Module Descriptor

Title	British Political History since WW2		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	Full Time
Code	**PLTC10004**	**SCQF Level**	SCQF 10
Credit Points	20	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	10
School	**Education and Social Sciences**		
Module Co-ordinator	**Michael Pugh**		

Summary of Module

This module offers students the opportunity to critically examine major themes and debates in the political history of the United Kingdom since the end of the Second World War. It provides a broad yet analytically focused overview of developments in British politics and government, encouraging engagement with competing historical interpretations and conceptual frameworks. Students are prompted to reflect on how political institutions, ideologies, and practices have evolved over time, and to recognise that both the meaning and consequences of these changes remain contested by scholars and political actors alike.

The module is infused with geopolitical concerns, not least the UK's fraught relations with the EU and its precursor institutions from before membership to Brexit, and the 'special relationship' with the United States from WW2 to Iraq and beyond. Central to all topics studied are questions of power and how it is wielded and resisted by people, ideas, institutions and movements over time, shaping the contemporary political environment.

Students will explore electoral politics, public policy, and constitutional change, including debates over devolution and the coherence of the UK state. They will develop the ability to analyse primary sources critically and empathetically, while strengthening skills in academic writing, discussion, collaboration, and independent judgment. Overall, the module enhances critical thinking, communication, and employability within national and global political contexts.

Module Delivery Method	On-Campus[1] ☒	Hybrid[2] ☐	Online[3] ☐	Work -Based Learning[4] ☐
Campuses for Module Delivery	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☒ Lanarkshire ☐ London ☒ Paisley	☐ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)	

Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1	☐	Term 2	☒	Term 3	☐
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2	☐	Term 2 – Term 3	☐	Term 3 – Term 1	☐

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Demonstrate a critical appreciation of change and continuity in UK political history over a substantial tract of time.
L2	Critically evaluate competing historical and conceptual interpretations of developments in UK politics in the period concerned
L3	Produce focused and mature writing involving research in primary and secondary sources on a contested issue in British or Irish political history.
L4	Critically engage with primary sources and locating them in their wider historical contexts

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	**During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:**
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	**SCQF 10** Developing a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of key trends, developments and debates in British political history post WW2.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	**SCQF 10** Rigorously analysing a variety of competing explanations and sets of evidence in British history.
Generic Cognitive skills	**SCQF 10** Engaging in the interpretive synthesis of complex issues and debates in British political history.

[1] Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[2] The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[3] Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[4] Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	**SCQF 10** Exercising a high level of autonomy in their reading, research and coursework preparation, while working collaboratively in seminar and VLE settings.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	**SCQF 10** Exercising a high level of autonomy in their reading, research and coursework preparation, while working collaboratively in seminar and VLE settings.

Prerequisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**
	Other	
Co-requisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**

Learning and Teaching	
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours.	
Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	**Student Learning Hours** (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture / Core Content Delivery	24
Tutorial/Synchronous Support Activity	12
Independent Study	164
TOTAL	200

Indicative Resources

The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:

Addison, P. and Jones, H. (eds.) (2005) *A companion to contemporary Britain, 1939–2000*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
Edgerton, D. (2019) *The rise and fall of the British nation: a twentieth-century history*. London: Penguin.
MacDonald, C.M.M. (2009) *Whaur extremes meet: Scotland's twentieth century*. Edinburgh: Polygon.
Thane, P. (2018) *Divided kingdom: a history of Britain, 1900 to the present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scottish Historical Studies
Parliamentary Affairs

Political Quarterly
Websites:
The British Cartoon Archive (online)
The National Archives
N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

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Attendance and Engagement Requirements

In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:

The university is committed to providing a supportive learning environment that actively facilitates student success. In this module, there is a high degree of student-led flexibility. You are academically engaged if you are regularly engaged with scheduled live sessions on-campus. You should also undertake work in your own time, including engaging with seminar exercises and Group Work in preparation for seminar discussion, course-related learning resources, and with timely completion and submission of assessments.

Whilst we understand that there may be times when conflicting priorities make participation challenging, for you to gain the most from this module it is recommended that you participate in all scheduled live classes and complete your self-directed learning activities in a timely manner.

It may be difficult to pass the assessment associated with this module if you are not regularly engaging with the module work and live classes. We may reach out to check how things are going and offer support if we observe that you have not been attending sessions or completing online activities.

Equality and Diversity

The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code.

In line with current legislation (Equality Act, 2010) and the UWS Equality, Diversity, and Human Rights Code, our modules are accessible and inclusive, with reasonable adjustment for different needs where appropriate. Module materials comply with University guidance on inclusive learning and teaching, and specialist assistive equipment, support provision and adjustment to assessment practice will be made in accordance with UWS policy and regulations.

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	**Social Sciences**
Overall Assessment Results	☐ **Pass / Fail** ☒ **Graded**

Module Eligible for Compensation	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No** **If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.**
School Assessment Board	Social Science
Moderator	D McKeever
External Examiner	**Jamie Halsall**
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**
Changes / Version Number	

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)
Assessment 1 Source commentary exercise (30%)
Assessment 2 Essay (70%)
Assessment 3
(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed. (ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Source commentary exercise	☐	☒	☐	☒	☐	30%	

Component 2							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Essay	☒	☐	☒	☐	☐	70%	

Component 3							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Combined total for all components	100%	4 hours

Change Control

What	When	Who
Changes in module descriptor to reflect greater focus on British political history	Feb 2026	MP