



*Course information*

# MA GOVERNMENT STUDIES

ensive?

England to

government - balancing

Professor Ed Balls, Lord Mandelson, Dame Melanie Dawes, Lord Sainsbury, Pat Ritchie and George Osborne speaking at an event on regional policy



Strand Group students outside No.10 Downing Street after a class



Delivered in partnership with central government, our MA programme blends the theory and practice of working at the heart of British Government.

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## Taught by practitioners

The MA is delivered by an expert teaching team of **Dr Jack Brown**, **Dr Michelle Clement**, **Professor Jon Davis** and **Dr Chetun Patel**, who teach alongside renowned practitioners such as former shadow Chancellor **Ed Balls**; The Independent's Chief Political Commentator **John Rentoul**; and the Head of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit under Tony Blair **Sir Michael Barber**. Teaching practitioners are joined by stellar guests. Every year since 2017 we've

brought a former Prime Minister to engage with our students, offering unparalleled access to the minds behind pivotal decisions. **Sir Tony Blair**, **Lord Cameron**, **Lady Theresa May**, and **Gordon Brown** have all shared their insights with students on our modules. We've also welcomed a host of notable speakers, including **George Osborne**, **Alastair Campbell**, **Anji Hunter**, **Baroness Jay** and many more distinguished personalities.

## Why is our programme unique?

### Delivered in partnership with central government

Develop an understanding of the policy-making process from the viewpoint of those who work in government, including political, societal and economic challenges.

### A bespoke programme

A true cohort approach with small group tutorials utilising a case study method. Learning from the past and understanding how decisions are made in practice, from the practitioners, is the hallmark of this course.

### Take the full master's or standalone modules

MA Programme is designed for full time, part-time and as part of a stackable portfolio. You will study alongside officials working at the heart of government. Students will build their networks and enhance their career opportunities.

Former Prime Minister John Major speaking at a Strand Group event in the Foreign Office's Locarno Suite



TheSTRAND

Examining the ins  
of British Gove

*Core module*

# Prime Ministers & No.10 Downing Street



Former Cabinet Secretary Lord Case speaking to Strand Group students in No.10 Downing Street



Former Prime Minister Theresa May at a Policy Institute event



These two modules, run in partnership with No.10 Downing Street, examine how British Prime Ministers governed in the years 1945 – to the present day.

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These are the flagship modules of the Strand Group and were in our previous incarnation as the Mile End Group. The module started in 1992 as “Cabinet, Premiership and the Conduct of British Central Government since 1945”. It was created by Professor Peter (now the Lord) Hennessy to analyse the mechanics of government and utilise his extensive contacts to bring the foremost practitioners into the classroom. This module was the basis of the style and methodology that the MA in Government Studies still uses today.

The modules now are led by **Professor Jon Davis**, alongside co-teachers **Dr Michelle Clement**, **Dr Jack Brown** and **Martin Stolliday**. Special attention is given to the memoirs and diaries of the prime ministers, cabinet ministers and senior officials involved in managing the central machinery of government, as well as first-hand testimony from a selection of highly-relevant and high profile

guests. Classes take place within No. 10 Downing Street itself, and guest speakers have included former Prime Ministers **Sir Tony Blair**, **Lord Cameron** and **Lady Theresa May**, academic **Lord Hennessy** and Cabinet Secretaries **Lord Armstrong**, **Lord Butler**, **Lord Turnbull**, **Lord Wilson**, **Lord O'Donnell**, **Lord Heywood**, **Lord Sedwill** and **Simon Case**.

A photograph of Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is gesturing with his hands while speaking. In the background, there is a blue banner with the Strand Group logo and a red banner with the text 'KING'S COLLEGE LONDON'.

Former Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Gordon Brown speaking to Strand Group students

*Optional module 1*

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# Chancellors and the Treasury: Managing the British Economy

A photograph of Clare Lombardelli, Visiting Professor, Deputy Governor at the Bank of England and former Chief Economist at the OECD, giving a lecture. She is wearing a colorful patterned blouse and is gesturing with her hands while speaking. The background is a plain light blue wall.

Clare Lombardelli, Visiting Professor, Deputy Governor at the Bank of England and former Chief Economist at the OECD giving a lecture



“Chancellors and the Treasury: Managing the British Economy” is the result of a unique collaboration between His Majesty’s Treasury the Policy Institute at King’s and the Strand Group. It studies the role and actions of the Treasury and its Chancellors since the Second World War up to the present day, through the context of the British economy.

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The module is led by **Dr Chetun Patel** and co-taught weekly by former Shadow Chancellor and Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury **Ed Balls** and former Permanent Secretary to the Treasury **Lord Macpherson of Earl’s Court**.

the Treasury Sir **Danny Alexander**, **David Gauke** and **Yvette Cooper** and, permanent secretaries past and present including **Lord Burns**, **Sir Tom Scholar** and **James Bowler**.

A wider teaching panel includes senior Treasury official, **Mario Pisani**, Deputy Governor at the Bank of England, **Clare Lombardelli** and **Catherine MacLeod**, former special adviser to Chancellor Alistair Darling.

Prominent special guest speakers will further increase the stellar teaching panel – in previous years these have included former Chancellors **George Osborne**, **Lord Lawson**, **Gordon Brown**, **Lord Darling**, **Lord Clarke**, **Lord Hammond**, **Sajid Javid**, **Lord Lamont** and former Chief Secretaries of

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair's Director of Government Relations Anji Hunter speaking to Strand Group students



## *Optional module 2*

# The New Labour Years: The Blair Brown Revolution

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair's Director of Communications Alistair Campbell speaking to Strand Group students





The module considers the New Labour governments from a historical perspective, tracing changes and themes across the thirteen years of Tony Blair's and Gordon Brown's premierships, using the rigour of the historical method. Special attention is given to the memoirs and diaries of the central protagonists, and a high-profile range of guests allow students to truly interrogate their sources face-to-face.

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New Labour was a transformative government with a legacy that remains instructive for politicians and policymakers on both sides of the political spectrum. This module sees students learn and debate the breadth of New Labour years – the personal history of the key protagonists, the role of media spin, the power of the Treasury under Brown, the development of transformative public service reform, the role of special advisers, foreign policy and the Iraq War.

The course is co-taught by **Dr Michelle Clement**; **Professor Jon Davis** and **John Rentoul**, Chief Political Commentator for The Independent, biographer of Blair and King's Visiting Professor. The course was founded in 2008 and has been a pioneering learning environment for the study of the New Labour years. The first book

of the course, *Heroes or Villains?: The Blair Government Reconsidered*, was written by Rentoul and Davis.

The seminars see a wide range of prominent participants from government and the Civil Service invited to speak and to field questions. In the past guests have included **Ed Balls**, **Lord Blunkett**, **Alastair Campbell**, **Anji Hunter**, **Baroness Jay**, **Lord Mandelson**, **Alan Milburn**, **Baroness Morgan**, **Lord O'Donnell**, **Sir Kevin Tebbit**, and **Sir Tony Blair** himself.

A photograph of Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and a young woman standing in front of a wall with vertical wooden slats. Sadiq Khan is on the left, wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a light blue shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a light grey button-down shirt and dark trousers, smiling. The text 'Optional module 3' is overlaid on the image, underlined.

*Optional module 3*

# London: Governing the Global City

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan with Strand Group student and London module Essay Prize winner



This module explores the recent history and government of London.

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Taught by **Dr Jack Brown**, “London: Governing the Global City”, uses the city’s history to examine how to best run a globally competitive “world city” such as London, and takes full advantage of King’s’ position at the heart of the capital, offering students a unique educational experience, firmly rooted in place.

The module deals with London-wide and local government, but also explores the significant role of the private sector in the city’s governance. Finally, it engages directly with the huge past and current challenges that face not only London but other world cities and devolved city and city-region governments across the country.

The module makes great use of practitioner-led teaching, with students getting a chance to engage directly with key London leaders. Previous special guests included current Mayor of London **Sadiq Khan**; former mayor Boris Johnson’s Chief Strategic Adviser and Mayoral Chief

of Staff **Lord Edward Lister**; former Metropolitan Police Commissioner **Dame Cressida Dick**; former Transport for London Commissioner **Sir Peter Hendy**, and many more.

Alongside seminars at King’s, classes have also taken place at City Hall, the City of London’s ancient Guildhall, One Canada Square in Canary Wharf and 22 Bishopsgate. There can surely be no better way for students to understand how this world-leading city works than by engaging directly with those who have been responsible for running it and experiencing it for themselves.

Former Prime Minister Lord Cameron with  
Strand Group Students

## *Optional module 4*

# The Conservative Years: Governing in an Age of Turmoil

Former Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
Lord Gove speaking to Strand Group students



The Conservative Years builds on the successful approach of “New Labour in Government”, and brings its focus into even more ultra-contemporary historical study.

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Taught by **Dr Jack Brown**, the module explores the politics and personalities that influenced the direction and actions of successive Conservative administrations since 2010. Looking at the inner workings of the Coalition government, the changing relationship between the prime minister and their party across the period, and the rise and fall of at least five Conservative leaders. Paying particular attention to the government-dominating issues of Austerity, Brexit and the government’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It also explores the inner working of the Conservative Party itself, and how it evolved over the period.

The ultra-contemporary focus of this module gives students the opportunity to have their thinking evolve continually, as new primary and secondary source material emerges and guest speakers

offer original contributions to our understanding of these tumultuous years. It makes great use of speeches, government documents where publicly available, and memoirs, alongside quality reporting, to build a framework for understanding the inner workings of central government since 2010.

Guest speakers from within government are invited to join seminars, allowing students to interrogate their sources directly and in person.

A photograph of Cabinet Secretary Simon Case, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie. He is standing at a podium, looking slightly to his left. The background is a blue screen with white text that is partially visible and out of focus. The text on the screen includes "Lecture at New", "The Strat", and "the Uni".

*Optional module 5*

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# The History of The Civil Service: Evolution of the Machinery of Government

Cabinet Secretary Simon Case giving the Cabinet Secretary's Annual Lecture

This innovative module, delivered in partnership with the Cabinet Office, focuses on the evolution of the British Civil Service and how its role has developed alongside the changing role of the state. World wars, the creation of the welfare state, as well as technological, economic and societal change has carved new functions and expectations of what government is there to do.

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Much of the focus of the study of British government centres on the politicians the powerful individuals who lead government for a period. Though they are powerful and vital, Prime Ministers and their Cabinet are temporary. There is however a permanent side of the coin in British government – the Civil Service. The Civil Service acts as a repository of influence and institutional power in government. At present there are close to 500,000 civil servants based in Whitehall and around the country. The Civil Service has historically been a place where many people spend much of their careers, and work for governments of several different political hues. Yet there is a lack of understanding of how this enduring institution has shaped the history and workings of statecraft. This module will be led by **Dr Michelle Clement** and **Professor Jon Davis**.

The module includes innovative teaching techniques that centre on individual, small group and whole class learning to debate and develop our critical understanding of how and why the Civil Service works. We also utilise our proximity to the heart of British government to conduct special guest classes with practitioners. Students gain a strategic understanding of how the British Civil Service has developed, how the most senior civil servant position of Cabinet Secretary was established and how it has evolved, how successive prime ministers have shaped this permanent part of the state, and how public services have been shaped by governments since 1945. This strategic foundation sets students in excellent stead for careers and further study in and around British government.



A close-up photograph of Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark blue suit, a light blue shirt, and a dark tie. He has grey hair and is looking slightly to his right with a serious expression. His right hand is raised, with fingers spread, as if he is gesturing while speaking. The background is blurred, showing hints of a blue and green wall.

*Optional module 6*

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# Making modern Britain: Pivotal Prime Ministerial Decisions

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair speaking at a Strand Group event

This unique module focuses on the pivotal moments for Prime Ministers, using case studies to examine the decision making process.

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Led by **Dr Chetun Patel** and Professor **Jon Davis**, this module builds on the successful implementation of case study learning across our suite of modules. Students explore the pivotal moments of decision making faced by Prime Ministers since 1945.

It will explore issues such as:

- The decision to build an independent nuclear deterrent
- Suez Crisis
- The withdrawal of the UK from “East of Suez”
- The decision to build Concorde
- The EEC referendum
- Callaghan and the vote of no confidence
- The Falklands War
- The Miners Strike
- Good Friday Agreement
- Huawei and 5G security

Students make full use of specially created case studies, putting forward the arguments for courses of action having weighed the issues of the day. They will also prepare briefing papers. Based on the approach of Harvard Professors Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May the module seeks to help decision-makers become more attentive to the proper “uses of history.”

Guest speakers and experts will be invited to join the sessions.



Strand Group studentship holders outside  
No.10 Downing Street after a class



# Studentships



Former Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt MP speaking to  
Strand Group students



The MA in Government Studies has a strong social mobility focus, with places provided on the programme from businesses such as Amazon Web Services and others.

Studentships provide an incredible opportunity to students from underrepresented backgrounds to access this exceptional programme without financial constraints. In 24/25 8 places on the MA Programme were funded through social mobility full-fee studentships.



Please contact **[martin.stolliday@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:martin.stolliday@kcl.ac.uk)** for further information.

# Careers

Former Strand Group student, now Policy Adviser at HM Treasury receiving the HM Treasury Prize from former HM Treasury Permanent Secretary Sir Tom Scholar

The Programme is specially designed with student career paths in mind. We focus on improving student knowledge, attributes and skills so alumni can flourish in a variety of roles.

- There is practitioner involvement in all teaching. Practitioners are anchored by an academic chair in the room to facilitate the discussions. This provides students with an applied framework to understand how the decision-making process in government works beyond a theoretical understanding, bringing together the three distinct strands of policy, processes and personality.
- Employability is be hard-wired into every aspect of this programme. Students use historical analysis to shape their thinking.
- The dissertation aspect of the programme is flexible in its design, allowing students to focus on a purely historical analysis whilst in-career public servants and others will be able to undertake bespoke research project focusing on a particular challenge.
- Students also gain knowledge of public-service ethos and the skills needed to pursue public sector career paths.
- Case study teaching with a focus on skills gives students more practical skills that will be applicable in all workplaces. These include the ability to confidently take decisions, write clear and concise briefings, give presentations and learn soft skills essential for networking opportunities.
- Small group tutorials further enable formative assessment and help students develop the skills they need for future work.
- Through our contacts and support from industry and government we have created an employability ecosystem around the programme.
- The programme features industry driven content reflecting governmental and political sectors.
- We bring in former students who have taken our modules and provide a system through which our alumni can provide formal and informal mentoring opportunities.





# Visiting faculty

The Strand Group has a number of Visiting Professors and Fellows who contribute to its research, teaching and events.

Visiting Professor Gordon Corera, author and former BBC Security Correspondent, teaching a class on the UK's decision not to use Huawei mobile communications

## Visiting professors

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### **Sir Michael Barber**

Sir Michael Barber is a senior adviser to the Prime Minister, delivering the five national missions.

### **Lord Case**

Lord Case was the Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service from 2020-2024.

### **Gareth Davies**

Gareth Davies is Permanent Secretary of the Department for Business and Trade.

### **Baroness Jay of Paddington**

Baroness Jay of Paddington was a Minister in the Department of Health, Minister for Women, Leader of the House of Lords, and has chaired the Lords Select Committee on the Constitution.

### **Sir Iain Lobban**

Sir Iain Lobban KCMG CB was the Director of the UK's intelligence and security agency, GCHQ, from mid 2008 to late 2014, having previously served as its Director General for Operations from 2004.

### **Clare Lombardelli**

Clare Lombardelli is the Deputy Governor for Monetary Policy at the Bank of England.

### **Catherine Macleod**

Catherine MacLeod was a special adviser to Alistair Darling when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, political editor of The Herald, and Chair of the Lobby in the UK's Parliamentary Press Gallery.

## Visiting fellows

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### **Commodore John Aitken**

Commodore John Aitken is a career submarine warfare officer with 31 years of service.

### **Stuart Glassborow**

Stuart Glassborow is a highly experienced civil servant having worked in HM Treasury and No.10 Downing street in a variety of roles.

### **Lord Macpherson of Earl's Court**

Lord Macpherson GCB was Permanent Secretary to the Treasury from 2005 to 2016.

### **Ciaran Martin**

Ciaran Martin was the first CEO of the National Cyber Security Centre.

### **Baroness Morgan of Huyton**

Baroness Morgan of Huyton (born 28 June 1959) is a British Labour life peer who served as Tony Blair's Director of Government Relations (2001–2005), former Chair of Ofsted, and is presently Master of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

### **Sarah Munby**

Sarah Munby was Permanent Secretary at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) from February 2023 to July 2025.

### **Mario Pisani**

Mario Pisani is Deputy Director, Debt & Reserves Management, HM Treasury.

### **Sir Dave Ramsden**

Sir Dave Ramsden is Deputy Governor at the Bank of England for Markets and Banking.

### **John Rentoul**

John Rentoul is Chief Political Commentator for the Independent, having joined in 1995.

### **Sir Kevin Tebbit**

Sir Kevin Tebbit was Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Ministry of Defence, 1998-2005.

### **Gordon Corera**

Gordon Corera is a journalist and author specialising in security and intelligence issues.

### **James Johns**

James Johns is a consultant, strategist and digital policy advisor, who spent 15 years at roles with Hewlett Packard, Amazon Web Services, and Workday.



# Core team

Strand Group Director Professor Jon Davis OBE



The Strand Group team runs the MA Programme, undertakes professional education, manages events and produces research.

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### **Professor Jon Davis OBE**

Professor Jon Davis OBE is Director of the Strand Group at King's College London. His research and work focuses on the contemporary history of British central government.



### **Martin Stolliday**

Martin is the manager for the whole of The Strand Group's activities. He supports all aspects of The Strand Group's work across teaching, research, events and executive education. He is also responsible for communications and stakeholder relations.



### **Dr Michelle Clement**

Dr Clement is a Lecturer on reform and delivery in government and Researcher in Residence at No.10 Downing Street.



### **Dr Jack Brown**

Dr Jack Brown is Lecturer with the Strand Group, his work focuses on No.10 Downing Street and London governance.



### **Professor Ed Balls**

Former shadow chancellor Ed Balls is a Professor of Political Economy. Working with the Strand Group he continues to build on the teaching he has been doing as visiting professor since 2015.



### **Dr Chetun Patel**

Dr Patel is a postgraduate lecturer within the Strand Group teaching team, specialising in contemporary British political economy history.







# The Strand Group

The Strand Group examines the contemporary history of the institutions of British Government.

The Group delivers the MA Government Studies Programme, and undertakes professional education, along with a number of Visiting Professors and Fellows who contribute to its research, teaching and events, and partners with various government departments and businesses.

# The Policy Institute

The Policy Institute at King's College London works to solve society's challenges with evidence and expertise.

We combine the rigour of academia with the agility of a consultancy and the connectedness of a think tank.

Our research draws on many disciplines and methods, making use of the skills, expertise and resources of not only the institute, but the university and its wider network too.



*The STRAND Group*

**THE  
POLICY  
INSTITUTE**

