

McDaniel College, Budapest

UK Politics

Dr Andrew Ryder is an Associate Professor in Sociology at the Corvinus University, Budapest and Associate Fellow with the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham. Prior to this he was Policy Officer respectively to the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition and researcher to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers within the British Parliament. Andrew is currently contracted by Policy Press to write a book on Brexit. For more information see: <https://about.me/andrewryder>

Contact

aryder@mcdaniel.edu

andrew.ryder@uni-corvinus.hu

Consultation – 11.45 – 12.45 Monday or by appointment

Short description of the course

- The course aims to provide specialist knowledge of contemporary British government and politics. It provides candidates with both an awareness of the most significant debates and a thorough understanding of the issues and controversies surrounding the operation of British government.
- The course involves a study of the theoretical and philosophical context of British politics, exploring the thoughts of key thinkers that have shaped British political debate. In addition students will explore the historical context to the present debates and political parties through an exploration of politics in the post war period. The course then proceeds to introduce students to how UK politics works at a national, regional, local level. Finally the course explores a range of case studies which illustrates in more depth the key themes and workings of British politics.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Key Skills

- - think critically about political sources and arguments
- - write political essays with a strong analysis
- - become well informed about the historical background to contemporary British politics
- - understand the technical workings of British politics
- - make connections between social, cultural and political change

The course will be based on classes and seminar type discussions, fieldwork and trips and discussions with guests from Roma civil society and the screening of films and documentaries.

Two 90 minutes sessions will be organised on a weekly basis for 15 weeks

Assessment

Students will be expected to attend and participate in the classes. Students will be asked to prepare some short presentations related to class topics. Students will have to write an essay at the end of the course. The students' evaluation will take into consideration attendance 20%, participation during the classes 15%, presentation 15% and a final course essay related to the topics 50%.

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|-----------------|--------|----|
| Standard scale: | 100+ | A+ |
| | 93-100 | A |
| | 90-92 | A- |
| | 88-89 | B+ |
| | 83-87 | B |
| | 80-82 | B- |
| | 78-79 | C+ |
| | 73-78 | C |
| | 70-72 | C- |
| | 68-69 | D+ |
| | 63-67 | D |
| | 60-62 | D- |
| | < 60 | F |

Honor Code

You are expected without question to adhere completely to the McDaniel College academic honor code. Any violation will result in a zero for the given assignment and other possible sanctions.

Course Policies

Informed, critical exchange of ideas forms the core of the McDaniel College learning experience. It should occur in every classroom. This is why in-class participation determines part of your grade. You are expected to share ideas during discussions; you are wholeheartedly encouraged to ask questions when you do not understand something; you will have chances to speak one-on-one with your fellow students as well as to speak before the entire class.

Creation of a proper classroom environment requires above all else respect for fellow students. We all ask that you don't be late; that you don't browse the Internet or otherwise distract others during class; that you turn off your cell phone and that you do not check for messages during class; that you don't pack up with five minutes left. Likewise, you can expect us to end class on time, to engage you in discussion and debate (that is, not to do all of the talking), and to be respectful of all points of view.

Participation implies attendance; absences will be noted and will adversely affect your final participation grade. In addition, in accordance with McDaniel Budapest's attendance

policy, there will be an automatic deduction of one letter grade for every unexcused absence following your third unexcused absence.

Finally, laptops and hand-held smart devices: while they are undoubtedly useful, no professor can compete with the vast, scintillating offerings of the Internet, personal messaging, etc. Therefore, unless explicitly authorized, laptops and smart devices are not permitted to be used during class.

List of classes

- Philosophical and Theoretical Context
- 1 – 2 / *Ideas in British Politics – the class will explore the impact and influence of key thinkers such as Keynes, Beveridge, Rawls and Hayek and Murray in British politics*
- **Key Reading:**
- **British democracy is nearing a crisis point**
- <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/04/british-democracy-nearing-crisis-point>
- **After Brexit: British democracy in crisis**
- <http://www.renewal.org.uk/blog/british-democracy-in-crisis>

- Historical Context
- 3 - 4/ *UK Statism*
The class will explore the creation of the welfare state and implementation of redistributive and egalitarian policies and the emergence of a UK consensus
- **Key Reading:**
- **1945-51: Labour and the creation of the welfare state**
- <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/mar/14/past.education>
- Look at Labour's 1945 manifesto – choose some interesting points
- <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/lab45.htm>

- 5 - 6/ *Thatcherism*
The class will explore the fragmentation of consensus politics and perception of UK decline and how Thatcherism heralded a new form of neoliberal politics
- **Key Reading:**
- **Ideology in politics: reflections on Lady Thatcher's legacy**
- 'Progressive Conservatism' and for Labour and the left by Sunder Katwala
<https://www.ippr.org/juncture/ideology-in-politics-reflections-on-lady-thatchers-legacy>

- 7 - 8/ *New Labour*

Thatcher once said her greatest achievement was the creation of 'New Labour' is this true? Did third way politics succeed or fail?

- **Key Reading:**
- The rise and fall of New Labour By Anthony Giddens
- <http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2010/05/labour-policy-policies-blair>

- 9 - 10/ *Austerity Politics and Corbynism*

The class will explore the causes of the financial crisis and impact on the UK and development of austerity politics and political response in the emergence of Corbynism

- **Key Reading:**
- **George Osborne's cunning plan: how the chancellor's austerity narrative has harmed recovery**
- The Tories claim austerity saved the country from disaster. But Osborne's neoliberal right economics drew on discredited theories - and ultimately scuppered growth by Robert Skidelsky

- How UK Politics Works

- 6 - 7/ *UK Parliamentary Proceedings*

- *Devolution and local government and Scottish independence*

The class will explore the mechanics of parliament democracy and study the notion of 'parliamentary sovereignty'. Is the British political system archaic and fragmenting?

- **Key Reading:**
- What is parliament and how does it work?
- <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/>

- Case Studies

- 8/ *Race and Ethnicity and Multiculturalism versus Integration*

- *How is British identity changing and how does this impact on politics? How does the UK manage ethnic relations? Integration V multiculturalism V interculturalism*

- **Key Reading:** Jenny Bourne - In defence of multiculturalism – IRR Briefing Paper
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/in-defence-of-multiculturalism#>

- 9/ *The Special Relationship: The UK and USA with particular reference to the Iraq war*

What is the special relationship? Is it working for Britain? What are the alternatives?

- **Key Reading:**

- Guardian - Will Trump's presidency finally kill the myth of the special relationship?
- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/14/will-trump-presidency-finally-kill-myth-of-special-relationship>
- 10 – 13/*The UK and BREXIT (Leaving the EU)*
Using the concept of securitisation the class will explore how the referendum result which supported the UK leaving the EU came about. The class will review the progress of negotiations and consider the differences between 'soft' and 'hard brexit'
- **Key Reading:** Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union
Paperback – June 1, 2017 by Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, Paul Whiteley
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- 14 - Presentations and Refection
Students will present on/discuss ideas for the final course essay

Resources

All the reading materials listed are available online or Central European University library or will be made available by the teacher via the online McDaniel blackboard. An extensive number of optional extra readings will be offered by the teacher