

GWUUK PSC 286. LH 4.

SPECIAL TOPICS: Parliament and the Development of Congress

Fall 2006
Thursday 6-8 PM

SCOPE:

The objective of the course is to study aspects of the historical development of the “Westminster Model” of legislative representation in the English-speaking world. Against the background of that development, topics for discussion focus in particular on the working of British Parliament and on-going evolution of British institutions. The course also considers the growth of colonial American legislative institutions out of their English ideological and constitutional origins and the debates leading to the establishment of Congress. The separate development of unique legislative institutions derived from the Westminster Model in Canada and Australia are also discussed.

Evaluation will be based on mid-term and take-home final examinations. Short essays will be assigned periodically for discussion in class. Students are responsible for material covered in lectures and class discussions and in required readings.

TOPICS:

Introduction to the Westminster Model

- What is the Westminster Model?
- English democratic traditions: The Levellers.
- Tony Blair: the presidential prime minister.
- Sources of the English Constitution.

The British Parliament Today.

- Parliamentary supremacy.
- The Crown in Parliament.
- The Cabinet.
- Electoral system.
- Political parties.
- Parliamentary procedure.
- Parliamentary committees.
- Parliament and the Civil Service.

Parliament Yesterday.

- The medieval origins of representative government in England.
- Crown and Parliament in Tudor-Stuart England.
- The evolution of parliamentary supremacy and responsible government in 18th century England.
- Legislatures in the British North America.
- Was the American Revolution inevitable?
- The idea of the legislature in the Early Republic.
- What did the Americans learn from John Locke?
- Electoral reform and representative government in Britain in the 19th century.
- War and the Welfare State: The British Parliament in the 20th century.

The Westminster Model outside Britain.

- Canada
- Australia.

The British Parliament Tomorrow.

- The future of the “Royal Prerogative.”
- Devolution and the future of the “United Kingdom.”
- Electoral reform.
- Bicameralism
- Parliament and Europe.

READING:

Recommended Text:

Dennis KAVANAGH. *British Politics: Continuities and Change*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. -- Standard textbook in many British schools.

Among other books especially recommended are:

Britain:

Walter BAGEHOT. *The English Constitution*. Introduction by Richard Crossman. Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1995. -- Particularly Crossman's introduction.

Samuel H. BEER. *Britain Against Itself: The Political Contradictions of Collectivism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1982. -- Critique (1964) of the welfare state that anticipated the Thatcher era.

Brian HARRISON. *The Transformation of British Politics 1860-1995*. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1996. -- Comprehensive political history.

Margaret THATCHER. *The Downing Street Years*. New York: Harper Collins, 1993. -- Political memoir.

_____. *Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002. -- Foreign policy and the presidential prime minister.

Anthony GIDDENS. *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. London: Polity, 2000 and *The Third Way and Its Critics*. London: Polity, 2000. -- Ideological framework and practical programs for "New Labour."

David MARQUAND. *Decline of the Public: The Hollowing-Out of Citizenship*. London: Polity, 2004. -- Critique presidential prime ministers and the decay of representative institutions in Britain.

George MITCHELL. *Making Peace*. New York: Knopf, 1999. -- Memoir of the Northern Ireland peace process.

John MORTIMER. *Paradise Postponed* (1985). Penguin USA, 1999 and *Titmus Regained*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1990. -- Political novel.

Earl A. REITAN. *The Thatcher Revolution: Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair, and the Transformation of Modern Britain*. London: Rowan&Littlefield, 2003. -- Growth of the presidential prime minister.

G.R. SEARLE. *Country Before Party: Coalition and the Idea of 'National Government' in Modern Britain 1885-1987*. London and New York: Longman, 1995. -- Revisionist analysis of the British party system.

Political Biographies of Tony Blair:

John RENTOUL. *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*. Little, Brown, 2001.

Anthony SELDON. *Blair*. Free Press, 2004.

Philip STEPHENS. *Tony Blair: The Making of a World Leader*. Viking, 2004.

Peter STOTHARD. *Thirty Days: Tony Blair and the Test of History*. Harper Collins, 2003.

-- Also published in pb. as *Thirty Days: An Inside Account of Tony Blair at War*. Perennial. 2004.

Colonial America and the Early Republic:

Bernard BAILYN. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992. – Essays on the evolution of American politics during the colonial period.

_____. *The Origins of American Politics*. Vintage, 1970 and many editions. – Comparative analysis of changes in British and American politics in the eighteenth century.

_____. *To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the the American Founders*. New York: Knopf, 2003. – Character sketches of key figures in the American Revolution.

Kenneth R. Bowling and Donald R. KENNON, eds. *The House and Senate in the 1790s*. Perspectives on the History of Congress 1789-1801 Series. Athens O: Ohio UP for U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 2002.

_____. *Inventing Congress: Origins and Establishment of the First Federal Congress*. Perspectives on the History of Congress 1798-1801 Series. Athens O: Ohio UP for U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 1999.

The Federalist Papers. (1) Penguin Classics, 1987. Introduction by Isaac Kramnick; (2) Bantam Classics, 1999. – Contrast introductions by Kramnick and Wills.

John FERLING. *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic*. Oxford UP, 2003. – Political history 1754-1801 focused on role of the legislature.

H. James HENDERSON. *Party Politics in the Continental Congress*. Lanham MD: University Press, Reprinted McGraw-Hill, 1987. – Comprehensive history of origins of the party system in Congress before the creation of the federal government.

Canada:

John BERJERMI. *How Parliament Works*. Toronto: Borealis Press, 2000.

Roy REMPEL. *The Chatter Box: An Insider's Account of the Increasing Irrelevance of Parliament*. Halifax: Dundurn Press, 2002.

Hugh THORBURN, ed. *Party Politics in Canada*. Toronto: Prentice Hall Canada, 1991.

Australia:

Paul BOREHAM et al. *The Politics of Australian Society: Political Issues for the New Century*. Melbourne: Longmans, 2000.

Gwynneth SINGLETON, et al. *Australian Political Institutions*. 7th ed. New York and Sydney: Prentice Hall, 2003.

John SUMMERS, et al. *Government, Politics, Power and Policy in Australia*. 7th ed. Melbourne: Longmans, 2002.

Students are especially encouraged to read *The Financial Times* daily and *The Economist* weekly and to check recent back issues of the latter. Watch *BBC World News* on local PBS stations and tune in to *As It Happens* (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) evenings on WAMU-FM.

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