



**Faculté de Droit  
et Science politique**  
**CAMPUS DE SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES**

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LDDRT226: Introduction to British Law and Institutions

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## **DESCRIPTION GÉNÉRALE DU COURS**

As well as introducing students to the common law, this course provides an introduction to the key British institutions and their place in the development of the law in the UK. It covers the UK's so-called "unwritten constitution" (the uncodified and unentrenched corpus of constitutional law) and the relationships between the UK's central institutions and those of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland under the devolution arrangements dating back to 1998.

## **OBJECTIFS VISÉS ET COMPÉTENCES ACQUISES**

Students will gain a solid knowledge of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government in the UK, as well as an understanding of devolution and how it works. The course also aims to give students an insight into the functioning of the common law and an understanding of how the doctrine of *stare decisis* is applied in practice.

## **DÉROULE DES SÉANCES**

### **Course outline 2024 (subject to modification):**

#### **1. The UK's uncodified constitution**

Sources of UK law and elements of the UK constitution:

Ancient documents

Acts of Parliament

Case Law

Constitutional conventions

Recent constitutional reform, including devolution,  
creation of the UK Supreme Court

## 2. The Parliamentary system

The King in Parliament  
The House of Commons  
The House of Lords  
The notion of parliamentary sovereignty

## 3. Elections

How they work: democracy and participation  
Electoral systems (explanation of “first past the post” and alternatives)  
major political parties

## 4. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet

The Westminster system of parliamentary government.

## 5. The Monarchy

Constitutional monarchy  
Key conventions concerning the monarchy  
Grey areas – can the monarch wield real power? The scandal over Queen’s consent procedure (now King’s consent) - not be confused with the royal assent!  
Arguments for and against abolition of the monarchy

## 6. The judiciary

The UK Supreme Court and its constitutional role  
The court hierarchy and why it matters in a common law jurisdiction  
How common law works in practice

## 7. Current issues:

The constitutional and political impact of Brexit  
Pressures on the Union: Scotland, Northern Ireland

## MODE D’ÉVALUATION

Contrôle continu

Examen Terminal

Oral

Ecrit

## PRÉREQUIS

A level of at least B2 in English. Some knowledge of the US system of law and government would be an advantage to facilitate comparative analysis.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Material for this course will be provided via e-campus, but students should try to keep abreast of current affairs in the UK by listening to the BBC world service and reading reliable news sources like The Guardian and The Economist, The Conversation UK etc.