

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
2	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
3	<b>Final Award</b>	BA (Hons)
4	<b>Programme Title</b>	Politics and History
5	<b>UCAS/Programme Code</b>	VL12
6	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	None
7	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	Politics, History
8	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	6
9	<b>Date written/revised</b>	01 June 2007

### 10 Programme Aims

- 1 To provide opportunities for students to study Politics and History, to acquire the skills of historians and political scientists, to specialise within each discipline according to their own interests and to undertake specialised research projects.
- 2 To broaden and deepen students' understanding of the nature and significance of Politics and History, including an appreciation of the complexity and diversity of situations, events, and mentalities in the past and present.
- 3 To offer a research-informed environment in which students can learn about Politics and History from knowledgeable staff, their own study and from discussion with fellow students.
- 4 To enhance students' cognitive skills, including analysing and presenting information and developing a reasoned argument; and core skills such as adaptability, planning and organisation.
- 5 Graduates of the programme should be capable of going on to further study, or undertaking a wide variety of jobs in the private, public or voluntary sector.
- 6 Graduates of the programme will have attained standards that at least meet Honours Level of the HE Qualifications Framework and the QAA subject benchmarks for Politics and History.
- 7 The programme will meet standards set out in university policies. Where courses of study take place outside the university, during ERASMUS exchanges, the standards will comply with the appropriate university policies on placements.

### 11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 Have gained knowledge and understanding of relevant key themes and concepts within the disciplines of Politics and History.
- A2 Have gained knowledge of a wide range of primary source material and an understanding of how such material should be interpreted and evaluated.
- A3 Have developed an ability to reflect critically on the nature of the disciplines and professions of Politics and History.
- A4 Have gained knowledge and understanding of self-selected specialisms within the two disciplines.
- A5 Have an understanding of the complexity, variety and diversity of the two disciplines and of the relationship between them.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding (A1-A5) is lectures,

supplemented by seminars and IT workshops. Seminars and workshops help to reinforce and amplify student learning gained in lectures and provide an opportunity to develop appreciation of issues through discussion and argument. Throughout the programme, students are encouraged to supplement taught material by independent study, for which they are given extensive support and guidance on relevant reading materials - and web-based material - and how to use them. Students have the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding partly via intensive seminar work and also by the undertaking of independent research under staff supervision. A1, A3 and A5 are developed through the compulsory Stage 1 module (POL 1000). A3 and A5 are further developed in an optional Stage 3 History module. A2 and A4 is taught via intensive seminar work and also through the option of undertaking independent research under staff supervision.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

Knowledge and understanding of the subject is primarily assessed by unseen written examinations together with written assignments notably essays, documentary commentaries, projects and group work including simulations and presentations (A1-A5). In the case of A4 this may be supplemented by submission of an extended piece of work.

#### **Intellectual Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Make use of analytical reasoning and critical skills in reading, writing and debating.
- B2 Use appropriate evidence to support a sustained argument or line of reasoning.
- B3 Be able to compare contrasting and conflicting ideas and material.
- B4 Be able to argue coherently and persuasively.
- B5 Be able to adapt effectively to new and/or unexpected questions or problems.
- B6 Have developed intellectual independence.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Intellectual skills (B1-B6) are developed through exercises and guidance in lectures, in seminars – where group discussion and debate take place. This is supplemented, in the case of B1-B4 by written feedback and discussion with staff. Students are encouraged to acquire such skills through the completion of a range of written assignments, notably essays, documentary commentaries and problem-solving exercises. B1-B6 are also encouraged through group and one-to-one discussion and debate in lectures, seminars and tutorials.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

Intellectual skills B1-B4 and B6 are assessed by unseen examinations, written assignments, timed class essays and dissertations. B5 is primarily assessed by unseen written examination only.

#### **Practical Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Listen and take notes effectively.
- C2 Pursue independent study.
- C3 Locate, critically read, evaluate and digest material.
- C4 Produce clear, succinct, accurate, well-planned and coherent presentation of results in both written and oral forms.
- C5 Process and evaluate primary sources in order to produce an extended piece of work.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Listening and note-taking (C1) are taught via a skills module (POL1000) and developed principally in lectures, but also in seminars. Note-taking is also a feature of independent study. Other practical skills (C2-C5) are taught in lectures and in seminars, supplemented by assigned work (C2-C4) and workshops. C5 is further taught via dissertation supervisions, for those students who choose to do a dissertation. Such skills (C2-C5) are developed and practiced in written assignments, notably essays and documentary commentaries, and problem-solving exercises undertaken in class or in private study time. Preparation of oral presentations also helps to develop C2 and C4.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

The ability of students to deploy practical skills (C1-C5) effectively is assessed primarily by means of unseen written examinations, written assignments, timed class essays and also in dissertations.

#### **Transferable/Key Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- D1 Use a computer and relevant software effectively.
- D2 Be able to gather, manage and evaluate information from a variety of sources.
- D3 Express themselves effectively in both written and oral form.
- D4 Solve problems.
- D5 Communicate clearly, relevantly, effectively and appropriately with others.
- D6 Use their initiative.
- D7 Adapt their knowledge and apply it to different circumstances.
- D8 Work effectively as part of a team.
- D9 Have basic numeracy skills.
- D10 Plan and organise their time and work effectively.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Transferable skills are principally learnt and practiced in private study, preparation of assignments, and seminars (D1-10), and taught also in the skills module and via workshops. Assigned work also helps to inculcate D2, D3, D4, D6 and D10. Communication skills (D3 and D5) are further refined in seminars. Transferable skills are developed and practiced in written assignments such as essays and documentary commentaries supplemented by individual or group presentations. Oral debate in seminars and tutorials provides the opportunity to develop D3 and D5. Computer literacy (D1) is developed by the word-processing of written assignments and problem-solving exercises such as bibliographic tasks. D8 is fostered by group presentations, projects and assignments.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

D3, D5 and D8 are assessed by means of the grading of seminar group presentations. D2, D3, D4, D6, D7 and D9 are assessed by a combination of unseen examination, written assignments, timed class essays and can also be assessed in dissertations. Computer literacy (D1) is assessed as part of the process of grading written assignments and also forms part of specific workshop tasks. D10 is not explicitly assessed.

## **12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**

### **Basic structure of the programme**

The programme is studied over three years full-time.

The programme is divided into three stages. Each year, or stage, requires the study of modules with a total credit value of 120. The three years of the degree therefore amounts to 360 credits. Each credit represents 10 hours of student effort, covering lectures, seminars, workshops, private study, completion of assessed work and revision.

In Politics and History, modules are either 20 or 30 credits.

At Stage 1 there is a compulsory 20 credit module (POL1000) that introduces students to methods and study skills in Politics and History. Students then take at least two introductory Politics modules (from a choice of political thought, political systems, international politics and film and popular culture) and at least two introductory History modules (from a choice of World history, British history, European history and American history). The remaining 20 credits can be used either to take an additional introductory Politics or History module or to take a module from outside the programme.

At Stage 2 students normally take 60 credits in Politics and 60 credits in History from a choice of more specialised 20 credit modules. However, as at Stage 1, students have the right to earn up to 20 credits in modules taken outside the programme. All modules at this stage are optional and provide the opportunity to develop further knowledge of both disciplines.

At Stage 3 all students have the choice to complete a dissertation in either Politics or History. Overall they must take 60 credits in Politics and 60 credits in History. In Politics the students choose from a range of specialised 20 credit modules. In History they may choose to take a 30 credit module on historical methodology or can select modules from a range of 30 credit Special Subjects, which cover a diverse array of historical topics and involve close engagement with primary sources.

For degree classification purposes all Honours modules (that is Stages 2 and 3) count. Stage 3 modules have twice the weighting of Stage 2 modules in the final degree classification.

Progression to the next stage of the programme is conditional on meeting the requirements laid down by the University for progression. Students should pass every module with a mark of at least 40% in order to proceed. However, narrow failure of a small number of credits may be condoned by the Exam Board.

#### **Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

This is a joint programme which allows students to study two separate disciplines to Honours level. The Politics and History degree at Newcastle University is distinctive in relation to similar degrees at other institutions in the emphasis on choice. There is only one compulsory module (POL1000), beyond that students are encouraged to pursue their own interests and to develop their own distinctive pathways through the programme. In both disciplines an exceptionally wide range of topics are covered (geographically, chronologically and thematically).

#### **Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

[http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2009-2010/documents/PoliticsandHistoryBAHonours\\_008.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2009-2010/documents/PoliticsandHistoryBAHonours_008.pdf)

### **13 Criteria for admission**

#### *Entry qualifications*

The typical offer for admission is AAB from 18 units including A level History (at least a B grade) and one other A Level. General Studies is acceptable as an A level.

Scottish Qualifications are also welcomed, and although we consider all candidates with Scottish Highers/CSCYS on an individual basis, a typical offer would be AAABB at Higher Grade including History. Combination of Highers and Advanced Highers are accepted.

#### *Admissions policy/selection tools*

The admissions policy is based on a number of considerations:

- The applicant's predicted grades (if he or she has not yet sat the exams).
- The applicant's school reference.
- The applicant's personal statement.
- The applicant's earlier academic performance (e.g. his or her GCSEs).
- The contextual information contained on the UCAS form (e.g. average school performance, areas of deprivation, social/economic status etc.)

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

We fully participate in the Partners programme and in other initiatives to widen participation. Partners school applicants are part of the guaranteed standard offer scheme and Partners applicants (e.g. those participating in the Partners' summer school programme) are given offers one grade below our 'standard offer'.

All students to whom offers are made are invited to an Open Day to meet staff and current students. Attendance at this Open Day is not compulsory.

#### *Non-standard Entry Requirements*

For candidates offering Access courses, modules in Historical Studies, Social Studies and Law are desirable (at Credit level for courses that are graded).

We also welcome applications from overseas students and appropriate overseas qualifications will be considered.

#### *Additional Requirements*

*Level of English Language capability*  
IELTS 6.5 or equivalent

## **14 Support for Student Learning**

### *Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/seminars/tutorials etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming\\_to\\_newcastle/orientation.phtml](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml))

### *Study skills support*

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Study Skills are central to the compulsory Stage One module (POL1000). Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

### *Academic support*

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their personal tutor (see below) for more generic issues. All teaching staff are available during office hours to discuss academic progress with students. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committees, and/or at the Boards of Studies.

### *Pastoral support*

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml>  
In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare.phtml>

### *Support for students with disabilities*

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of the campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

### *Learning resources*

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/acfacilities.phtml>

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other

languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/facilities/langcen.phtml>

## **15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

### *Module reviews*

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Boards of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committees and at the Boards of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committees and at the Boards of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

### *Programme reviews*

The Joint Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

### *External Examiner reports*

External Examiner reports are considered by the Boards of Studies. The Boards respond to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committees.

### *Student evaluations*

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committees, and the Boards of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at [www.thestudentsurvey.com/](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/) With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

### *Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committees and the Boards of Studies.

### *Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal\\_subject\\_review/index.php](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php)

### *Accreditation reports*

### *Additional mechanisms*

## **16 Regulation of assessment**

### *Pass mark*

The pass mark is 40%.

### *Course requirements*

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/ugcont.pdf>) and Undergraduate Examination Conventions (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/ugexamconv.pdf>). In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35 is possible at each Stage and there are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

*Weighting of stages*

The marks from Stages 2 and 3 will contribute to the final classification of the degree.  
The weighting of marks contributing to the degree for Stages 2 and 3 is 1:2

*Common Marking Scheme*

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Undergraduate Examination Conventions, namely

	<b>Honours</b>	<b>Non-honours</b>
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

*Role of the External Examiner*

External Examiners, distinguished members of the subject community, are appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Boards of Studies. The External Examiners are expected to:

- See and approve examination papers.
- Moderate examination and coursework marking.
- Attend the Board of Examiners.
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme.

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact [enquiries@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ncl.ac.uk))

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

## Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1	<b>POL1000</b> , HIS1023, HIS1024, HIS1044, HIS1045, HIS1046, POL1016, POL1017, POL1022, POL1032
A2	All modules – especially those at Stages 2 and 3.
A3	<b>POL1000</b> , HIS3008.
A4	All Stage 2 and 3 Politics modules, all Stage 2 History modules, all Stage 3 History Special Subjects.
A5	<b>POL1000</b> and other modules.
B1	All Politics and History modules.
B2	All Politics and History modules.
B3	All Politics and History modules.
B4	All Politics and History modules.
B5	Those modules that involve unseen examinations.
B6	All modules, but especially HIS3010, POL3046, POL3047 and POL3048.
C1	All Politics and History modules.
C2	All Politics and History modules, but especially HIS3010, POL3046, POL3047 and POL3048.
C3	All Politics and History modules.
C4	All Politics and History modules.
C5	HIS3010, POL3046, POL3047, POL3048.
D1	All Politics and History modules, but especially <b>POL1000</b> .
D2	All Politics and History modules.
D3	All Politics and History modules.
D4	All Politics and History modules.
D5	All Politics and History modules.
D6	All Politics and History modules.
D7	All Politics and History modules, but especially those involving unseen examinations.
D8	Many Politics and History modules.
D9	All Politics and History modules.
D10	All Politics and History modules.