

Braintree Sixth Form

A Level Politics

This course will give you the opportunity to:

- Investigate topics and issues of your choice
- Take part in wider reading and research
- Collate and write your thoughts in a report
- Share findings with your peers



Week 1: Investigating an issue

Read the booklet from the University of East Anglia *How do we explain the rise of celebrity politicians like Donald Trump?*

Select which topic you would like to investigate further:

1. How do we explain the rise of celebrity politicians like Donald Trump?
2. Do nuclear weapons make us safer?
3. Does 'hashtag feminism' make a difference?
4. Why do countries obey international law?
5. Will other countries vote to leave the European Union?
6. How do we solve the problem of terrorism?
7. Has social media changed political activism?
8. Who makes foreign policy?
9. Is it possible to rig an election?
10. How politically powerful are the media?
11. What are the responsibilities of social scientists?

Answer these questions:

Which question have you chosen?

What are the different debates surrounding this question?

Why did you choose this question?

Week 2 & 3: Reading and researching

Start reading and researching your topic. Use the ideas from the UEA booklet to get you started. Fill in the reading log below.

Date accessed Where accessed	Author, Title	Argument	Criticisms	Usefulness

Week 4 & 5: Writing your report

Your report should have:

- an introduction
- A conclusion
- both sides of the argument
- appropriate references
- A bibliography

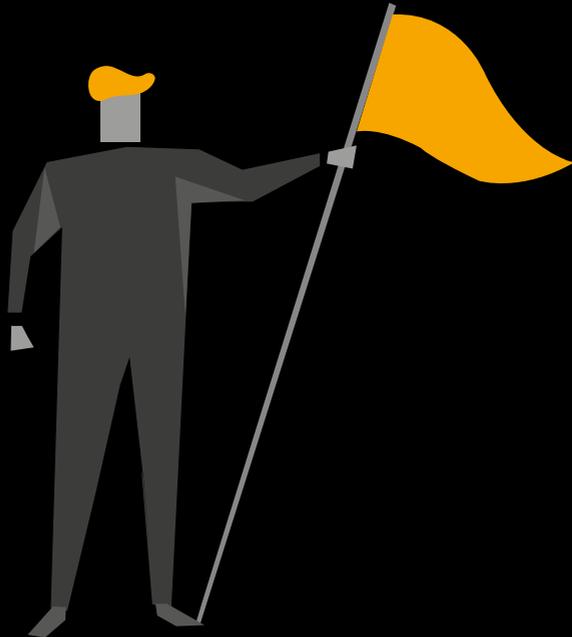
Week 6: Sharing findings

Prepare a presentation to share your findings with your fellow students. You could create a PowerPoint if you wish. We will email round all the presentations at the start of Year 12.

Include:

- Key question
- Arguments both sides
- Your overall opinion
- Where you could investigate further

HOW DO WE EXPLAIN THE RISE OF CELEBRITY POLITICIANS LIKE DONALD TRUMP?



**AND TEN OTHER BIG QUESTIONS
ON POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND THE MEDIA**

UEA

University of East Anglia

**SCHOOL OF POLITICS,
PHILOSOPHY, LANGUAGE
AND COMMUNICATION
STUDIES**

WELCOME

Here at the University of East Anglia's School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies, we often get asked for reading suggestions by people thinking of studying Politics, International Relations or the Media. While there are many excellent textbooks on all of these subjects, and lots of other ways to develop your knowledge, we have never found anything covering the breadth of topics we explore with our students. Never, that is, until now...

In this short book, we offer even shorter answers to 11 of the biggest, and most challenging, questions you are likely to face in these subjects. We don't promise to answer these questions definitively (indeed, we don't all agree with each other!). But we do draw on the best, and most recent, academic research to outline some of the ways you might go about answering them for yourself. So, even if you can't explain the rise of Donald Trump by the end of this book – and even if you can't solve the problem of international terrorism – you will have a clearer idea of how you might tackle these questions in your future studies.

We hope you enjoy it!

WHAT COULD YOUR UEA BE ABOUT?

THE BIG QUESTIONS

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Q1.

HOW DO WE EXPLAIN THE RISE OF CELEBRITY POLITICIANS LIKE DONALD TRUMP?

BY DR. BEN LITTLE



THE FACTS

Donald Trump is the first reality TV president. A man who faces a string of accusations of sexual assault and who has openly courted extreme racist groups, is now in charge of the world's most fearsome military machine.

WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE?

We would suggest that you start by looking at three on-going processes: the celebritisation of politics; the rise of social media; and the decline of the industrial working class. Let's take them briefly in turn.

First: celebrity is a powerful force in electoral politics: the importance attached to personality and style has been affecting how politics is conducted for decades. While this once meant politicians being more smooth or more media savvy, now, under the sign of reality TV, it means being more 'warts and all' authentic, more fallible. Trump's lack of polish and provocative style benefited from these cultural logics.

Secondly: as we teach on our module about new media and society, social media's impact on politics is keenly debated, but it is doubtless a hotbed for the cultivation and dissemination of far-right views and conspiracy.

Emotional rather than reasoned reaction, and the division of people into self-selecting silos, seems to be the prevailing way that many use social media. Trump created alliances with the emerging 'alt-right' online extremists and, using outlets like Breitbart news, fed a steady drip of misinformation, accusation and "clickbait" to grow his network of supporters.

Finally: the collapse of industrial jobs, as they have been automated or moved overseas, means that the traditional base for left of centre politics is in terminal decline. Voters who find themselves cut off from the benefits of contemporary globalised capitalism have lost access to the institutions which collectively represented their interests and helped shape their identities (trade unions or workers' clubs).

THE CONCLUSION?

Trump offered the voters answers, gave voice to the anger of dispossession, and promised this key electoral group restitution for the economic and cultural loss they had suffered. In doing so he sealed the presidency.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Check out Ben's recent book [Russell Brand: Comedy, Celebrity, Politics](#), or for more analysis of Donald Trump's victory [see here](#).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Study UEA's modules covering topics such as Political Communication, Politics and Popular Culture, and Digital Media and Society.

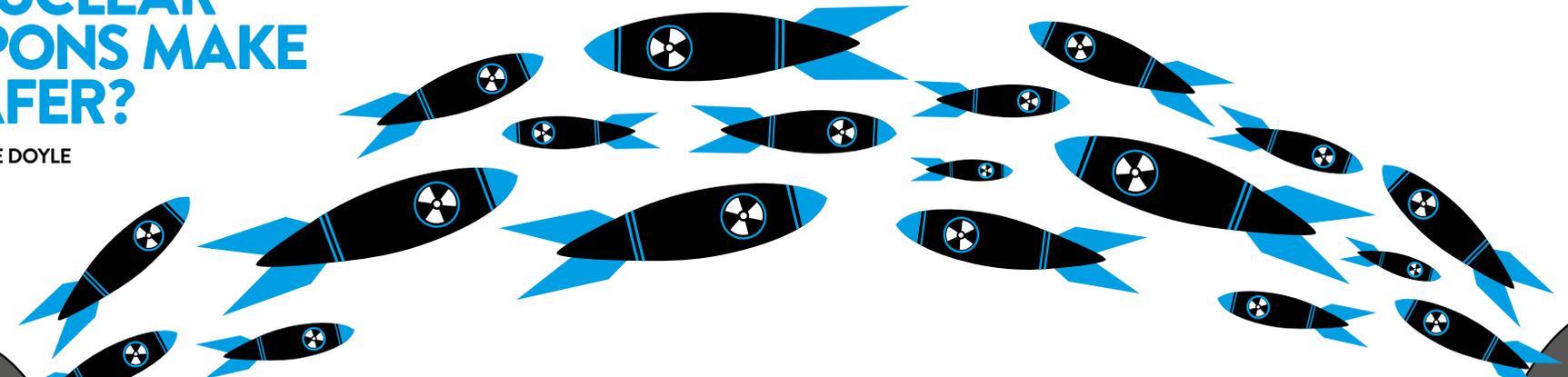
"I will build a great wall – and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me – and I'll build them very inexpensively. I will build a great, great wall on our southern border, and I will make Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words."

DONALD TRUMP

Q2.

DO NUCLEAR WEAPONS MAKE US SAFER?

BY DR. SUZANNE DOYLE



THE FACTS

The world's nine current members of the nuclear club – those countries which have nuclear weapons capabilities – possess roughly 15,500 nuclear warheads between them. Just one of these warheads could destroy a whole city, yet thousands are on standby ready to be released within minutes.

UNDERSTANDING BOTH SIDES OF THE ARGUMENT

Many academics and politicians believe that the sheer destructive capability of nuclear weapons makes the world a safer place. This is because owning them supposedly deters other states from firing their own nuclear weapons due to the fear of retaliation: an idea that was known as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) in the Cold War era.

Some people also argue that nuclear weapons make states more hesitant to engage in conventional warfare due to the risk that this could escalate into nuclear war.

So maybe then nuclear weapons make the world safer? After all, no nuclear weapon has been used since the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

THE CONCLUSION

In my view, it is just not that simple. Deterrence is a theory, not a proven fact, and there are arguably other reasons a nuclear weapon hasn't been used since 1945. One of these is the importance of sheer luck. There are a number of hair-raising stories about mistakes that have nearly led to the

launch of nuclear weapons. Another problem is that the theory of deterrence relies on the assumption that the protagonist wants to survive. In the current period, this may not be the case: imagine, for instance, a terrorist with an atomic bomb who may not be so worried about death.

THE DEBATE CONTINUES

The debate over whether nuclear weapons make our world a safer place remains unresolved. What is clear is that nuclear weapons still matter and we need further study on how to manage the threat they pose.

WANT TO READ MORE?

For more information on Britain's nuclear force see Suzanne's recent paper in the [Journal of Strategic Studies](#). Explore the history of nuclear weapons via the Wilson Center's [Digital Archive](#).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Think about taking modules covering Global Politics or International Security on our undergraduate degree courses.

Q3.

DOES 'HASHTAG FEMINISM' MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

BY DR. HELEN WARNER



THE FACTS:

On 15 October 2017, actor Alyssa Milano posted a screenshot on twitter. It read: 'Suggested by a friend: if all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'me too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem'. The following morning, the tweet had received 55,000 replies and #metoo was the No. 1 trending hashtag twitter. Within 45 days #metoo was active in 85 countries and had been posted on Facebook 85 million times.

WHY #METOO?

Milano's tweet was prompted by reports of sexual misconduct committed by Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein, and sparked a global discussion regarding sexual harassment and assault in the workplace. Though popularised by Milano, the 'me too' movement was launched 12 years earlier by civil rights activist Tarana Burke. The movement was designed to empower young women of colour

who had suffered sexual abuse, assault or exploitation through education and empathy. After discovering that her slogan had gone viral, Burke reportedly expressed concerns that social media was not a safe space for survivors to share their stories. She was not convinced that centuries of stigmatisation and victim blaming could be dismantled by a hashtag.

CONCLUSION

The impact of #metoo has been significant. It has exposed the culture of sexism that pervades both the entertainment industry and society at large. It's also thought to have helped bring a number of high profile abusers to justice (see the Larry Nassar case). But will this hashtag affect real change? Will it make a material difference in the lives of women and girls across the world? Perhaps it's too soon to tell, but if history tells us anything, it's that every (feminist) has an equal and opposite reaction.

"Me too was just two words; it's two magic words that galvanised the world"

TARANA BURKE

WANT TO READ MORE?

Take a look at Helen's book *The Politics of Being a Woman*

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can study modules on topics such as Gender and Power, Activist Campaigning, and Digital Media and Society.

Q4.

WHY DO COUNTRIES OBEY INTERNATIONAL LAW?

DR. ADRIANA SINCLAIR

THE FACTS

The first question we should ask is: do countries obey international law? And the answer might surprise you because most countries obey most international law most of the time. Disobedience is actually very rare despite the fact that there's no international police force to arrest offenders, and the international courts we do have are rather haphazard and very weak.

WHY?

There are several reasons why this might be the case. First of all, states obey international law because it is usually in their interest to do so. Everybody benefits from living in an orderly and predictable world, and international law provides the framework and regulations we need to be able to cooperate.

WHAT IF?

But what happens when obedience is not in a state's interest? Powerful states use a range of tactics. First, they interpret the law in ways that are more favourable to them. For example, the US decided that the Geneva Protocols didn't apply to Taliban and Al Qaida detainees because it renamed them 'unlawful enemy combatants', rather than prisoners of war. By simply inventing a new term, the US could claim it was still obeying international law. Whether or not the rest of world believed them is another matter.

UNDERMINING LAWS

Powerful states will also undermine laws they dislike while supporting ones they do. They do this in many ways, but most straightforwardly by withholding participation or by not being fully

involved in global political processes. They will appear to be obeying international law but what they are really doing is subtly trying to transform international law, marginalising the bits they don't like.

Finally, if all this manipulation fails – and smaller states often work very hard to stop more powerful states from doing this – states can simply withdraw from a particular regime or treaty. This comes at a reputational cost, but little else.

THE CONCLUSION

So does international law have any effect at all? Yes, but it is rarely capable of stopping a determined and powerful state doing what it wants.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Check out Adriana's prize-winning book, *International Relations Theory and International Law* and read about the UN's understanding of international law [here](#).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Take an International Relations degree at UEA where you will learn about international law, and the history of the international system.



Q5.

WILL OTHER COUNTRIES VOTE TO LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION?

DR. PIERRE BOCQUILLON



THE FACTS

When a majority of British citizens voted to leave the EU in the June 2016 referendum, many proponents of Brexit hoped that it would lead to a 'domino effect', with other countries following the UK's example. Since then, no other member state has made any sign of being prepared to leave the EU, or to organize a referendum on EU membership.

EUROSCEPTICISM AS A PERENNIAL FEATURE OF THE EU

Survey data shows that UK citizens are among the most Eurosceptic people in the EU, an attitude that has deep roots in national history and politics. Yet, for two decades Euroscepticism has been on the rise across the block, fuelled recently by the economic and migration crises. Arguably Euroscepticism is now a persistent feature of European politics.

As the challenges of exiting the EU have become increasingly clear with Brexit, Eurosceptic parties such as the far right Front National in France and anti-establishment

Five Star Movement in Italy have toned down their anti-EU or anti-Euro stances for now. However, there is still deep dissatisfaction with the way the EU works among large portions of national electorates.

CONCLUSION: THE UK-EU RELATIONSHIP, A BENCHMARK FOR THE FUTURE

Although no other country is likely to leave the EU in the short term, in the mid to long term the UK will serve as a model for Eurosceptic parties across the block. Depending on how favourable the outcome of Brexit negotiations is, they may try to emulate it or push for redefining the nature of their country's EU membership. If the Brexit deal were more appealing than existing alternatives (such as the Norwegian or Swiss models), some non-EU countries may also be tempted to renegotiate their relationship with the EU on more favourable terms. The outcome of Brexit negotiations is therefore key to the EU's future, not just the UK's.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Take a look at the website 'The UK in a changing Europe' (ukandeu.ac.uk/), where you can find expert comments and analysis on Brexit negotiations and the future of the UK-EU relationship. Read the report coordinated by Professor Hussein Kassim (UEA) analysing how EU institutions and other member states see Brexit and what their positions in the negotiations are (ukandeu.ac.uk/research-papers/negotiating-brex-it-what-do-the-uks-negotiating-partners-want/).

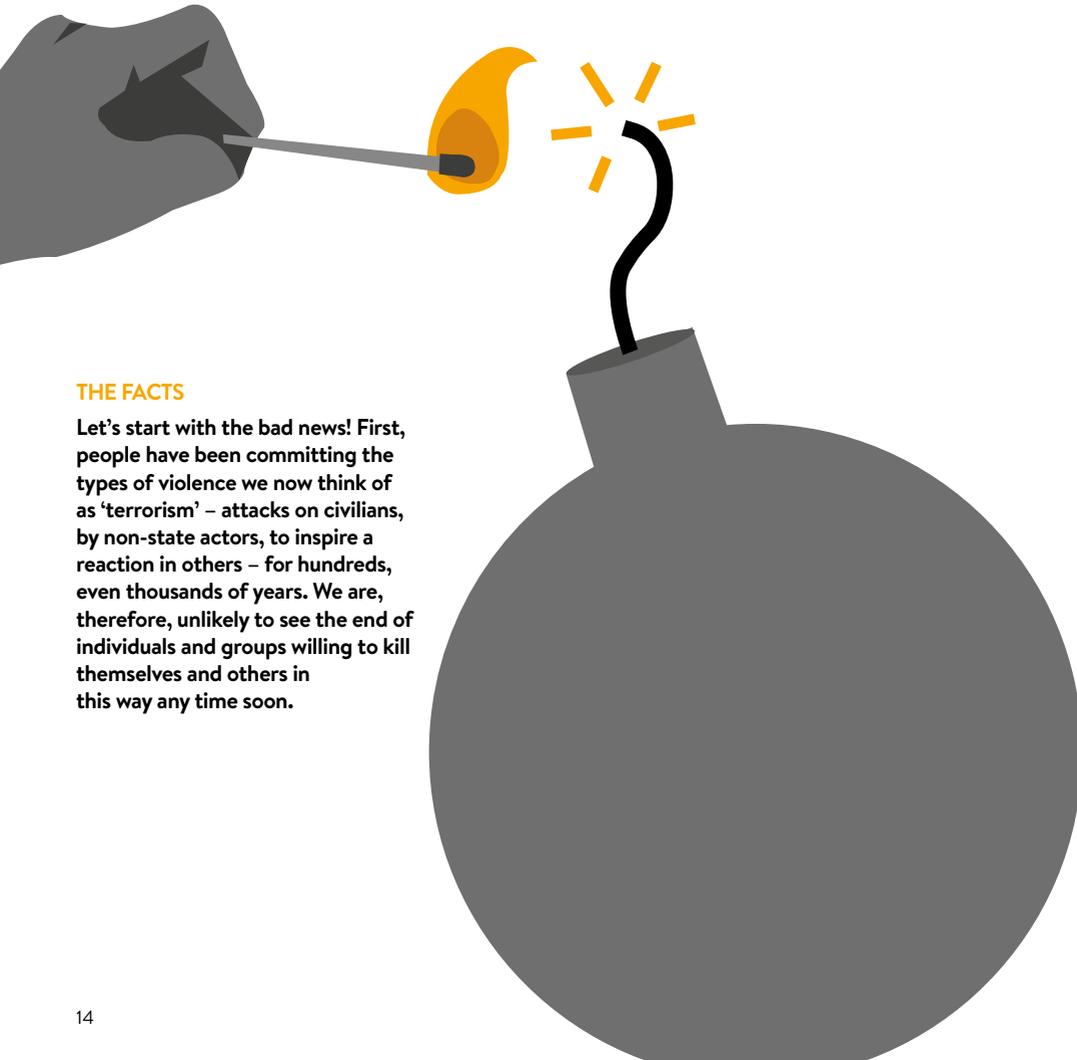
WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Study for a Politics degree at UEA, where you can take a module introducing you to what the EU is, what it does and the challenges it is currently facing. You will also be able to explore all aspects of the vexed relationship between the UK and Europe.

Q6.

HOW DO WE SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF TERRORISM?

BY DR. LEE JARVIS



THE FACTS

Let's start with the bad news! First, people have been committing the types of violence we now think of as 'terrorism' – attacks on civilians, by non-state actors, to inspire a reaction in others – for hundreds, even thousands of years. We are, therefore, unlikely to see the end of individuals and groups willing to kill themselves and others in this way any time soon.

Second, it is hard to be completely sure on what works in countering terrorism because we have no counterfactuals. We don't, for instance, know what may have happened if a particular drone strike or negotiation had not taken place: so evaluating effectiveness is tricky.

Third, efforts to counter terrorism themselves often have considerable costs: the 'collateral damage' of those killed by mistake; frequent reductions in civil liberties; and the expenditure of financial resources that might have been put toward education, health, social care and so on.

NOT ALL BAD NEWS

Stay with me though, because here comes some better news. First, most terrorist groups don't last very long (often failing within a year): and the ones we are familiar with are familiar to us because they are, in this sense, very unusual.

Second, the problem of terrorism may actually be far less of a problem than we tend to imagine. In terms of global deaths, for instance, it pales into insignificance compared with much more everyday forms of harm: poverty, disease, road traffic accidents, or 'ordinary' crime.

Indeed by some counts, we are far less likely to die from terrorism than we are in a DIY accident or by drowning in the bath (which is no excuse for poor personal hygiene).

Third, there are a wide range of strategies that states can use to counter terrorism. These include criminal justice measures, such as laws and policing; military measures like assassinations or 'wars against terror'; diplomatic measures such as negotiations and treaties; and, longer-term initiatives including education programmes or development assistance.

THE CONCLUSION

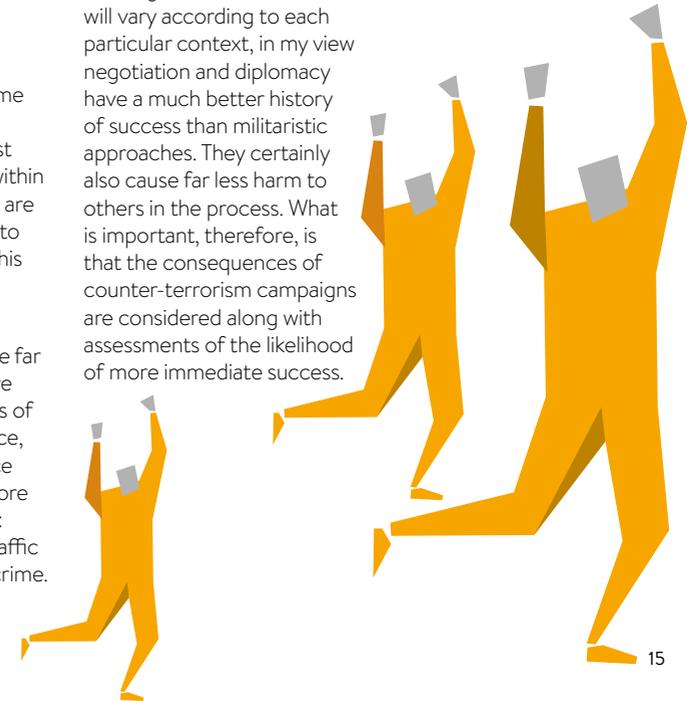
Although what works best will vary according to each particular context, in my view negotiation and diplomacy have a much better history of success than militaristic approaches. They certainly also cause far less harm to others in the process. What is important, therefore, is that the consequences of counter-terrorism campaigns are considered along with assessments of the likelihood of more immediate success.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Check out Lee's recent books [Terrorism: A Critical Introduction](#) and [Anti-terrorism, Citizenship and Security](#). Visit his [website](#) for copies of his academic papers, or see the [Global Terrorism Database](#) for lots of data on terrorist events around the world.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Study modules on topics such as International Security, Politics in the USA, and Terrorism and Counter-terrorism at UEA.



Q7.

HAS SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGED POLITICAL ACTIVISM?

BY DR. MARINA PRENTOULIS

THE FACTS

Mainstream media may be our main source of information, but almost every discussion of their role in society is accompanied by accounts of their bias or their support for the establishment. It is difficult to ignore the political power of media moguls like Rupert Murdoch, or the dependency of private media outlets on advertisers. The result tends to be media content that is shaped by the needs of advertisers, rather than citizens.

THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA

In the late 1990s, the internet changed things. It enabled people to create and disseminate their own content, giving hope that citizens might break away from the mainstream media and use these new technologies as a tool for emancipation.

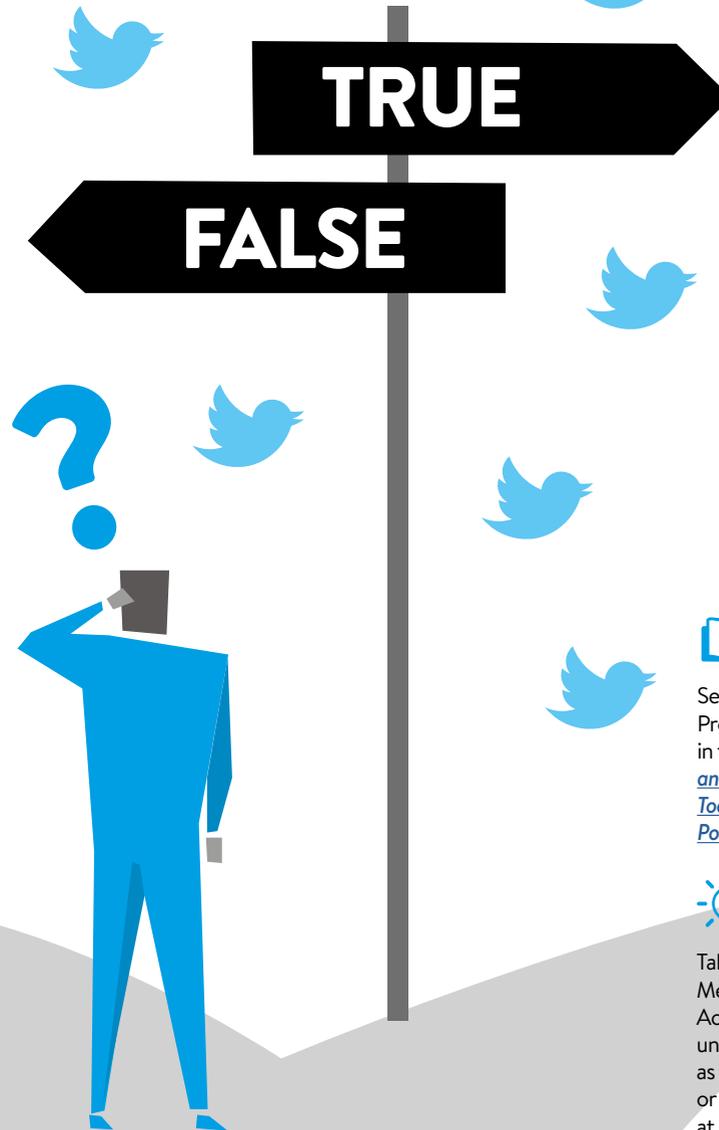
This was the time of the anti-globalization movement, the battle of Seattle against the World Trade Organization, and the creation of online platforms like the Independent Media Centre (Indymedia). Ignored by the mainstream American media, these activists bypassed them and communicated their demands across the world.

More recently, in 2011, we saw the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement and the political protests in Greece and Spain, celebrated by most commentators as 'Facebook' or 'Twitter' revolutions. In many cases social media did indeed contribute to the mobilisation and organisation of national and transnational publics. They articulated the injustices people felt, shrinking geographical distance, giving a voice to protesters and bypassing national censorship and legal restraints.

THE CONCLUSION

But without denying the possibilities created by social media, we should not forget that the online world involves power struggles of its own. What is thought of as 'free', is the source of huge profits for multinational corporations like Facebook and Google: firms which dominate the internet.

The online world, and especially social media, enable the fabrication of all kinds of distortions, and may be dominated as much by authoritarian, regressive voices as by democratic and emancipatory ones. Those silenced by the mainstream media often have no access to (or lack the 'know how' of) social media. And ultimately, old forms of bringing people together, for example by 'word of mouth', can be as powerful as a hashtag.



WANT TO READ MORE?

See Marina's work on The 2011 Protests in Greece and Spain in the book [Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today](#) and in [Contemporary Political Theory](#).

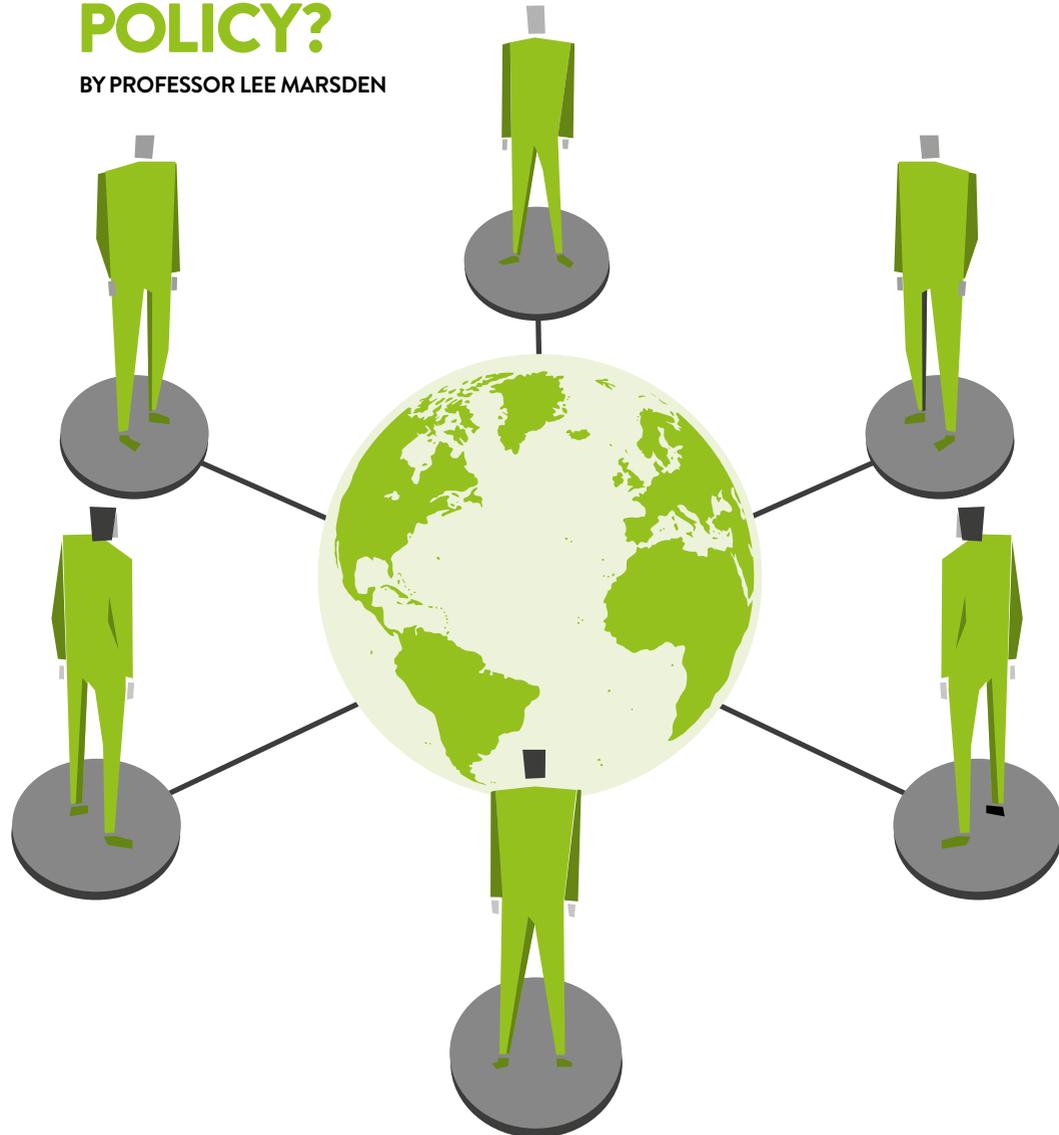

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Take modules on New Media and Society and Activist Campaigning on undergraduate degrees such as Society, Culture and Media or Politics and Media Studies at UEA.

Q8.

WHO MAKES FOREIGN POLICY?

BY PROFESSOR LEE MARSDEN



THE FACTS

In an increasingly interconnected world, foreign relations between countries are vital to reduce international tensions and develop mutually beneficial relationships which can lead to the prosperity and wellbeing of all states. The primary function of governments traditionally has been to protect their own citizens.

Fortunately, for most countries, most of the time, being attacked by another country is rare. However, the fear of such an attack necessitates negotiations toward pacific relationships with other countries, either through mutual cooperation, trade, or alliances that make conflict less likely. This necessitates a constantly evolving foreign policy that operates at many levels and is subject to change as new events challenge the status quo.

BUT WHO ACTUALLY GETS TO MAKE FOREIGN POLICY?

Governments appoint national representatives to speak, engage and negotiate on their behalf. Prime Ministers, Presidents,

Foreign Secretaries and Secretaries of State are key office holders, but many others are also involved in foreign relations including those working in overseas aid, defence, treasury, environment, trade, UN and other intergovernmental organisations representatives, and Ambassadors.

Each office has a bureaucratic infrastructure with junior ministers and civil servants who often have greater knowledge of these systems and are able to guide ministers through foreign policy processes in such a way that there is a consistency and predictability about foreign policy approaches which are generally reassuring to other countries.

OTHER INFLUENCES

Apart from ministers and bureaucracies the media are also able to influence public debate and put pressure on governments to pursue specific foreign policy outcomes. Business, lobbyists, pressure groups, diasporic communities and the general public also may exert some influence.

THE CONCLUSION

Given all these competing interests it is little surprise that incoming administrations with very clearly articulated foreign policy strategies find it far more difficult to change foreign policy than they imagine. Foreign policy is ultimately determined by a combination of structure (the foreign policy system), agency (the individuals pursuing foreign policy) and contingency (those unexpected occurrences such as 9/11 or Brexit which prove to be game changers).

WANT TO READ MORE?

Take a look at Lee's book [For God's Sake: The Christian Right and US Foreign Policy](#) or his introductory textbook [Doing Political Science and International Relations](#).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Think about modules covering topics such as The Clash of Fundamentalisms, and Politics and Public Affairs in our degrees on Politics and International Relations.

Q9.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO RIG AN ELECTION?

BY DR. TOBY JAMES

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Donald Trump created a media storm before being elected as US President by claiming that the election would be 'rigged against him.' Shortly after, claims were made about Russian interference in US elections.

CAN IT BE ACHIEVED?

But if you were a ruler attempting to rig an election, how could you do it? The history of elections from around the world provides a menu of manipulation. Rulers are spoiled for choice. The most obvious tactics involve using force and fear. Harassing, assaulting or intimidating your opponent's candidates so that they don't stand; bribing election workers and voters; marching troops through villages to intimate them; destroying opposition property; or, using state control of the media. Many of these

tactics are thought to have been used by contemporary leaders such as Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe or Vladimir Putin in Russia. The digital world provides other methods. Election results can be hacked. Lists of eligible voters destroyed. Social media streams can be manipulated.

A CLEVER WAY?

The more cunning leader, however, is often more subtle. They employ tactics that they can present as 'fair' or 'within the rules'. This might involve changing or keeping rules and laws that are considered 'legitimate' within democracies. This can be done knowing that relatively few citizens and journalists pay attention to the geekery of electoral law. But it can be a wicked and effective way of ruling and maintaining power.

STRATEGIES

If your strategy for winning an election is getting the backing of older voters, definitely don't allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote. Maintain an electoral system that keeps down smaller parties, if you have won the last election. Ask voters to show their passport to their polling stations before they can cast a vote – this bureaucratic hurdle may deter opposition voters more than your own. Employ fewer staff in polling stations where your opponent has lots of supporters. The queues will put off many people from voting.

THE CONCLUSION

Because these subtle ways of 'rigging' an election are so effective, what rulers may fear most is the reform and scrutiny of laws that suit them very well. And for these reasons you should study very closely how elections are run.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Read Toby's book *Elite Statecraft and Election Administration: Bending the Rules of the Game* or check out his work as a Lead Fellow on Electoral Modernisation for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Democratic Participation' available via the [website www.electoralmanagement.com](http://www.electoralmanagement.com).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Study modules covering topics such as Democracy in Theory and Practice and Comparative Politics at UEA.

Q10.

HOW POLITICALLY POWERFUL ARE THE MEDIA?

BY PROFESSOR JOHN STREET

THE FACTS

In democratic societies, it is assumed that the media serve democracy. They inform citizens about their world and help them to deliberate about their political preferences and values. They are not meant to exert influence in pursuit of their own special interests, or the interests of their friends and allies. But, for many people, this is exactly what they do; they exercise 'power without responsibility'.

MEDIA INFLUENCE

What is clear is that we depend heavily upon our media. Imagine what it would be like to be deprived of all forms of news, information and entertainment. No television, no radio, no newspapers, no blogs, no Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, or Instagram. Our world is

created by our media. Few of us have seen, let alone met, the national leaders and others whose decisions directly affect our lives. Nor have we direct experience of the wars and disasters that affect our planet. And yet we believe – we 'know' – that all of these people and all of these things are real.

POST-TRUTH POLITICS?

But in this very dependence lies the power of the media. It is a power that has been starkly highlighted in talk of 'post-truth' politics and 'fake news'. These things are not entirely new. We have long been aware of the ways in which media reporting presents, at best, a partial account of world. A central question is how

much such reporting affects how citizens think?

MEDIA IMPACT

In 1992, the Sun declared that it had won the election for the Conservatives, and many commentators at the time agreed that the paper had been decisive in securing the defeat of Labour, who had been leading in the polls. Subsequent research showed that this was wrong. If anything, the Sun lost votes for the Tories, but more [recent research](#) does suggest that media coverage – including that of the Sun – can make a real difference to how people vote and, in close elections, which party wins.

THE CONCLUSION

Perhaps more importantly, we should not think of media power just in terms of its coverage and its influence

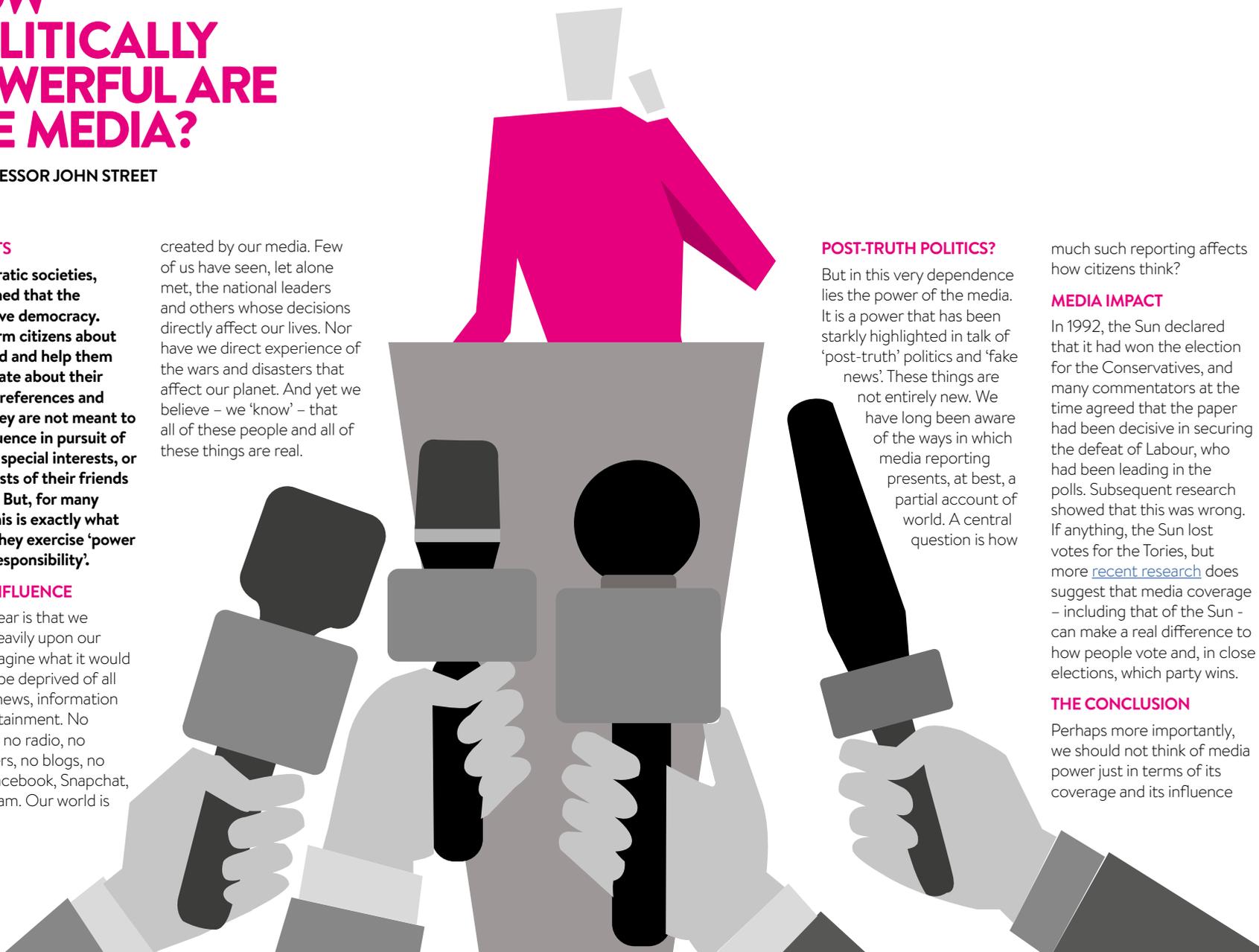
on voters. We need also to see how [government agendas](#) can be shaped by the same dynamics, and how government policy may be the result of the influence of media conglomerates and the special access they are granted to the so-called corridors of power.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Read John's book [Mass Media, Politics and Democracy](#) or see this [interview with John on the politics of music](#).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Take modules covering topics such as Political Communication; Media Power or Politics and Media on one of our degrees.



Q11.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL SCIENTISTS?

BY DR. MICHAEL FRAZER

THE FACTS

Like everyone else who is paid by the public to do a particular job, social scientists need to be held accountable for providing something of public value. In this respect, there is nothing special about social science: physicists and biologists have the same responsibilities to their public funders that political scientists and economists do.

A UNIQUE FIELD

But what makes social science unique is the fact that the larger societies around us are not only the funders of our work. They are also our research subjects. When individuals participate

in a medical experiment, existing rules guarantee that they will be briefed about all possible harms and benefits of participation. They then have an opportunity to grant or withhold their consent because they have been 'informed'. In recent years, these rules have been extended to cover research in the social sciences that involves interaction with specific individuals.

The same rules do not apply, however, when social scientists are studying entire societies through the use of pre-existing or publicly available data. Yet just as participation in research can harm or benefit individuals, so too can it harm or benefit entire societies.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Of course, an entire society cannot be expected to sign an informed consent form the way an individual can. But social scientists have an obligation to engage with the public discourse in the societies they study, make a case that the benefits of their work outweigh the harms, and seek something like a collective, democratic version of informed consent.

THE CONCLUSION

When a society is funding a piece of social science research about itself, the same procedures that allocate funding can also be understood as an expression of informed consent. Yet when one society is funding research about another, procedures must be developed to seek the collective consent of the society being studied as well. In both cases, engagement with local media and other venues for public debate are not just a way of promoting our work. They also serve an important ethical function like the briefings provided to individual research subjects.



WANT TO READ MORE?

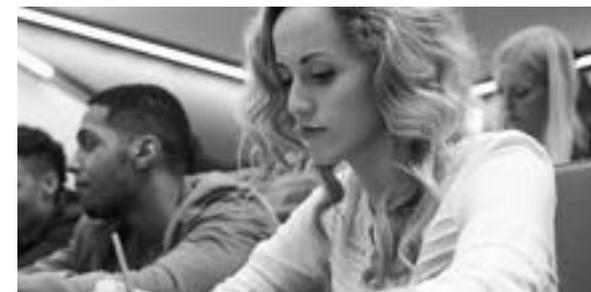
Check out [Michael's ongoing work](#) on 'research ethics in the social sciences' or see his recent paper on [The Professional Ethics of Ideal and Non-ideal Political Theory](#).



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Study modules on topics including Social and Political Theory; Ethics in International Relations; and Philosophy of Social Science at UEA.

WANT TO READ EVEN MORE?



CONSIDERING A DEGREE IN POLITICS?

You might enjoy these books:

- Kenneth Minogue – *Politics: A very short introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Colin Crouch – *Post-democracy* (Polity, 2004)
- Andrew Heywood – *Politics* (Palgrave, 2013)
- Larry Siedentop – *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism* (Penguin, 2014)
- Javier Cercas – *The Anatomy of a Moment* (Bloomsbury, 2009)
- Michael Wolff – *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House* (Little Brown, 2018)
- Geoffrey Evans and Menon – *Brexit and British Politics* (Polity Press, 2017)
- David Runciman – *How Democracy Ends* (Profile Books, 2018)
- Charles Clarke and Toby James – *British Labour Leaders* (Biteback, 2015).

THINKING OF STUDYING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

You might enjoy these:

- Andrew Heywood – *Global Politics* (Palgrave: 2nd edition, 2014)
- John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens – *The Globalization of World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
- Paul Mason – *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions* (Verso, 2014)
- Richard Sakwa – *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (I. B. Tauris, 2015)
- Ishmael Beah – *A Long Way Gone: The True Story of a Child Soldier* (Harper Perennial 2008).

INTERESTED IN THE MEDIA AND CULTURE?

Check these out:

- Nick Robinson – *Live from Downing Street* (Bantam, 2013)
- Andreeana Clay, *The Hip Hop Generation Fights Back* (2012, NYU Press)
- Andrew Marr, *My Trade* (2014, Macmillan)
- Astra Taylor, *The People's Platform to Media and Culture* (2014, Metropolitan)
- James Curran and Jean Seaton – *Power Without Responsibility* (Routledge, 2009)
- Liesbet van Zoonen – *Entertaining the Citizen* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)
- Nick Davies – *Flat Earth News* (Vintage, 2009)
- Tom Watson and Martin Hickman – *Dial M for Murdoch* (Penguin, 2012).

FICTION

Insights into politics and the media can also be found in novels. Worth reading are the very familiar, like George Orwell's *1984* or *Animal Farm*, and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, as well as modern works like China Mieville's *The City & The City*, Dave Eggers' *The Circle*, and Chris Cleave's *The Other Hand*.

Robert Tressell's *Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* remains one of the finest books ever written in the English language. It is the first working class novel and an insight into the world of labour and capitalism that has rarely, if ever, been bettered. Louis de Berniere's *Birds Without Wings* is a novel about the breakup of the Ottoman Empire set in a village in Anatolia, which also provides an account of everyday life during conflict.

POLITICAL SPEECHES

Political speeches offer an opportunity to explore how people think about their politics. Speeches can give us an insight into the past but also show us some of the ideas and outlooks that have shaped our present. Here are two examples:

Patrick Henry: "Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Death!": This short but important speech came to be seen as encapsulating a general attitude on the part of the Republic.

Neil Kinnock: This speech in Bournemouth 1985 was a key moment in arguments about what is responsible politics and how the Labour Party should think of itself and its mission. www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=191

ONLINE SOURCES AND TELEVISION

Radio 4's History of Ideas series: 2 minute videos on big philosophical concepts. www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLiykLlICgPEOq9BiMexL-Fj-1rq9GUwX

Open Democracy: Lots of free commentary and articles on issues around Politics, International Relations, Media and Culture: www.opendemocracy.net

E-IR: commentary and articles by academics as well as current International Relations students: www.e-ir.info

Eastminster: Our Politics, Media and International Relations blog hosted at UEA: www.ueapolitics.org

Or for those of you who prefer television, finally, check out: Mr Robot, House of Cards, The Thick of It, The West Wing, or Veep.

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