

British Government in the 21st Century

It has never been so difficult to govern the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Political developments in recent years have highlighted the complexity and challenges faced by the UK as it seeks to re-establish its global standing in the aftermath of the decision to leave the European Union in 2016. Since then, a series of near-constitutional crises have been averted, testing the workings of the British parliamentary system, while the future of the union as a long-term political framework remains in doubt. This course will introduce students to the functioning of a political system guided by an unwritten constitution. It will consider the role of the monarchy; the nature of parliament and its relationship to cabinet government; devolved government in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland; local government; and the UK's relationship with extra-national organizations like the United Nations, NATO, the Commonwealth, and the European Union.

Provisional class themes:

1. An Unwritten Constitution and the Modern Monarchy
2. Parliament: Commons and Lords
3. Elected Dictatorship: Prime Minister and Cabinet Government
4. Multilateral Britain: Sovereignty and International Institutions
5. Decentred Government: Local Government, Devolution, and the fate of the UK

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