PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1 Awarding Institution University of Newcastle Upon Tyne

2 Teaching Institution University of Newcastle Upon Tyne

3 Final Award BA (Hons.)

4 Programme title Politics

5 Programme Accredited by: Not relevant

6 UCAS Code L200

7 QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s) Politics

8 Date of production/revision October 2004

9 Programme Aims:

- to broaden and deepen the student's understanding of the nature and significance of politics

- to develop the student's appreciation of the diversity of the discipline in terms of both content and approaches

- to offer an environment informed by research and scholarship in which students can learn about politics from knowledgeable staff, their own study and from discussion with fellow students

- to enhance students' cognitive skills, including analysing and presenting information and developing a reasoned argument; and core skills such as adaptability, planning and organisation

- to allow students to specialise within the discipline according to their interests and provide an opportunity for them to study outside subjects at each stage

- to achieve a quality of student work such that most degrees awarded are of upper second-class standard or higher

- to meet the needs of stakeholders (eg employers) and other external referents (eg the benchmarking statement)

10 (a) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:

Note: these learning outcomes are defined at the level of the typical graduate

A *Knowledge and understanding of*

1 Major aspects of political thought

2 Major aspects of political systems

3 Major aspects of international politics

4 Self-selected specialisms within the discipline

B *Subject-specific/professional skills*

1 The capacity to make effective use of a wide range of information sources, including qualitative and quantitative data, library, internet and other electronic sources, and governmental and non-governmental information.

2 The ability to undertake, and to report on, a research exercise

C *Cognitive skills*

1 Critical evaluation of arguments and evidence

2 Presenting a reasoned and informed position

D *Key (transferable) skills*

1 Written and oral communication

2 Planning and organisation

3 Basic IT skills

4 Initiative and adaptability

10 (b)
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:
Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies

A   *Knowledge and understanding*
      Core knowledge is imparted and understanding developed through lectures supplemented by handouts and sometimes by other visual media, such as videos and web sources. Seminars are used to check and improve students' understanding, to develop appreciation of issues through discussion and argument, and to enhance presentation and other oral skills. A1, A2, and A3 are developed through compulsory modules at Stages 1 and 2 while A4 is achieved through optional modules at all three stages.

B   *Subject-specific/professional skills*
      Professional skills (B1) and their application to the study of politics are taught through lectures, seminars, workshops, exercises, and debates in skills modules at Stages 1 and 2. Student presentations and essays require effective extraction of information.

C   *Cognitive skills*
      C1 and C2 are developed throughout the curriculum and are inherent in the nature of our subject and its teaching. Students develop, evaluate and present evidence and arguments in essays, exams, projects, presentations and seminar discussion.

D   *Key (transferable) skills*
         Written communication (D1) is developed through essays, projects and examinations while oral communication (also D1) is developed through seminars, presentations and debates. Planning and organisation (D2), as well as initiative and adaptability (D4), skills are required for such sessions and are further developed in project and dissertation modules. IT skills (D3) are taught in Study Skills modules and further developed in compulsory and optional project modules.

10 (c)
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:
Assessment Strategy and Methods

A   *Knowledge and understanding*
1   Political thought - Unseen written exams, essays
2   Political systems - Unseen written exams, essays debates, simulations
3   International politics - Unseen written exams, essays, portfolio
4   Specialist areas - Unseen written exams, essays, projects

B   *Subject-specific/professional skills*
1   Information sources - Presupposed in essays and projects

C   *Cognitive Skills*
1   Unseen written exams, essays, projects
2   Presentations, essays, debates, simulations

D   *Key (transferable) skills*

1   Written and oral communication   Unseen written exams, essays, projects and presentations

2   Planning and organisation   ) Basic IT skills are assessed in a Study

3   Basic IT skills   ) Skills module but achievement of B2 and B4 is presupposed by other forms of assessment

4   Initiative and adaptability   ) eg (projects)

11 Programme Curriculum, Structure, and Features:

Duration: 3 years

Stages: 3

Number of credits per stage: 120

Number of credits per module: 10-30

Number of study hours per 10 credit module: 100

Students may take up to 20 credits in subjects other than Politics at each Stage of the

degree.

Requirements for progression: Satisfactory completion of each stage in accordance with University Progress Regulations

Stage 1 introduces politics as an academic subject. Knowledge and understanding of political thought, political systems and international politics (outcomes A1-A3) is developed through required modules in these areas while students also have an opportunity to study more specialised topics (A4). Professional (B1) cognitive (C1, C2) and key skills (D1-D4) are developed throughout the stage but are explicitly developed in a compulsory Study Skills module, further reinforced by assessed debates, simulations, and portfolios in the foundation modules in Comparative Government and International Politics.

MODULE	C/R/O	Credits
POL120 Studying Politics I: Skills and Techniques	C	20
POL121 UK Government & Politics	O	20
POL122 Political Thought	C	20
POL123 Comparative Government	C	10
POL129 Political Thought: Ancient World & Middle Ages	O	20
POL130 Introduction to European Union	O	20
POL132 Introduction to International Politics	C	10

C = Compulsory
R = Part of a List of Required Modules
O = Optional

At *Stage 2* required modules extend the three core areas of political systems, political thought and international politics (A1-A3) while options permit more specialised study (A4). Again, professional (B1), cognitive (C1, C2) and key skills (D1-D4) are developed throughout the stage, and most explicitly in the compulsory Study Skills Project module, which includes sessions on effective information searching and lays the foundation for the more self-directed character of the final year.

MODULE	C/R/O	Credits
POL207 Political Thought: Socialism & Anarchism	O	10
POL208 Political Thought: Nationalism & Fascism	O	10
POL273 Political Marketing	O	10
POL215 EU: Politics & Policy	R	10
POL216 Britain & the EU	O	10
POL222 Government & Politics of the USA	R	20
POL261 Politics of the Middle East	R	10
POL228 Studying Politics II: Research Projects	C	10
POL263 International Politics: Global Transformations	C	10
POL264 Political Thought: Hobbes to Mill	C	20

MODULE	C/R/O	Credits
POL275 The Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa	R	20
POL266 East Asia: Power & Culture	O	20
POL270 British Politics: State & Society	O	10

Stage 3 seeks to deepen understanding of politics in specialised areas (A4) including the three core areas (A1-A3). The requirement to undertake between 20 and 50 credits of dissertation/project work contributes to subject-specific/professional skills (B1), cognitive skills (C1 and especially C2) and notably to key skills (D1-D4).

MODULE	C/R/O	Credits
POL307 Project in International Politics	R	10
POL314 Project in African Politics	R	10
POL324 Politics of Central & Eastern Europe	O	20
POL329 The Psychology of Politics	O	20
POL330 Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism	O	20
POL334 Africa & the Politics of Development	O	20
POL333 Dissertation	R	40
POL350 Contemporary Political Philosophy	O	20
POL353 Political Thought: Perspectives on International Affairs	O	10
POL354 Oil and Security in the Persian Gulf	R	10
POL357 Project on the EU	R	10
POL358 Project on the Government & Politics of the USA	R	10
POL360 The Government & Politics of France	O	10
POL361 Government & Politics of Italy	O	10
POL362 Political Thought: Hegel & Marx	O	10
POL363 EU: Decision-Making Simulation	O	20
POL364 Third World in Global Development	O	20
POL366 Project in Contemporary Political Philosophy	O	10
POL372 Water Politics & Water Policy	O	20
POL339 Environmental Politics: Philosophy & Practice	O	20
POL373 The Politics of Immigration & Race in the UK	O	20

12 Criteria for Admission

GCSEs required: All candidates must satisfy the University's General Entrance Requirements and Matriculation Regulations at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/

A level subjects and grades: BBB from 18 units including two A levels, AVCE (Double Award) accepted if offered with an A level.

Alternative Entry qualifications for candidates offering Access courses, modules in Arts and Social Sciences desirable (where graded, at Credit level).

The admissions policy is based on a number of considerations:

- the applicant's predicted grades (if he or she has not yet sat her exams);

- the applicant's school reference;

- the applicant's personal testimonial; and,

- the applicant's earlier academic performance (eg his or her GCSEs)

The decision as to whether to accept a candidate and, if so, what offer to make are based on all of these considerations.

Arrangements for non-standard entrants: We recognise that students will apply to our degree programmes with a range of qualifications. We consider each application on an individual basis, taking into account the information on the UCAS form including past academic performance and potential. We welcome applications from students with non-standard qualifications other than the ones described above, and are pleased to advise anyone interested with regard to choosing an appropriate preparatory course of study.

Any Additional Requirements: None

13 Support for Students and their Learning:

Induction

In advance of the start of the year, the University sends new students a pack of information. Politics also sends pre-registration information to both new and returning students, including degree programme handbooks and module handbooks.

The University devotes the first week of the new academic year to induction. Politics organises its own programme of meetings and events for Induction Week.

The main features of the Induction Week in Politics for **all students** (new and returning undergraduates) are:

- meetings of all students with their personal tutors

- student registration for the academic year

- students' selection and registration of their modules

- welcome, information and advice meetings specifically for each stage of each degree

- briefing sessions on modules

In addition, the following is provided for **new undergraduates**:

- a Faculty Induction meeting covering such

> matters as the careers service, student welfare, etc

- an introduction to, and tour of, the Library

- a 'Meet the Staff' session

Returning undergraduates also receive

- talks on careers (including talks held shortly after Induction Week) provided by the University Careers Service

- information on the 'Students into Schools' project

Study skills support

The degree includes two required Study Skills modules. The objective of POL 120 Studying Politics I: Skills and Techniques is to introduce students to the skills and techniques fundamental to the study of politics, including background quantitative and computer skills, qualitative techniques and critical and literary skills. POL 228 Studying Politics II: Research Project provides an opportunity for students to conduct self-defined research.

Academic support

All teaching staff are available in office hours to discuss academic progress with students; many are also available at other times and by e-mail and telephone. The Degree Programme Director is available to discuss issues affecting progress on the degree as a whole while the personal tutor offers advice on module selection, building on the general advice offered in induction week and in the Degree Handbook. All essays are returned with both quantitative and qualitative feedback; and we recognise the particular need for students to receive such feedback early on in the degree.

Pastoral support

Every Politics student is assigned for the duration of their studies to a personal tutor, who has specific responsibility for support and guidance. The personal tutor has five main functions:

- to provide advice on academic matters

- to provide advice on non-academic matters affecting the student's work or situation within the University

- to be a source of help and sympathy

- to represent the tutee in his/her dealings with the university

- to write helpful and accurate references

All full-time members of academic teaching staff act as personal tutors. Assignment of students to personal tutors is by the Degree Director. The student has the right, stated in the Degree Handbook, to ask the Degree Director for a change of personal tutor. A network of specialised support agencies provides much of the non-academic help and advice for students, but the personal tutor often provides the initial linkage of the student to the network.

The school in which Politics is located emphasises that tutors must be accessible, amicable, approachable and accurate in keeping records. All tutors are required to display their office hours and contact details (eg email address, phone number) outside their offices. Personal tutors are also encouraged to use email and the Student Support and Tutoring (SST) system to maintain regular contact with their tutees. The tutorial absence tracking system notifies personal tutors of unexcused absences, and they are expected to chase up persistent absentees.

Students are offered appropriate opportunities for career development and support. We appoint a member of staff and a student to liaise with the Careers Service with which we have a Service Level Agreement.

Support for Special Needs

The Degree Handbook describes the support facilities available for students with special needs, including the Disability Support Service, the Student Counselling Service, the Student Advice Service, University Student Office and the International Office. Personal tutors provide a link between the student and these support facilities. All ground floor rooms in the department are accessible to wheel-chair users.

Learning resources

Politics aims to make efficient and effective use of its own resources and those of the University to provide students with a learning experience which is both appropriate to the student profile and productive in its outcomes.

Politics recognises that full-time academic staff are its most important teaching resource. We ensure that all degree programmes and most modules are led by specialist staff whose teaching is enhanced by research. The teaching skills of full-time academic staff are regularly refreshed through training courses.

Politics is materially well equipped to discharge its teaching tasks. All seminar rooms are equipped with OHPs, screens and whiteboards, and our lecture room has a networked PC coupled with a multi-media projector. A portable display projector has recently been purchased for use with a laptop computer in seminar rooms by students and staff.

We are fortunate in the excellent library and IT facilities provided by the University to support its teaching provision. We believe that the subject provision within the Robinson Library is appropriate to the requirements of the curriculum, and that a high quality library service is delivered to users.

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards
- Stage questionnaires
- Module questionnaires
- Biennial course review
- Peer observation of teaching
- Internal subject review
- External Examiner reports
- Staff meetings
- Annual review of progression rates, degree classes achieved, graduate employment statistics

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards
- Board of Studies (includes student representatives)
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Staff Student Committee (includes student representatives)
- Employers' Forum
- Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee
- University Teaching Committee
- Examination Boards

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience
- Staff Student Committee and student representation on Board of Studies
- Module and stage evaluation questionnaires

15 Regulation of Assessment

Assessment rules and Honours classification
- Minimum pass mark is 40% for each module
- Most modules are assessed by a combination of unseen written examination and coursework, although projects and dissertations are 100% coursework
- Information on assessment is available in the degree programme and module handbooks
- All stage 1 and stage 2 modules must be passed before students can proceed, in accordance with University Progress Regulations. There are two resit opportunities.
- Degree classification is based on the weighted average result for stages 2 and 3, with stage 3 results accounting for twice the weight of stage 2

Honours marks are based on the following University scale:

Mark Degree Class
> 70% First
60-69% Upper second
50-59% Lower second
40-49% Third
<40% Fail

Role of external examiners

The external examiners are leading members of the academic community appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee and their role is to:
- Approve assessment on modules which count for honours, including approving examination papers
- Review samples of examination scripts and coursework to check standards and assessment procedures
- Attend the Examination Boards
- Report back to the University

16 Indicators of Quality and Standards

With a standard offer of BBB, the degree attracts academically strong students, a large majority of whom progress well on the course and graduate with at least an upper second-class honours. The graduates from the degree are successful in entering a wide variety of occupations; the employment rate is particularly high. Politics teaching received 23 our of 24 marks in the Quality Assurance Agency review in November 2001.

17 Other Sources of Information

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes which a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he or she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. More detailed information can be found in the degree programme handbook and in module documentation. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Key information about the programme can be found in:
- Degree Programme Handbook
- The Module Guides
- The Regulations of the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne
- The University's Undergraduate Prospectus and subject brochure
- Subject Review Report (April 1998, follow-up December 1999)
- The School's website (www.ncl.ac.uk/geps)