

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **Honours Degree programmes in Politics**. For Combined and Joint Honours Degree programmes, please also refer to the equivalent document(s) for the other subject(s). This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2012**.

The aims of all Honours Degree programmes in Politics are:

- to provide an intellectually exacting and stimulating learning experience in social and political science for students from a wide variety of backgrounds, some of whom will be studying it for the first time;
- to give students the knowledge and understanding of social and political science that will enable them to use its distinctive concepts and approaches, whilst maintaining a reflexive awareness of their contested nature and the problems associated with them;
- to offer a learning framework that will assist students in gaining those cognitive and social skills that will be part of their intellectual, vocational and personal development, and encourage them to achieve their full potential;
- to foster the intellectual development of students and, in particular, to encourage their capacity for critical analysis and independent thought both as a worthwhile educational goal in its own right and to provide employers with highly skilled and motivated graduates;
- to provide a curriculum that draws on recent staff scholarship and a broader research culture of intellectual enquiry and debate.

Programmes are delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of four units (one unit is equivalent to 30 national credits). The programme comprises 'core' disciplinary courses, including a core stage one common to all degree programmes in the department, and 'optional' specialist courses, with an extended essay in the final stage. Whilst the development of disciplinary-specific skills are emphasised in the 'core' courses, the specialist options provide focused opportunities to examine the application of these skills. Moreover, the multi-disciplinary common first year, and the opportunity to take courses offered in complementary disciplines gives a heightened appreciation of disciplinary distinctiveness.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

The programmes are designed to enable students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following aspects of the discipline:

- how politics; sociology and social policy have developed historically, and of current innovations in the disciplines;
- a sound working knowledge of relevant information technology and its applications in political and sociological research;
- the distinctive characteristics of political science, sociology and social policy particularly in comparison with one another;
- the historical development of political science, sociology and social policy and the chief controversies that have emerged within them.
- the nature and significance of politics as a human activity;
- different political systems - especially in Britain, other European states and America - the nature and distribution of power within them and the different social, economic, historical and cultural contexts within which they operate and the relationships between them;
- modern normative political theory and its application to public policy and political controversies.

Skills and other attributes

The programmes are designed to allow students to acquire competence in the following skills:

- the application of political and sociological analyses to sub-disciplinary specialisms;
- learning and general study skills;
- gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of sources;
- written and oral communication skills in a variety of contexts;
- the capacity to identify, investigate, analyse, formulate and advocate solutions to problems;
- the ability to construct reasoned argument, synthesise relevant information and exercise critical judgment;
- the ability to use communication and information technology skills to retrieve and present information;
- skills of time planning, the management one's own learning and making use of constructive feedback;
- the capacity to present, orally and in writing, balanced and well-constructed arguments;
- the ability to respond effectively to the arguments of others;*
- ability to assume personal responsibility for a task and study independently;*
- self-awareness; political and sociological insight and civic awareness;
- an enhanced ability to communicate fluently and effectively in speech and writing;*
- the ability to work collaboratively with others to achieve common goals;*
- the ability to work independently with initiative, self-organisation and good time-management.*
- the ability to apply the concepts, theories and methods used in political science to the analysis of political institutions and practices;
- the ability to apply political analysis to different political phenomena and to help resolve political problems;
- the ability to evaluate critically political issues and events using the methods of academic political science;
- the ability to carry out an independent investigation of a political topic or issue and to produce a coherent written account;
- the ability to apply relevant information technology to political science research;

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, seminars, essay consultations, oral presentations and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal examinations, coursework, examined essays, translation exercises, oral presentations and the dissertation or long essay. In addition, students may be involved in workshops and may produce various forms of creative work. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

Please note that not all courses run each year. A full list of courses including optional courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

Single Honours Degree programme

Stage one:

Students must pass the following compulsory courses:

PR1400 Introduction to Politics and Government (1 unit)

Students must also take:

PR1500 Introduction to International Relations (1 unit)

PR1520 Classic and Contemporary Reading in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)

PR1600 Introduction to Research Methods in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)

Stage two:

Students must take:

Choices of the value of THREE units from among available courses in Politics

and

Choices to the value of ONE further unit of appropriate level two courses in Politics and International Relations or another department.

Stage three:

Students must take:

PR3000 Dissertation (1 unit)

and

Choices of the value of TWO units from among available courses in Politics

and

Choices to the value of ONE further unit of appropriate level three courses in Politics and International Relations or another department.

Combined Honours Degree programmes with Political Studies as a minor element

Stage one:

Students must take:

PR1400 Introduction to Politics and Government (1 unit)

and specified courses in the major subject.

Stage two:

Students must take:

One unit of courses from among available options in Politics and specified courses in the major subject.

Stage three:

Students must take one unit from among available options in Politics and specified courses in the major subject.

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Progression and award requirements

The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway. Students must pass units to the value of at least three units on each stage of the programme. On some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage, or to qualify for a particular degree title.

All first year students on single joint or combined honours programmes offered all or in part by departments or schools in the Faculty of Arts & Social Science are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Certificates of Distinction are awarded to students who achieve at least 80% in the quiz. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: Conditions for progression to the next stage) but fail to pass the Moodle-based quiz will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

Students must pass PR1400 Introduction to Politics and Government to progress to stage two and must pass all their stage one courses to be awarded the degree of single honours Politics.

In the final year all students must complete PR3000 Dissertation.

Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%.

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Student support and guidance

- Personal Advisers: All students are allocated a personal adviser who meets with them in the induction week and then regularly through the programme. The tutor's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- All tutors and academic staff, including the Head of Department, are available for consultation at advertised office hours.
- The Departmental Academic Coordinator provides guidance and advice on a range of academic, administrative, pastoral and welfare matters.
- The Department operates an 'open door' policy such that any member of staff may be consulted by students.
- A Departmental common room and a study room are available to all students.
- Induction programme to the Department and College for orientation at the start of the first year.
- Detailed and comprehensive Departmental Student Handbook.
- The Departmental Staff/Student Committee acts as a channel of communication between staff and students.

- Extensive supporting material and learning resources available from the College libraries. In addition students also have access to a wide range of resources available through other University of London libraries.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service liaison officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Education Support Unit for students with special needs.

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Admission requirements

The Department's standard conditional offer is available on the [Course Catalogue](#) web page. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

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Further learning and career opportunities

The programmes provide a firm foundation for postgraduate study and research, and some of the more successful graduates can expect to go on to postgraduate programmes in both Royal Holloway and elsewhere. The programmes also provide graduates with a range of intellectual, personal and social skills that are transferable to a wide variety of employment opportunities. Careers which will especially suit International Relations graduates include work in the civil service, local government, public and private sector management, political research and lobbying, teaching, and journalism and the media. Students on the programmes are able to take full advantage of the resources available at the College [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research.

In the 2008 RAE, 70% of the Politics and International Relations Department's research publications were judged to be in the top three categories, from 'internationally excellent' to 'world leading'. These results ranked the Department in ninth place among departments of politics and international relations with fewer than 20 staff and second place among departments with fewer than 15 staff.

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List of programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in Politics are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statements in Politics and International Relations describe the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subject, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see www.qaa.ac.uk). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see www.ucas.ac.uk).

Single Honours Degree programmes in Politics

BA Politics (L200)

Combined Honours Degree programmes with Political Studies as a minor component

BA French with Political Studies (R1L2)

BA German with Political Studies (R2L2) last cohort entry 2011

BA Italian with Political Studies (R3L2) last cohort entry 2011

BA Music with Political Studies (W3L2)

BSc (Econ) Economics with Political Studies (L1L2)

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