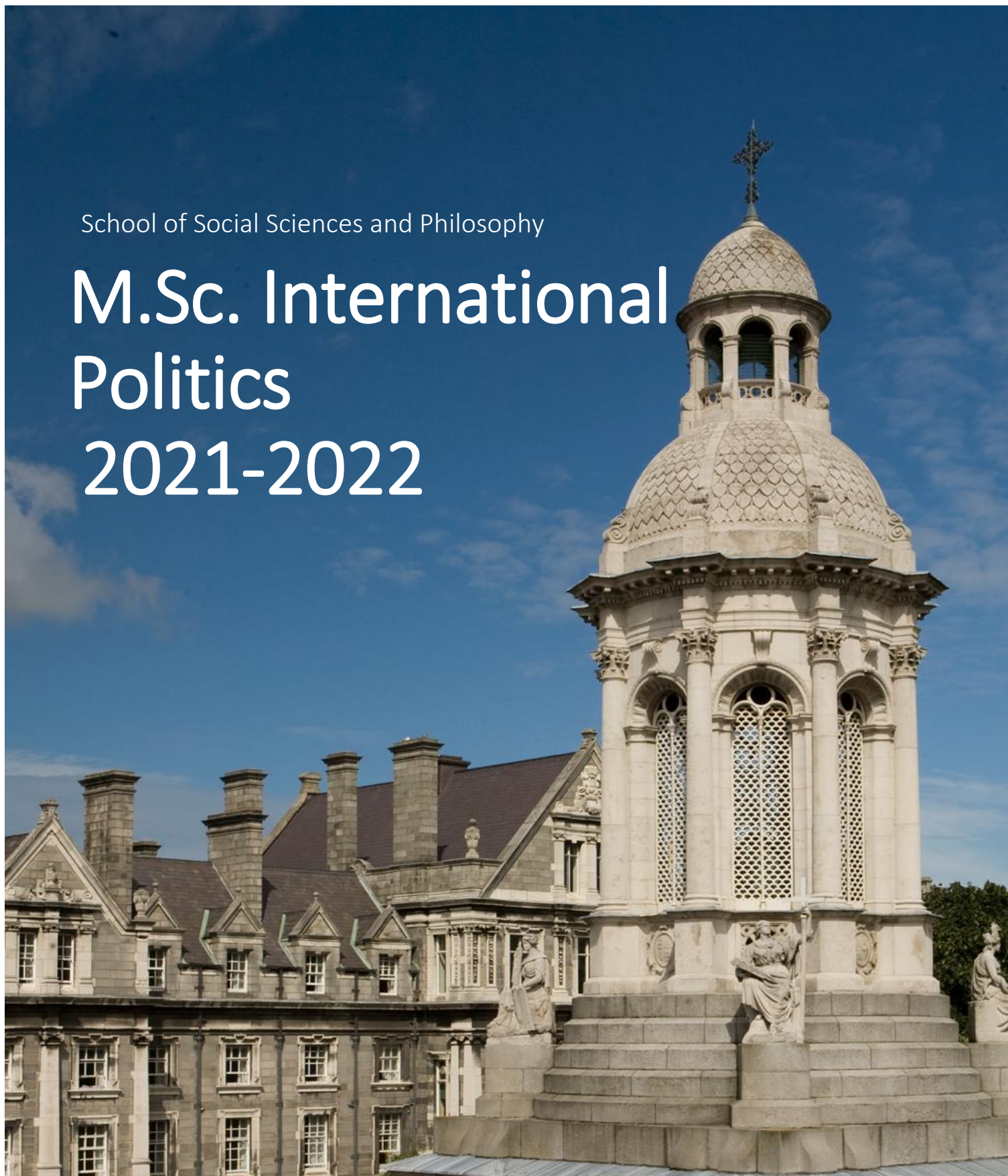**Trinity College Dublin**
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

M.Sc. International Politics 2021-2022

A Note on this Handbook

In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the General Regulations published in the University Calendar and information contained in programme or local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations in the Calendar will prevail.

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1. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

Welcome to the International Politics M.Sc. course at Trinity College Dublin. We are delighted you have decided to study with us.

We are particularly glad that you decided to join us at a very difficult time. TCD, like the rest of the world, is struggling to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. But we are deeply committed to doing everything we can to make sure you get as close to the usual postgraduate experience with us as possible. We are honored by your vote of confidence in us, and we'll do what we can to merit that trust.

As you know, our M.Sc. in International Politics offers postgraduate students rigorous training in the study of international relations, and provides a comprehensive empirical approach to understanding many prominent problems in contemporary world politics, especially topics where domestic and international politics cannot be understood in isolation from each other. You will also receive training in research methods.

You will find in this handbook a detailed description of the work you need to complete in the course of our programme. Your individual timetable will be available to you via your online student portal at my.tcd.ie.

Please read this handbook carefully, especially the parts dealing specifically with course content and our expectations of M.Sc. students. We are of course happy to answer any questions you may have.

Welcome to TCD, and I look forward to your time with us.

Dr William Phelan

1.2 Contact Details

Staff Name	Role/Title	Contact
Dr Carol Newman	Head of School	cnewman@tcd.ie
Dr Tara Mitchell	Director of Teaching & Learning – PG	mitchet@tcd.ie
Dr Peter Stone	Head of Department	pstone@tcd.ie
Dr William Phelan	Course Director	phelanw@tcd.ie
Dr Noah Buckley	Associate Course Director	buckleno@tcd.ie
Sarah Cunningham	Course Administrator	polgrad@tcd.ie

1.3 Programme-Specific Locations

Please see interactive campus maps [here](#).

- The Political Science Department is located on the fourth and fifth floors of 1 College Green building, just off the west end of the main campus. All instructors and the administrator for the course can be found here unless otherwise indicated.
Note: 1 – 5 College Green is a combined building, the main entrance is at 3 College Green. Turn left on exiting the main lift or staircase in order to reach 1 College Green. If taking the lift to the fifth floor of 1 College Green, press *four*; if taking the lift to the fourth floor of 1 College Green, press *three*.

- The Arts Building (on the main campus) and Phoenix House (7-9 Leinster St South, just off the east end of the main campus) host the majority of Political Science lectures.

- Blackboard is the College online learning environment, where lecturers will give access to material like lecture notes and discussion forums. The use of Blackboard varies from module to module and individual lecturers will speak to you about the requirements for their module. In order to access a module on Blackboard you should be registered to the module by your Course Administrator. Blackboard can be accessed here:
https://tcd.blackboard.com/webapps/login/

- Your @tcd address **only** will be used for correspondence. You should check your email on a regular basis. When emailing the Administration, make sure to include your TCD Student ID Number.

- My.tcd.ie allows students to view their own central student record containing all relevant information related to the course for which you are registered. To access the system you will need your College username and network password. If any details on your timetable/module list are incorrect, you should contact the Course Administrator.

- Academic Registry ("AR") manages course registration and fees. Their website can be accessed here: https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/. If your personal student information listed on SITS is incorrect, you should email academic.registry@tcd.ie. The Academic Registry offices are located in the Watts Building, on the east side of the main campus.

1.4 Key dates

Please see the Academic Year Structure: https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/academic-year-structure/

Michaelmas Term

10th September 2021	Mandatory Orientation Session for all incoming M.Sc. International Politics students
13th September 2021	MT instruction begins
3rd December 2021	MT instruction finishes
6th December 2021	Draft syllabi distributed for optional Hilary Term modules; students select optional modules on a first-come first-served basis
13th December 2021	Students submit dissertation topics

Hilary Term

17th January 2022	Students assigned dissertation supervisors
24th January 2022	HT instruction begins
14th March 2022	Dissertation proposals due Students send dissertation proposal to supervisor and MSc Director, indicating in 250-500 words 1) the research question to be answered; 2) why this question is significant; and 3) the methodology proposed to solve it (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.).
14th April 2022	HT instruction finishes

Trinity Term

25th April 2022	Dissertation Seminar begins
27th May 2022	End of dissertation supervision
15th August 2022	Dissertations due

1.5 Timetable

The course timetable will be available on the Departmental website (www.tcd.ie/Political_Science) shortly before the start of the Michaelmas term. Personal timetables will be available to students through MyTCD.

2. ACADEMIC WRITING

2.1 Plagiarism and Referencing Guide

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. It is commonly accepted, however, that we build on the work and ideas of others in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the work or ideas of others as one's own, without due acknowledgement. Plagiarism can arise from deliberate actions and also through careless thinking and/or methodology. The offence lies not in the attitude or intention of the perpetrator, but in the action and in its consequences. It is the responsibility of the author of any work to ensure that he/she does not commit plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered to be academically fraudulent, and an offence against academic integrity that is subject to the disciplinary procedures of the University.

Plagiarism can arise from actions such as:

a) copying another student's work;
b) enlisting another person or persons to complete an assignment on the student's behalf;
c) procuring, whether with payment or otherwise, the work or ideas of another;
d) quoting directly, without acknowledgement, from books, articles or other sources, either in printed, recorded or electronic format, including websites and social media;
e) paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, the writings of other authors.

Examples (d) and (e) in particular can arise through careless thinking and/or methodology where students:

(i) fail to distinguish between their own ideas and those of others;
(ii) fail to take proper notes during preliminary research and therefore lose track of the sources from which the notes were drawn;
(iii) fail to distinguish between information which needs no acknowledgement because it is firmly in the public domain, and information which might be widely known, but which nevertheless requires some sort of acknowledgement;
(iv) come across a distinctive methodology or idea and fail to record its source.

All the above serve only as examples and are not exhaustive.

Plagiarism in the context of group work

Students should normally submit work done in co-operation with other students only when it is done with the full knowledge and permission of the lecturer concerned. Without this, submitting work which is the product of collusion with other students may be considered to be plagiarism. When work is submitted as the result of a group project, it is the responsibility of all students in the group to ensure, so far as is possible, that no work submitted by the group is plagiarised.

Self-Plagiarism

No work can normally be submitted for more than one assessment for credit. Resubmitting the same work for more than one assessment for credit is normally considered self-plagiarism. Similarly, students should not submit work previously submitted at another point in their academic career.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Students should ensure the integrity of their work by seeking advice from their lecturers, tutor or supervisor on avoiding plagiarism. A general set of guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism is available at http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism, where students must also complete the Online Tutorial 'Ready Steady Write'.

If plagiarism as defined above is suspected, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) or his/her designate will arrange an informal meeting with the student, the student's Supervisor and/or the academic staff member concerned, to put their suspicions to the student and give the student the opportunity to respond. Students may nominate a Graduate Students' Union representative or PG advisor to accompany them to the meeting. The student will be requested to respond in writing stating his/her agreement to attend such a meeting and confirming on which of the suggested dates and times it will be possible for them to attend. If the student does not in this manner agree to attend such a meeting, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), or designate, may refer the case directly to the Junior Dean, who will interview the student and may implement the relevant procedures.

If the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) forms the view that plagiarism has taken place, he/she must decide if the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure set out below. In order for this summary procedure to be followed, all parties noted above must be in agreement and must state their agreement in writing to the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) or designate. If one of the parties to the informal meeting withholds his/her written agreement to the application of the summary procedure, or if the facts of the case are in dispute, or if the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) feels that the penalties provided for under the summary procedure below are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, he/she will refer the case directly to the Junior Dean.

If the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) will recommend one of the following penalties:

Level 1: Student receives an informal verbal warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will be assessed and marked without penalty;

Level 2: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will receive a reduced or capped mark depending on the seriousness/extent of plagiarism;

Level 3: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. There is no opportunity for resubmission.

Provided that the appropriate procedure has been followed and all parties are in agreement with the proposed penalty, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) should in the case of a Level 1 offence, inform the Course Director and, where appropriate, the Course Office. In the case of a Level 2 or Level 3 offence, the Dean of Graduate Studies must be notified and requested to approve the recommended penalty. The Dean of Graduate Studies may approve or reject the recommended penalty, or seek further information before making a decision. If he/she considers that the penalties provided for under the summary procedure are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, he/she may also refer the matter directly to the Junior Dean who will interview the student and may implement the procedures as referred to under conduct and college. Notwithstanding his/her decision, the Dean of Graduate Studies will inform the Junior Dean of all notified cases of Level 2 and Level 3 offences accordingly. The Junior Dean may nevertheless implement the procedures as set out in Section 5 (Other General Regulations) of the Calendar.

If the case cannot normally be dealt with under summary procedures, it is deemed to be a Level 4 offence and will be referred directly to the Junior Dean. Nothing provided for under the summary procedure diminishes or prejudices the disciplinary powers of the Junior Dean under the 2010 Consolidated Statutes.

2.2 Research Ethics

We wish to draw your attention to the need for you to comply with the School's research ethics policy. Full details can be found at http://www.tcd.ie/ssp/research/ethics/. The most consequential aspect of this that, should you be planning to observe, interview, poll, or experiment on human beings, you will need to get ethics approval. This involves completing a form that you will find via the link above and then having it approved/signed by the Department's Research Ethics representative. **Failure to comply with the School's research ethics policy could result in penalties, up to and including a zero mark for the dissertation.**

3. TEACHING AND LEARNING

3.1 Course Structure

The International Politics M.Sc. course is designed to run for one year on a full-time basis. The course commences on the Monday of the first teaching week in the College's academic year structure in mid-September. The programme concludes with the submission of the dissertation in the following August.

The course is structured around 3 terms, each of which is compulsory. In each term, students take modules summing to 30 ECTS, where the dissertation in Trinity term counts for the full 30 ECTS. Thus, the degree programme sums to 90 ECTS. Most modules in the M.Sc. programme are taught around weekly seminars, with assessment based upon participation, short assignments, and a paper. Some modules (notably Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods) will involve lectures. Students are expected to attend class every week. In addition, please note that written work can be assigned during study week and between term times.

The final M.Sc. is awarded in accordance with University convention as either Pass or Distinction. In addition, the Department of Political Science may award the predicate Merit to a student whose overall performance falls between these categories. The M.Sc. (or Postgraduate Diploma – see section 3.8 below) is a level nine QQI – NFQ qualification.

3.2 Course Workload

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required to achieve the objectives of a module or programme of study. It is designed to enable academic recognition for periods of study, to facilitate student mobility and credit accumulation and transfer. The ECTS is the recommended credit system for higher education in Ireland and across the European Higher Education Area.

 The ECTS weighting for a module is a measure of the student input or workload required for that module, based on factors such as the number of contact hours, the number and length of written or verbally presented assessment exercises, class preparation and private study time, laboratory classes, examinations, clinical attendance, professional training placements, and so on as appropriate. There is no intrinsic relationship between the credit volume of a module and its level of difficulty. The European norm for fulltime study over one academic year is 60 credits. 1 credit represents 20-25 hours estimated student input, so a 10-credit module will be designed to require 200-250 hours of student input including class contact time, assessments and examinations.

ECTS credits are awarded to a student only upon successful completion of the programme year. Progression from one year to the next is determined by the programme regulations. Students who fail a year of their programme will not obtain credit for that year even if they have passed certain components. Exceptions to this rule are one-year and part-year visiting students, who are awarded credit for individual modules successfully completed.

The core compulsory full-term modules are as follows:

Module Code	Module Title	Term	Weighting
PO8046/PO8047	MSc Research Design	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
PO8048/PO8049	International Politics	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
PO8050/PO8051	International Conflict	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
PO8006	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods	Hilary	10 ECTS
PO8200	Dissertation	Trinity	30 ECTS

Details of the optional modules offered in the Hilary Term (each worth 5 ECTS) will be available on the Department site before the start of the Hilary Term:
https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/postgraduate/msc-international-politics/course-content/

3.3 Module Descriptors & Compulsory Reading Lists

Module descriptors and timetables will be available on the Departmental website shortly before the start of each term:

https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/postgraduate/msc-international-politics/course-content/

Students are required to submit a dissertation of 10,000 words on a research question of their choice in the area relevant to their degree programme. Dissertations should be of an empirical nature, providing an *explanation* for *observable variation in political phenomena*, building on political science scholarship. They should not be (merely) descriptive or prescriptive. Students that are interested in writing a political theory dissertation or formal modelling/game theory should consult with William Phelan.

After successfully completing the dissertation, students should be able to:

- Identify a research question worthy of sustained scholarly attention;

- Design a research plan appropriate to answering that question within given time and resource constraints;

- Implement all stages of that research design independently, including the structured collection of new information, the application of appropriate analytical techniques and the interpretation of the results;

- Present their research in written form in a manner that withstands scrutiny.

The examiners are instructed to assess the dissertation according to the standards commonly used for peer-reviewed journals. In particular, examiners assess:

- the importance of the research question in the context of the academic literature and the appropriateness of its formulation;

- the appropriateness of the evidence basis examined and the analytical tools brought to bear;

- the extent to which the interpretations and conclusions are justified on the basis of the analytical results, and;

- the contribution that the dissertation makes to knowledge on the particular question it addresses.

Students will attend a weekly seminar during Trinity Term during which they will present their work in progress. Further details will be provided when students begin their the dissertation work. Completed dissertations should be submitted online <u>and</u> handed in hard copy in the Political Science department office (or a hard copy submitted by mail if necessary).

3.4 Learning Outcomes

The course aims to provide students with the necessary skills for a range of research-related careers, as well as careers in other areas. It is suitable for students who wish to progress to doctoral research, or to pursue careers in applied policy research, the civil service, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, or the media. After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- Assess the major theories of international relations.
- Explain variation in developmental trajectories as a consequence of the interplay between domestic and international factors.
- Evaluate critically theoretical and empirical research on how the interaction between international and domestic politics affects a range of key outcomes in the field of development.
- Formulate policy-relevant research questions in the fields of international politics and related issues such as development and the environment.
- Design appropriate research strategies, applying quantitative and/or qualitative methods as appropriate, for answering policy-relevant research questions.
- Conduct independent research relevant to international politics using qualitative and/or quantitative methods.

3.5 Coursework Requirements

The coursework requirements for each individual module will be detailed in relevant syllabus.

Documentation

The Department does not require that sources be documented in any particular format. If you are unsure about what reference format to use, however, we recommend the American Political Science Association Style Manual, at https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/. This style manual is generally an excellent resource for writing political science papers.

Late Work

All late work, unless excused in advance by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate or tutor's note, will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day. Under no circumstances will work be accepted after the set work has been marked and handed back to other students, or after the end of Hilary teaching term.

Plagiarism Declaration

Each coversheet that is attached to submitted work should contain the following completed declaration:

"*I have read and I understand the plagiarism provisions in the General Regulations of the University Calendar for the current year, found at http://www.tcd.ie/calendar.*

I have also completed the Online Tutorial on avoiding plagiarism 'Ready Steady Write', located at http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/ready-steady-write."

The College plagiarism policy can be downloaded here: https://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-policies/assets/plagiarism-mar2020.pdf and the College Calendar here: https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/

3.6 Attendance Requirements

Attendance is not optional. Absences should be cleared with the relevant instructor, who should be provided with medical or other documentation as appropriate.

See Part III of the Calendar for College regulations regarding attendance and 'Off-Books' status: https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/

3.7 Marking Scale

The Department of Political Science uses the following grading scheme for overall module assessment:

- Excellent: 70 – 100
- Good: 60 – 69
- Fair: 50- 59
- Condonable Fail: 40 – 49
- Uncondonable Fail: 0 – 39

Note that all marks given during the year are provisional and subject to change by the external examiner at the end of the year. After a lecturer has returned marks to students at the end of a module, they may not be changed other than at the Court of Examiners meeting at the end of the year. Grades and comments for module work should be returned in a prompt manner, and students should politely approach instructors for module grades if they have not been provided by the end of first week of the following term (end of first week of HT for MT grades, end of first week of Trinity Term/dissertation workshop for HT grades).

The dissertation is marked by two readers, who will agree on a mark on the main numerical grading scale. The external examiner will be consulted where there is a significant disagreement between marks given by two examiners and for any dissertation deemed to have failed or achieved 70+. If a student passes the taught elements of the course but is deemed to have failed the dissertation, the student may request a viva voce examination in which he or she may defend the dissertation. Students are required to be present in Dublin during the Court of Examiners meeting, usually held between mid-September and mid-October, if they wish to avail of this option.

Pass	The pass mark for the programme is 50%. To obtain an MSc., students must achieve all of the following: • a passing mark for the dissertation • an overall (weighted) average pass mark in the taught elements of the course; • pass marks in individual modules amounting to at least 50 ECTS • a mark of not less than 40% in the remaining modules
Postgraduate Diploma	Students who pass the required modules but fail to meet the required standard on the dissertation are eligible for the award of a **Postgraduate Diploma** (exit only).

Merit	The Department may recommend that the M.Sc. be awarded with the predication '**Merit**' to students who achieve <u>both</u>: • a mark of 60% or above in the dissertation • an overall (weighted) average mark across all taught modules of at least 58%, where modules amounting to at least 30 credits have a mark of 60% or above. A merit cannot be awarded where the candidate has failed any credit during the course.
Distinction	The Department may recommend that the M.Sc. be awarded with the predication '**Distinction**' to students who achieve <u>both</u>: • a mark of 70% or above in the dissertation • an overall (weighted) average mark across all taught modules of at least 68%, where modules amounting to at least 30 credits have a mark of 70% or above. A distinction cannot be awarded where the candidate has failed any credit during the course.

3.8 Progression Regulations

See Part III of the College Calendar for full details of College regulations regarding Progression
https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/

3.9 External Examiner

Dr Andrea Ruggeri

Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, United Kingdom.

3.10 Student Feedback and Evaluation

Evaluation of courses and their constituent modules is an important component of College's commitment towards improving the quality of teaching and the support of learning. To this end, all postgraduate programmes that are taught by the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy are evaluated on a yearly basis using an online survey. This survey is anonymous, and the results are used in reviewing and improving aspects of each programme and its delivery.

3.11 Postgraduate Supports for Students with Disabilities

Postgraduate students (both taught and research) who have a disability are encouraged to apply to the Disability Service for reasonable accommodation.

Supports for Postgraduate Students includes:
- Academic Support
- Assistive Technology
- Occupational Therapy
- Support on Placements and Internships
- Preparation for Viva Voce examinations

An application can be made through my.tcd.ie via the 'My Disability Service' tab. Additional information is available in a step-by-step How to apply for Reasonable Accommodations guide.

Any postgraduate student in Trinity (or prospective student) is welcome to contact the Disability Service to informally discuss their needs prior to making a formal application. Please email askds@tcd.ie or visit the Disability Service Contact page.

https://www.tcd.ie/disability/contact/

https://www.tcd.ie/disability/current/Postgrad.php