law and the institutions. * Key issues of these institutions in dealing with human rights * The role of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) * Performance of international courts * Competing views on tackling environmental issues |
| **4** | **Power and developments** | * Different types of power * Differing classification of state power in global affairs * Different types of polarity in international relations * Different systems of government |
| **5** | **Regionalism and the EU** | * Growth of regionalism and the different forms it takes * Development of regional organisations outside of the EU * Factors that have fostered European integration * Significance of the EU as a global actor |
| **6** | **Comparative theories** | * Main ideas of realism * Main ideas of liberalisms * Divisions between realism and liberalism * Main ideas of the anarchical society and society of states theory |

**Government and politics of the USA**

This involves a depth study of American politics, considering how the American system works and assessing its democratic features. A key component is comparison of this system with UK politics. You will consider different institutions such as Congress, the Supreme Court and the role of the President, alongside considering the democratic processes and the role the race has played in US politics.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Government and politics of the USA** | | |
| *TOPIC* | | *CONTENT* |
| **1** | **The US Constitution & federalism** | * The nature and key features of the US Constitution * Characteristics of federalism * Debates about the extent of democracy within the US Constitution and the extent of federalism today. |
| **2** | **US Congress** | * The structure of Congress and distribution of powers * The functions of Congress, including representation, legislation and oversight * Debates surrounding the powers and role of Congress * The changing role of political parties * The significance and effectiveness of powers outlined in the Constitution |
| **3** | **US Presidency** | * Formal and informal sources of presidential powers, plus their limitations. * The significance of these powers in relation to presidents since 1992. * The relationship between the presidency and other branches. * Debates surrounding the presidency including how effectively presidents have achieved their aims, the imperial presidency, their role in foreign policy and their extent of accountability to Congress. |
| **4** | **US Supreme Court and US civil rights** | * The nature and role of the Supreme Court. * The appointment process * The impact of the court on policy. * The protection of civil liberties and rights in the USA today. * Race and rights in contemporary US politics. * Debates surrounding the US Supreme Court and civil rights. |
| **5** | **US democracy & participation** | * Electoral systems in the USA, including the process of presidential elections. * The role of campaign finance. * The key ideas of the Democratic and Republican parties. * Interest groups in the USA. * Debates surrounding US democracy and participation. |
| **6** | **Comparative theories** | * Theoretical approaches – rational, cultural and structural * Similarities and differences between the UK and USA. |

**Assessment**

When starting Politics it is important to know how the course is assessed. All assessed work is marked around what are known as **‘assessment objectives’** (AOs) which have been set by the exam board. You need to understand what each of these is and how many marks it carries for each type of question. If you can do this then you will know what skills to demonstrate and to what extent for each question on the exam.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AO1** | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues. | **35%** |
| **AO2** | Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences. | **35%** |
| **AO3** | Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions. | **30%** |

***What do these mean?***

***AO1 –*** using your own-knowledge understanding of the political events and thinkers that have been studied to support judgements. This means using specific examples to back up or illustrate your points whilst also showing a general understanding of events or ideas

***AO2 –*** looking at the strengths and weaknesses of arguments or causes and reaching judgements. ‘Analyse’ means to examine something to find its strengths and weaknesses, and to help you explain it. ‘Evaluate’ means reaching a judgment about the value or importance of something

***AO3 –*** reaching a judgement on the question. Using your above evaluation and analysis to reach a clear answer to the question being asked and fully justifying why you have reached that conclusion.

***How do the Assessment Objectives apply to each question type?***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit 1**  **UK Politics** | Questions | Type of question | **AO1 marks** | **AO2 marks** | **AO3 marks** | Total marks |
| **1** | Source essay | 10 | 10 | 10 | **30** |
| **2** | Essay | 10 | 10 | 10 | **30** |
| **3** | Ideologies essay | 8 | 8 | 8 | **24** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit 2**  **UK government** | Questions | Type of question | **AO1 marks** | **AO2 marks** | **AO3 marks** | Total marks |
| **1** | Source essay | 10 | 10 | 10 | **30** |
| **2** | Essay | 10 | 10 | 10 | **30** |
| **3** | Ideologies essay | 8 | 8 | 8 | **24** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit 3**  **Global Politics/US Politics** | Questions | Type of question | **AO1 marks** | **AO2 marks** | **AO3 marks** | Total marks |
| **1** | Examine question | 6 | 6 | - | **12** |
| **2** | Analyse question | 6 | 6 | - | **12** |
| **3a** | Essay | 10 | 10 | 10 | **30** |
| **3b** | Essay | 10 | 10 | 10 | **30** |

**A-Level Mark scheme**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Level 5** | **Level 4** | **Level 3** | **Level 2** | **Level 1** |
| AO1 | Demonstrates thorough and in-depth knowledge and  understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories  and issues, which are effectively selected in order to underpin  analysis and evaluation | Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political  institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, which are  carefully selected in order to underpin analysis and evaluation | Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of  political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues,  many of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin  analysis and evaluation | Demonstrates some accurate knowledge and understanding of  political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues,  some of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin  analysis and evaluation | Demonstrates superficial knowledge and understanding of political  institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, with limited  underpinning of analysis and evaluation |
| AO2 | Perceptive comparative analysis of political information, with  sustained, logical chains of reasoning, drawing on similarities and  differences within political information, which make cohesive and  convincing connections between ideas and concepts | Consistent comparative analysis of political information, with  coherent, logical chains of reasoning, drawing on similarities and  differences within political information, which make relevant  connections between ideas and concepts | Mostly focused comparative analysis of political information with  focused, logical chains of reasoning, drawing on similarities and/or  differences within political information, which make mostly relevant  connections between ideas and concepts | Some emerging comparative analysis of political information with  some focused, logical chains of reasoning, referring to similarities  and/or differences within political information, which make some  relevant connections between ideas and concepts | Limited comparative analysis of political information with partial,  logical chains of reasoning, referring to similarities and/or  differences within political information, which make simplistic  connections between ideas and concepts |
| AO3 | Constructs fully relevant evaluation of political information,  constructing fully effective arguments and judgements, which are  consistently substantiated and lead to fully focused and justified  conclusions | Constructs mostly relevant evaluation of political information,  constructing mostly effective arguments and judgements, which  are mostly substantiated and lead to mostly focused and justified  conclusions | Constructs generally relevant evaluation of political information,  constructing generally effective arguments and judgements, many  of which are substantiated and lead to some focused conclusions  that are sometimes justified | Constructs some relevant evaluation of political information,  constructing occasionally effective arguments and judgements,  some are partially substantiated and lead to generic conclusions  without much justification | Makes superficial evaluation of political information, constructing  simple arguments and judgements, many of which are descriptive  and lead to limited unsubstantiated conclusions |

**Assessment and predicted grade policy**

**Godalming College, History and Politics Department**

***(This is an abridged version of the assessment policy – see Godalming online for the full version covering History, Politics and Ancient History)***

**The Importance of Feedback**

Learning will not happen instantly and takes time; attending lessons is not enough, you also need to be working outside of class, to learn new information and consolidate learning. In the process, you will make mistakes but hopefully feedback will enable you to learn from these mistakes. Better to make a mistake during the year and correct it, than make your first mistake in the actual exam! Feedback is essential for your learning and will consist of written (teacher marking), peer (where you feedback on someone else’s work in the class) and self (where you assess yourself).

**Weekly Independent Tasks (Homework)**

Homework does not necessarily need to be completed at home. You should use free periods during the day to complete these tasks outside of lessons. To keep a good work/life balance, you might like to treat College as an 0845 to 1615 day and use your free periods in the library completing tasks. This will minimise the work you need to complete at home and might make you more productive.

The classes are shared equally between two teachers for 2.25 hours, with each teacher delivering one of the two units. Each week, homework will be set and could take up to 5 hours in total. Each teacher therefore could set you up to 2 ½ hours homework per week. If the homework only takes you 1 hour for a week, then you will have a further 1 ½ hours to conduct further reading and consolidate learning. Each week, therefore, you should be completing between 4.5 to 6 hours of independent study in History. This will consist of:

* **Structured homework** - tasks set by your teachers to help consolidate work done in class or prepare for future lessons
* **Proactive work** – these are tasks that you complete independently to improve your understanding of a topic, revise material in preparation for an assessment, or to extent your knowledge. See the History and Politics ‘50/50 Support Sheet’ displayed around the department and available on Godalming online for more ideas.

When work is taken in to be assessed (practice essays, revision sheets, consolidation tasks etc.) it will be returned to students within 10 working days. If work receives a formal mark then it will be accompanied by a departmental feedback sheet outlining the different levels of the appropriate mark scheme.

Students can expect their work to be returned within an appropriate timeframe and with clear developmental targets. In return it is expected that students will meet the deadlines set by teachers and remain up to date. To help students do this they need to record homework carefully in a diary or planner, and organise their study periods each week to spread their workloads out evenly. The department also offers a range of weekly workshops to provide extra support to students. See the posters displayed around the department for more information.

If work is not submitted on time then the student will be spoken to by their subject teacher to find out the reason for this. If appropriate, the student will then be given a warning and a revised deadline set. The department may also place a student on an action plan to give them a 3-5 week window to improve their performance, after which, if they have failed to do so, they will enter the college’s disciplinary system.

The department also reserves the right to not mark any work which is handed in after the set deadline.

**Benchmark Assessments**

Benchmark assessments are substantial, exam-style questions that are set, completed, and assessed during a two-year A level course. The History and Politics department gives students four benchmarks in their first year and three benchmarks in their second.

Benchmark assessments are marked consistently across the department using OCR or Edexcel mark schemes and feedback is given on standardised feedback sheets. Results on these assessments are then recorded centrally using the college mark book. The size of each benchmark is set in advance but the specific question may differ depending on what individual teachers think is most appropriate.

Benchmarks are extremely important and should be treated like the actual exam. They are an ideal point to see how you are progressing and to get valuable feedback. You will make mistakes in the benchmarks and so the follow up work is to test whether you have learned from those mistakes to become better at the subject and exam technique. When completing benchmarks you will receive some or all of the following:

* WRITTEN FEEDBACK: Each benchmark assessment will receive substantial written feedback in the form of comments on a cover sheet that relate directly to the assessment criteria of the exam board. Alongside this, symbols (representing comments) and questions will be posed about how to improve).
* VERBAL FEEDBACK: 1-2-1’s with your teachers will be held throughout the year. These may take the form of brief discussions following the return of benchmarks, or more general discussions in the build-up to student reviews and following end of year exams
* These benchmark assessments will feed directly into the student reviews (‘reports’) which get sent home to your parents.
* REFLECTION AND TARGET SETTING: After each assessment, students will be expected to reflect on the written feedback from their teacher and set themselves targets for improvement in the period in question.
* FOLLOW UP WORK: After each benchmark, work will be set to consolidate students’ understanding such as revision sheets. The idea is to learn from the mistakes in your written work. Students who perform particularly badly are encouraged to rewrite the assessment and submit to the teacher for another grade.

**Predicted Grades**

* The predicted grade for full A-level students moving from their first to their second year, will be based on the combined result of their two mock exams. These exams are used to produce an Annual Review Grade (ARG) for students.
* Students will have a full mock exam in both their Unit 1 and Unit 2 courses once the content of these courses has been completed.
* It is essential therefore that students approach these mock exams as significant assessments and revise accordingly. Failure to do so will not be seen as a reason to change the predicted grade.
* If a student has underperformed substantially in the mock exams then their benchmark results will be taken into account when deciding on their predicted grade.

Students will have a 1-1 in the summer term of their first year to discuss their predicted grade. It is essential that these grades are accurate reflections of a student’s performance and are based on the evidence of achieved results. It is the college’s policy that a predicted grade can only be one level higher than an ARG.

**Mock Exams**

A level students will sit a full mock exam in each of the units studied in the first year:

These exams will be sat in formal timed conditions and any students entitled to extra time or to word-process will be able to do so. Students will be expected to conduct substantial revision to prepare for these exams and will be supported with revision materials and revision sessions (either during lunchtimes or after college).

Completed mock exams will be marked using the full OCR/Edexcel mark schemes and feedback will be given using standardised feedback sheets.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is submitting another person’s written work as one’s own original work or using someone else’s idea without referencing the source or using pictorial work without permission or referencing the source. If there is a suspicion of plagiarism, the Head of Department and Senior Tutor will be informed and a meeting will take place. If a student is found guilty, they will be subject to disciplinary action by the College and the awarding body will be informed. Students should be aware that the College is subscribed to software designed to detect plagiarism.

**Effective Revision in Politics**

When preparing for your final exams it is important to think about how you are going to revise to make sure it is as effective as possible, both to arrive at the exams with as good an understanding of the content and source as you can, but also to ensure that you use your time effectively when balancing Politics revision with other subjects. Below is a suggested approach to revision to help structure or tweak what you are doing.

1. **Organisation and Structure**

A second year A-level student has 3 units to learn. Within this, there are **8 UK topics, 4 political ideologies and 6 global/US topics.** Meaning there are in total **18 topics** to revise. This is a lot but is perfectly achievable if your revision starts early enough and is clearly structured to allow you cover the topics systematically.

***How much time should you spend revising?***

*Suggested minimums*

* February – April = 1.5-2 hours per week
* Easter Holiday = 10-15 hours per week
* April – May = 4.5 hour per week
* May – June (study leave) = 15 hours per week

***How should you organise your time?***

Start by working out a **weekly schedule** – when will you do the suggested time above? Will it be at college or at home? The best advice is to set aside a minimum of one free period a week (1.5 hours) to revise Politics at the start and then increase this over time. In addition to this, you can use the support offered (lunchtime workshop) to top-up your revision, gain 1-1 help or work in groups.

Once you know when you are going to revise then use the course **checklists** to divide you time between the topics. Revise topic-by-topic and try to follow the same routine for each (see below). You might decide to complete one topic (e.g. Electoral Systems) at a time before moving onto another or to alternate between components – one week on one, one on another. Choose an approach and stick with it.

Finally have a **target** for when you want to have completed sections of your revision. An obvious one would be to finish the first-round of first-year revision by the start of the Easter holiday to then focus on Second Year content in preparation for mock exams when you return.

For more advice on structuring your revision and on sample revision timetables, go to the Learning Support page on Godalming Online and then ‘Tips for Starting Revising’ <https://online.godalming.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=12737>

1. **Content Revision**

This is revision of the ‘own-knowledge’ content of the course. Select the topic you want to revise and then follow you preferred method of revision. The aim of all of these is to take the content and reduce it into a more focused and revisable summary. Think about some of the following ideas

* Flash-cards
* Mind-maps around the point on the checklist or specification
* Condensed notes based on the ‘lesson aims’ on the front of each booklet
* Timelines – templates available on GoL
* Quizlet – an online way to make flashcards, tests, timelines and other revision resources

You will know what your preferred way of revising content is but make sure it is more than just reading notes. Stick with a method that works but prepared to do specific revision within this. If you know, for example, that you will struggle to remember the different types of ministerial responsibility, create a spider diagram just on this and get someone to test you. Also try to add in documentaries, podcasts and articles to give your revision greater depth.

1. **Question Practice**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **30 mark essay or source essay** | **40-45 minutes** |
| **24 mark essay** | **30-35 minutes** |
| **12 mark analyse or examine question** | **15-20 minutes** |

Having revised the content and sources of a topic you need to bring this together by looking at a past question. You can find questions in the following places:

* First-year question – go back to questions you may have forgotten or where you under-performed. Look at the feedback you we given and then re-write
* Revision sections of Godalming Online
* The Edexcel textbooks – example questions are the end of every chapter

Produce detailed plans to questions based on your content and source revision and then write them up in timed conditions to practice being question-focused. Make sure you use a variety of question-types and don’t just pick questions that look straight-forward. Once you have written a question, self-assess it using the mark schemes at the end of each set of lesson materials or bring it to the workshops that the department is putting on.

**Some Common Mistakes to Avoid**

***Starting too late* –** if you try to cram your revision from Easter or when you go on study leave it will be overwhelming. Start early and you have the time to revise in a structured way that also gives you time to do other things

***Focusing on topics you like or find easier –*** All of the units are weighted equally and so your time needs to be divided likewise. In fact, if you know you struggle with ideological thinkers, for example, give more time to it.

***The “what should I do today…?” approach –*** your revision needs structure and to be planned at the start. Equally don’t spend a week on a revision timetable and think you have revised

***Just reading through notes –*** revision needs to be an active thing that reinforces your understanding of content. See the suggestions above on how to revise content and sources

***Not making the most of help and support –*** the support sessions and resources are there to assist you revision. Be proactive in getting questions marked and problems resolved

**History and Politics Department**

**50:50 Help and Advice**

Key to your success whilst studying in the History and Politics Department is the level of effort and work you put into your subjects outside of lessons. The college’s expectation is that you match every hour of class time with an hour of independent study – **50:50**. This will include completing **structured homework** tasks set by your teachers but will also require you to **work independently**; finding ways to consolidate and extend your understanding. To help you to do this, the list below gives some ideas or activities to consider each week.

**Consolidate your weekly work *(Suggested time = 1.5 hours per week)***

Go over your lesson materials and handouts from that week making sure that all activities have been finished in detail. If you have been reading articles or sources, go over these highlighting key points and adding annotations to the margins. When you have looked at a new concept or period, produce a simple mind-map to summarise the key information ready for future revision.

**Read an Extension article/chapter *(Suggested time = 1-2 hours per week)***

Log on to History Today, Modern History Review, Politics Review or Dawsonera and find an article or chapter that supports what you have been doing in class - reading lists are provided for each course to help you choose. Print out the article, create a set of sub-headings and then take detailed notes. Help with logging on to all of these websites can be found on the ILC’s page of Godalming Online under ‘Websites, Links, Subscriptions’.

**Listen to a MASSOLIT LEcture *(Suggested time = 15 minutes per week)***

Using the list of relevant lectures on Godalming Online, listen to a lecture from the website [www.massolit.io](http://www.massolit.io). This is a collection of lecture courses from leading academics on a range of History topics. As you listen, treat the lecture like an article – draw up a set of sub-headings or questions and take detailed notes under these. Help logging on can be found on the History and ILC pages of Godalming Online.

**Watch a documentary *(Suggested time = 45 minutes per week)***

Estream has a wide selection of History, Ancient History and Politics documentaries which support your courses or extend your understanding. You may often find yourself watching part of a documentary in class and can then also finish this off at home. Make sure that you are ‘actively’ watching e.g. create a basic spider-diagram with the issue you are investigating in the middle and then record brief notes around it.

**Revision *(Suggested time = 1 hour per week)***

It is never too early to start the process of revision, particularly if you are on a linear A-Level course. Go back to topics and lesson materials you completed earlier in the year and start to produce revision notes e.g. flashcards, mind-maps, typed notes, glossaries, key-dates timelines etc.. Starting your revision early will make it much easier when you come to revise for your end of year or final exams fully.

**Past-Question practice *(Suggested time = 1.5 hours per week)***

Use the selection of past questions from the department’s Godalming Online pages (or straight from the exam board: History and Ancient History = OCR; Politics = Edexcel) to practice structuring and writing exam-style answers. Once you have chosen a question revise its contents by going over your notes, prepare a detailed plan, and then write it under timed conditions. You can then bring this to one of the weekly support sessions to get feedback.

