

British Politics and Government (GL 399-02)

Extra Credit Assignment – *The Deal*

MOVIE SYNOPSIS: *The Deal* is a 2003 British television film directed by Stephen Frears from a script by Peter Morgan, based in part upon *The Rivals* by James Naughtie. It stars David Morrissey as Gordon Brown and Michael Sheen as Tony Blair, and depicts the Blair-Brown deal—a well-documented pact that Blair and Brown allegedly made whereby Brown would not stand in the 1994 Labour leadership election so that Blair could have a clear run at becoming leader of the party, and eventually Prime Minister. The film begins in 1983, as the two men are first elected to Parliament, and concludes in 1994 at the Granita restaurant—the location of the supposed agreement.

THIS ASSIGNMENT IS OPTIONAL. If you chose to complete it, please answer the following questions in approximately 1-2 page typed pages. This can earn you up to the equivalent of 5% toward your overall grade. The assignment is due when we return from spring break, Monday, April 20th.

1. Having now some familiarity with the politics of the period covered by the movie, did you find the movie's depiction to be relatively accurate?
2. Given that Gordon Brown was initially considered to be a very strong candidate for the leadership, why was it that many (including, as the movie implies, John Smith himself) came to consider Tony Blair to better candidate?
3. What were the terms of 'the deal' struck between Blair and Brown? Obviously the movie is a fictionalized account of what happened (only Blair and Brown themselves know for sure), but did the subsequent events of the Labour Government seem to bear out the movie's version? How so?
3. While 'the deal' may have resolved the specific problem of leadership succession on 1994, did it fatally undermine the relationship between Brown and Blair and hinder their ability to effectively govern?

