HISTORICAL TRIPOS PART I

PAPER 5

British political history 1688-1886

COURSE GUIDE

2019 – 2020
In taking Paper 5, you will not be expected to study the whole of the 1688-1886 period. As a general guide, you should aim to cover about half of it, and you may begin and end at whichever date you and your supervisor judge best, given your own particular interests. Whichever part of the period you study, you will encounter important themes which make the period a significant phase in British history. These themes are covered in the lectures, but a summary of the major ones here may be useful.

* The Revolution Settlement of 1689 established a novel system of parliamentary sovereignty, which survived more or less unscathed throughout the period and only began to be undermined in the twentieth century with the growing power of the civil service and extra-parliamentary corporations. This system undoubtedly contributed to the country’s political stability relative to her continental rivals. At the same time, the powers of the Crown, the functions of parliamentary representation, the extension of popular liberties and rights, and the role of party all remained areas of fierce debate. This meant that the narrative drama of high politics—the stories of elections, cabinet intrigues, personalities, debates, and legislation—was more than just the game it sometimes seems today, but had real outcomes and affected the lives of real people.

* It is probably with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 that Britain was first generally recognised as a Great Power. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 established her as the Greatest Power, a position confirmed by the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. Between these dates the First British Empire was won and partly lost, and the Second British Empire established. After 1815 the country had to perform the role of the world's policeman, while after about 1870 there was a gradual turning away from Europe to the third phase of empire. Diplomatic and imperial history are covered elsewhere in the Tripos (i.e. Papers 17, 18, and 21), but Britain's European and world roles were also matters of intense debate in domestic politics. Moreover, they contributed to distinctive views about national identity (‘Englishness’) which are arguably crucial in understanding the appeal of some of the most charismatic political leaders and political traditions of the period.

* These two centuries also saw Britain establish itself as first the commercial market place, then the warehouse, and finally the workshop of the world, while throughout the period it acted as the world's banker. These successive economic transformations impacted on politics as new commercial and then industrial elites arose to challenge the hegemony of the old aristocratic, monarchical, and clerical regimes. Economic developments also created the world's first predominantly urban society, with attendant social problems (policing, housing, health, etc), all of which required political solutions and challenged traditional conceptions of the role of politics and the state. Such problems also generated—at least according to some historians—a growing sense of class consciousness and potential for social conflict, and present us with the difficulty of assessing how popular politics functioned and how political order was maintained. Finally, concern for the social order (not to mention the moral fate of nations and individuals) helps to explain why religious issues played an important part in politics throughout the period.

* Another salient theme arises from the political unions with Scotland (1707) and Ireland (1801), which not only created a United Kingdom state whose legitimacy was being called into serious question by 1886, when a government first introduced an Irish Home Rule Bill, but also precipitated debate on issues of British identity and nationality. The Irish problem, in particular, presented British politicians with a set of fundamental challenges to their dominant assumptions about property, religion, local government, and empire.

* A final theme traces the way political life was immersed in wider intellectual and cultural contexts. Broad developments in society created new opportunities for, and new media of, political communication and association. Political tactics and goals found expression in many literary and cultural forms. The aspirations of varying groups of men were reshaped as the habits of daily economic and social life evolved through commercialization, industrialization and urbanization. Likewise, women’s political capacities, disabilities, and ambitions fluctuated in relation to their changing circumstances. Notions of political capacity and citizenship were enriched by intellectual developments. The role of religious ideas was often important in debates on these broader topics, while there was considerable controversy about the role that religious institutions should play in politics and the constitution.
The Cambridge History Faculty has always been exceptionally strong in the history of ideas, and this has naturally affected the way in which political history is understood. Concepts relating to the constitution, the role of the state, and national identity play an important part in the paper, and emphasis is placed on underlying intellectual, cultural, religious, and linguistic developments. Candidates who have already studied this period at school should find this approach both novel and refreshing, while candidates who have not studied the period before may be reassured that they will not be at any disadvantage.

In the essays you write on this paper you may well have to deal with relatively short periods, but you should always be prepared to relate your knowledge of such detailed events and processes to the wider themes of the paper. The Paper 5 booklist gives more detailed guidance on the structure of the course and the interrelationship of the topics. It also gives some advice on how to approach the study of the paper and the Tripos examination for it.

There are two outline lecture courses, once for 1688-1815 and one for 1815-1886. They combine thematic and more specific topics. These are related fairly closely to the topics on the booklist, though there are some changes for the sake of course coherence. We encourage students to attend as many of these lectures as you think might help you, bearing in mind that lectures are a very efficient way of acquiring background understanding of elements of the paper which you are not studying directly but which may illuminate the parts that you are writing about. Because of the broad nature of many of the examination topics for paper 5, this can be extremely useful.

Please note also that though the lecture courses divide at 1815, this is just for convenience. We are aware that many students start the paper in the mid-eighteenth century, and others around 1780, and that studying a period of about eighty years from either of these dates works well.

The lecture courses will be complemented by classes on ‘Sources and contexts’, which will provide students with a chance to engage directly with primary sources. The aim of these classes is to help students gain a deeper understanding into how historians have reached their conclusions, and also to provide students a way of reflecting critically on the secondary literature in the light of their own interpretation of the sources. Each of the classes will discuss a range of primary sources relevant to the themes of the lectures; the sources will be available on Moodle.

**Michaelmas Term**

**Core lectures: British politics 1688-1815.** (Eight lectures) Th. 9
DR A. THOMPSON and DR G. ATKINS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Oct</td>
<td>1688 and its consequences</td>
<td>ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Oct</td>
<td>1721-1760</td>
<td>ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Oct</td>
<td>1760-1784</td>
<td>ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Oct</td>
<td>1784-1815</td>
<td>GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Nov</td>
<td>Parliaments, elections and party</td>
<td>ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Nov</td>
<td>Governing England</td>
<td>ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Nov</td>
<td>The making of the UK</td>
<td>ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Nov</td>
<td>Patriotism and national identity</td>
<td>GA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Core lectures: British politics 1815-1886.** (Eight lectures) M.9
DR B. GRIFFIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Oct</td>
<td>The structure of politics at the accession of George IV</td>
<td>BG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Oct</td>
<td>Gender, party and political culture</td>
<td>BG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
28 Oct  The Pittite tradition and Liberal Toryism, 1815-27  BG
4 Nov  The crisis of 1827-35  BG
11 Nov  Making and breaking a party system, 1830-46  BG
18 Nov  Chartism and the radical tradition  BG
25 Nov  The struggle for leadership in Liberal and Conservative politics, 1846-68  BG
2 Dec  Parliamentary reform, 1830-85  BG

Classes: Sources and contexts for eighteenth-century British politics.
(Two one-hour classes, weeks 3 and 5) W.2
DR A. THOMPSON AND TBC

Classes: Sources and contexts for nineteenth century British politics.
(Two one-hour classes, weeks 4 and 6) W.2
DR B. GRIFFIN

Lent Term:

Core lectures: British politics 1688-1815.  (Eight lectures) Th. 9
DR A. THOMPSON, DR G. ATKINS, DR S. CAPUTO AND PROFESSOR J. RAVEN

16 Jan  Britain and Empire  SC
23 Jan  Britain and Europe  ACT
30 Jan  Monarchy and the state  ACT
6 Feb  The politics of the crowd  GA
13 Feb  Media and print culture  JR
20 Feb  Reactions to the French Revolution  SC
27 Feb  Gender and politics  ACT
5 Mar  Languages of politics  ACT

Core lectures: British politics 1815-1886.  (Eight lectures) M.9
DR B. GRIFFIN

20 Jan  Radicalism and popular politics, 1848-85  BG
27 Jan  Gladstone and the Liberal Party  BG
3 Feb  The Conservative Party and the challenges of democracy  BG
10 Feb  Ireland 1801-85  BG
17 Feb  Britain and the wider world: Europe  BG
24 Feb  Britain and the wider world: Empire  BG
2 Mar  Religion and party politics  BG
9 Mar  The transformation of the state: war, finance and social reform  BG

God and the British, 1688- c.1900 (Eight lectures) W. 10
DR G. ATKINS
Classes: Sources and contexts for eighteenth-century British politics.
(Two one-hour classes, weeks 3 AND 5) W. 2
TBC AND MR C. EASTON

Classes: Sources and contexts for nineteenth century British politics.
(Two one-hour classes, weeks 4 and 6) W.2
DR B. GRIFFIN

Easter Term:

Revision: 1688-1815 (Two one-hour classes, weeks 2-3) W. 2
DR A. THOMPSON AND DR G. ATKINS

Revision: 1815-1886 (Two one-hour classes, weeks 2-3) M. 11
Dr B. GRIFFIN