



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

School of Social Sciences and
Philosophy – Department of
Political Science

MSc International Politics Handbook

2023-24

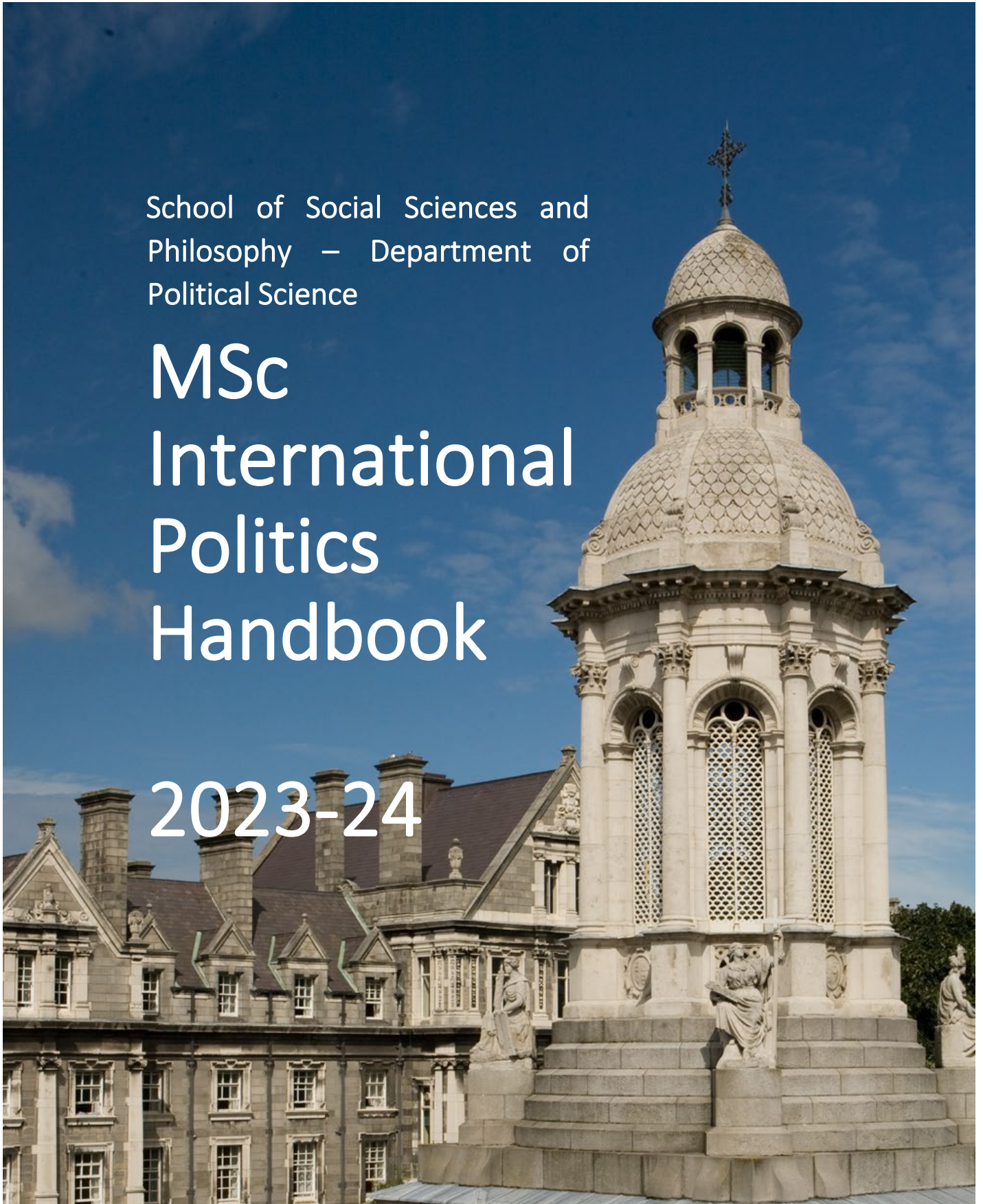


Table of Contents

1. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION	3
1.1. Introduction.....	3
1.2. Contact Details	4
1.3. Programme-Specific Locations and Sites	5
1.4. Key Dates.....	6
1.5. Timetable.....	6
2. PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC WRITING	7
3. TEACHING AND LEARNING	10
3.1. Programme Structure.....	10
3.2. Workload	10
3.3. Module Descriptors & Compulsory Reading Lists.....	11
3.4. Learning Outcomes	11
3.5. Coursework Requirements.....	12
3.5.1. Documentation.....	12
3.5.2. Late Work	12
3.5.3. Plagiarism Declaration.....	12
3.6. Attendance Requirements	12
3.7. Marking Scale	13
3.8. Dissertation	15
3.8.1. Supervision	16
3.8.2. Dissertation proposal	17
3.8.3. Research Ethics.....	17
3.8.4. Dissertation seminar	17
3.8.5. End of Supervision.....	18
3.9. External Examiner	18
3.10. Progression Regulations.....	18
3.11. Student Feedback and Module Evaluation	19
4. STUDENT WELFARE	19
4.1. Class Representatives.....	19
4.2. Supports for Students	19

1. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

1.1. Introduction

Welcome to the International Politics MSc course at Trinity College Dublin. We are delighted you have decided to join our Programme for 2023-24.

As you know, our MSc 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. More detailed information will be provided throughout the year, but this Handbook should be your first port of call when you have a query. Your individual timetable will be available to you via your online student portal at my.tcd.ie.

We hope very much that you will enjoy a happy and productive time at Trinity College.

Dr Noah Buckley



1.2. Contact Details

Staff Name	Role/Title	Contact 1
Dr Paul O'Grady	Head of School of Social Sciences and Philosophy	pogrady@tcd.ie
Dr Tara Mitchell	Director of Teaching & Learning - Postgraduate	mitchet@tcd.ie
Dr Peter Stone	Head of Department of Political Science	pstone@tcd.ie
Dr Noah Buckley	Director of MSc in International Politics (MT) Associate Director of MSc (HT)	buckleno@tcd.ie
Dr William Phelan	Director of MSc in International Politics (HT)	phelanw@tcd.ie
Sarah Smullen	Administrator of MSc in International Politics	polgrad@tcd.ie

1.3. Programme-Specific Locations and Sites

- Interactive campus maps are available: <https://www.tcd.ie/Maps/map.php?b=> 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 many Political Science classes.
- College has several libraries, most of which are located on the College Green campus. Students enrolled in the programme will find the material in the library complex, located beside the Arts Block. The library website allows students to request books and access online materials: <https://www.tcd.ie/library/>.

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/>

- Students' @tcd email address is the only email address that will be used for correspondence. Students should check their email frequently. When emailing the Administration, students must include their 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, students will need their College username and network password. If any details on a student's timetable/module list are incorrect, students should contact the Course Administrator as a matter of urgency.
- Academic Registry ("AR") manages course registration and fees. Their website can be accessed here: <https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/>. If any personal student information listed on SITS is incorrect, students should email academic.registry@tcd.ie. The Academic Registry offices are located in the Watts Building, on the east side of the main campus. This is where students will also collect their student card from, when they first arrive on campus. Details about how to do this can be found here: <https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/service-desk/id-cards/>

1.4. Key Dates

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

Michaelmas Term

8th September 2023	Mandatory Orientation Session for all incoming MSc International Politics students
11 th September 2023	MT instruction begins
1 st December 2023	MT instruction finishes
4 th December 2023	Draft syllabi distributed for optional Hilary Term modules; students send choices to Course Administrator; students are enrolled on a first-come first-served basis
11 th December 2023	Students submit dissertation topics to MSc Course Director

Hilary Term

15 th January 2024	Students assigned dissertation supervisors
22 nd January 2024	HT instruction begins
11 th March 2024	Dissertation proposals due
12 th April 2024	HT instruction finishes

Trinity Term

22 nd April 2024	Dissertation Seminar begins
1 st May 2024	Last day for submission of research ethics applications
24 th May 2024	End of dissertation supervision
End June 2024	Publication of MSc module results by AR
11 th August 2024	Dissertations due

1.5. Timetables

Personal timetables will be available to students through my.tcd.ie shortly before the start of each term. Students are encouraged to regularly check their online timetables, particularly at the start of each term, to get the most up-to-date information.

2. PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC WRITING

2.1. School of Social Sciences and Philosophy Procedures for Dealing with Plagiarism

Plagiarism and Referencing Guide

If you copy another student's essay, engage someone to write your work, quote material from any published or electronic source without acknowledgement, or extensively paraphrase such material without acknowledgement, you have committed the offence of plagiarism. A mark of zero may be awarded. The College's definition of plagiarism and specification of its consequences can be viewed on the Trinity website: <https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity>

These webpages are designed to help you to understand what plagiarism is and to employ the principles of academic integrity so as to avoid plagiarising. They also set out the regulations in Trinity relating to plagiarism offences and how they are dealt with.

The College Calendar defines plagiarism, gives examples of the kinds of actions that are deemed to constitute plagiarism, and elaborates on the procedures for dealing with plagiarism cases. It is essential that you read the Calendar entry that is relevant to you as a postgraduate student. The webpages also contain materials and advice on citation styles which are used to reference properly. You should familiarise yourself with the content of these pages. For further information please visit:

<https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity>

All students must complete our Ready Steady Write plagiarism tutorial and sign a declaration when submitting course work, whether in hard or soft copy or via Blackboard, confirming that you understand what plagiarism is and have completed the tutorial. If you read the information on plagiarism, complete the tutorial and still have difficulty understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, please seek advice from your College tutor, your Course Director, your supervisor, or from Student Learning Development.

To access this tutorial please visit: libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity/ready-steady-write

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. I have also completed the Online Tutorial on avoiding plagiarism 'Ready Steady Write'.

Please refer to your relevant School/ Department for the format of essay submission coversheets.

Academic Integrity

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. However, it is essential that we do so with integrity, in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement. Any action or attempted action that undermines academic integrity and may result in an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any member of the academic community or wider society may be considered as academic misconduct. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- **Plagiarism** - presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement. Submitting work as one's own for assessment or examination, which has, been done in whole or in part by someone else, or submitting work which has been created by using artificial intelligence tools, where this has not been expressly permitted.
- **Self-plagiarism** - recycling or borrowing content from the author's own previous work without citation and submitting it either for an assignment or an examination.
- **Collusion** - undisclosed collaboration of two or more people on an assignment or task, or examination, which is supposed to be completed individually.
- **Falsification/fabrication.**
- **Exam cheating** - action or behaviour that violates examination rules in an attempt to give one learner an unfair advantage over another.
- **Fraud/impersonation** - actions that are intended to deceive for unfair advantage by violating academic regulations. Using intentional deception to gain academic credit.
- **Contract cheating** - form of academic misconduct in which a person uses an undeclared and/or unauthorised third party to assist them to produce work for academic credit or progression, whether or not payment or other favour is involved. Contract cheating is any behaviour whereby a learner arranges to have another person or entity ('the provider') complete (in whole or in part) any assessment (e.g., exam, test, quiz, assignment, paper, project, problems) for the learner. If the provider is also a student, both students are in violation.

Further examples of the above available at www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-integrity

Academic Misconduct in the Context of Group Work

Students should normally submit assessments and/or examinations done in co-operation with other students only when the cooperation is done with the full knowledge and permission of the lecturer concerned. Without this permission, submitting assessments and/or examinations which are the product of collaboration with other students may be considered to be academic misconduct.

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, or that any other academic misconduct has taken place. In order to avoid academic misconduct in the context of collaboration and group work, it is particularly important to ensure that each student appropriately attributes work that is not their own. Should a module coordinator

suspect academic misconduct in a group assignment, the procedure in cases of suspected academic misconduct must be followed for each student.

[Avoiding Academic Misconduct](#)

Students should ensure the integrity of their work by seeking advice from their module coordinator or supervisor on avoiding academic misconduct. All schools and departments must include, in their handbooks or other literature given to students, guidelines on the appropriate methodology for the kind of work that students will be expected to undertake. In addition, a general set of guidelines for students on avoiding academic misconduct is available at libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity

For further information including details of the procedure to be followed in case of suspected plagiarism, please refer to Section 1, 'Academic Integrity' (pages 30 & 31) of the Graduate Studies Academic Calendar: www.tcd.ie/calendar/graduate-studies-higher-degrees/complete-part-III.pdf

2.2 Procedures regarding Dignity and Respect Matters

The School of Social Sciences and Philosophy is committed to fostering a learning environment that upholds principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion. We strive to ensure that all students and staff can pursue their academic and professional goals without fear of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or any form of mistreatment.

Recognizing the adverse impact harassment can have on individuals' performance, morale, confidence, health, and learning, the School seeks to create a culture where such behavior is unequivocally condemned. Our goal is to encourage an atmosphere in which individuals can address harassment concerns without fear of ridicule or retaliation.

Trinity Dignity and Respect Policy serves as a guiding framework for addressing any matters related to dignity and respect. This policy outlines the resources and support available to both students and staff when facing issues related to harassment or discrimination.

Should any student encounter issues related to dignity and respect, as outlined above, we strongly urge them to immediately reach out for support from the designated contact person, who will provide guidance and support in accordance with the Dignity and Respect Policy: <https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/pdf/dignity-and-respect.pdf>

MSc International Politics Course Director: Noah Buckley, buckleno@tcd.ie

Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate): Tara Mitchell, mitchet@tcd.ie

3. TEACHING AND LEARNING

3.1. Programme 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.

Full-time students are required to take POP88041/POP88051 MSc Research Design, POP88061/POP88071 International Politics and POP88081/POP88091 International Conflict in Michaelmas term. For these compulsory modules, the cohort will be split into two groups (A and B) to enable the classes to be conducted as seminars, something which would not be possible for the full group. Students should consult their timetables on my.tcd.ie to find out which group they are assigned to, and when their classes will meet.

In Hilary term, full-time students are required to take POP88164 Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods and to choose two optional 5 ECTS modules for the first half of Hilary term and two optional 5 ECTS modules for the second half of Hilary term.

In first year, part-time students are required to take POP88061/POP88071 International Politics and POP88041/POP88051 Research Design in Michaelmas term and POP88164 Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods and two optional 5 ECTS modules in Hilary term. In second year, part-time students are required to take POP88081/POP88091 International Conflict in Michaelmas term and to choose two optional 5 ECTS modules in Hilary term. The dissertation in Trinity term counts for the full 30 ECTS.

The final MSc 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 MSc (or Postgraduate Diploma – see section 3.8 below) is a [level nine QQI – NFQ](#) qualification.

3.2. 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.

Within postgraduate courses, 1 credit represents 25 hours estimated postgraduate student input, so a 10-credit module will be designed to require 250 hours of postgraduate 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.

The core compulsory full-term modules are as follows:

Module Code	Module Title	Term	Weighting
POP88041/POP88051	MSc Research Design	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
POP88061/POP88071	International Politics	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
POP88081/POP88091	International Conflict	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
POP88164	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods	Hilary	10 ECTS
POP88200	Dissertation	Trinity	30 ECTS

3.3. Module Descriptors & Compulsory Reading Lists

The School reserves the right to amend the list of available modules and, in particular to withdraw and add modules. Timetabling may restrict the availability of modules to individual students.

Module descriptors and timetables will be available on the Departmental website shortly before the start of each term: https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/programmes/postgraduate/msc-international-politics/course-content/

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.

3.5.1. 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.

3.5.2. Late Work

All late work, unless excused in advance by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate, 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.

3.5.3. 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>."

See above for more information on plagiarism policy as laid out by the Department and College.

3.6. Attendance Requirements

Modules on this programme are delivered in-person and are not recorded. Regular and consistent attendance at all module seminars and tutorials is required of all MSc students.

Authorised absences should be requested in advance from the relevant instructor, who should be provided with medical or other documentation as appropriate. Students who fail to attend without obtaining authorisation may receive a failing grade for that module, which may prevent them from obtaining an MSc or Postgraduate Diploma. To avoid misunderstanding, a failing grade may be awarded for a module in the case of non-attendance without prior authorisation even if the student would otherwise have passed the module on the basis of coursework submitted etc.

Please note that module instruction may take place at any time between 9am and 6pm Monday to Friday and that all full-time students are expected to be available throughout this period. Timetabling may be organized and indeed reorganized if necessary, at any time within this period. Such rearrangements are indeed sometimes necessary, particularly in the first weeks of module instruction.

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
- Unconsonable 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. Trinity College does not routinely offer opportunities to achieve extra credit in modules. Students are encouraged to alert their module lecturers in the event that they are unable to complete an assignment on time and to request an extension where appropriate (module syllabuses will set out policies regarding extensions).

Grades and comments for module work should be returned to students in a prompt manner, and students should politely approach instructors for module grades if they have not been provided several weeks into the following term (e.g. several weeks into HT for MT grades, end 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	<p>The pass mark for the programme is 50%. To obtain an MSc, students must achieve <u>all</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a passing mark for the dissertation • an overall (ECTS-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	<p>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).</p>
Merit	<p>The Department may recommend that the MSc be awarded with the predication 'Merit' to students who achieve <u>both</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>A merit cannot be awarded where the candidate has failed any credit during the course.</p>
Distinction	<p>The Department may recommend that the MSc be awarded with the predication 'Distinction' to students who achieve <u>both</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>A distinction cannot be awarded where the candidate has failed any credit during the course.</p>

In the case where a student has obtained an uncondonable fail (a mark of less than 40%) for one (maximum) taught module, and if significant extenuating circumstances can be documented, the student may apply in writing to the MSc Director to submit an additional written assignment related to the materials covered by the failed module for a deadline before the Court of Examiners meeting. The opportunity to submit this additional assignment and the deadline for its submission are at the MSc Director's discretion.

If this material demonstrates sufficient student learning, then, on the recommendation of the MSc Director, the Court of Examiners may award a capped mark of 40% for this module. Please

note that this arrangement can only raise the student's mark in one taught module to 40%, it does not guarantee that the student will obtain an MSc and/or PG Diploma, as other criteria remain relevant. No such option is available where the student has obtained an uncondonable fail in more than one taught module, or where a student's dissertation has been marked as a fail, and in those cases the student will fail the MSc and/or PG Diploma as relevant. Regulations on repeating a Masters dissertation can be found at the following link: [section-III.pdf \(tcd.ie\)](#)

3.8. Dissertation

Students are required to submit a dissertation of a maximum of 10,000 words on a research question of their choice in the area relevant to their degree programme. This word count is inclusive of all aspects of the dissertation except for the bibliography. The word count thus includes the title page, abstract, tables, any appendices (if necessary) and any other words submitted as part of the dissertation. Only the final dissertation is graded, though students are expected to meet specific milestones while they are working towards producing the paper (more on this below).

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 should consult with the Course Director.

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 following:

- 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 are advised to think about the dissertation as writing a paper for an international peer-reviewed political science journal. A common format for your dissertation, and of course for journal articles, is the following:

- An introduction that states the research question and emphasises its social and scientific relevance.
- A theory section that discusses the relevant, sometimes competing, explanations of the phenomenon being examined. The theory section often presents specific expectations to be tested in the study.
- A research design section that justifies the selection of cases, choice of analytic method and any measurement decisions.
- An analysis section that presents the empirical findings and procedure through which these were derived.
- A conclusion that draws out the implications of the findings for the theories examined and for our broader understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Further details will be provided when students begin their dissertation work. Completed dissertations should be submitted online through Turnitin. Instructions about how to do this will be provided closer to the submission date.

3.8.1. Supervision

By December 11th, students will submit a **dissertation topic** to the Course Director, through Turnitin.com. This will consist of a brief description (of 150-200 words) of the proposed area that you will explore in your dissertation. This description may be vague, or it may be more specific (particularly if students are building on the proposal completed as part of the Research Design module), but it will be helpful if at this stage some consideration has been given to the methodology that might be used (qualitative, quantitative, theoretical). Students are also encouraged to include a brief literature review of 3-5 articles or books in the area, summarised in research design terms (i.e., dependent variable, key independent variable, and approach to testing the argument).

This dissertation topic will be used by the Course Director to assign students to a supervisor. Where possible, students will be allocated to a supervisor whose research and/or teaching interests align with the proposed topic; however all supervisors are experienced in guiding students through the process of developing a research project. Supervisors and students will meet regularly over the course of Hilary Term, and up until the end of supervision (May 24th).

While supervisors will provide guidance, give feedback, and discuss progress with their supervisees, it is important to note that the dissertation is an independent piece of work which is being conducted by the student; with students taking decisions in respect of their project (regarding the methodology, data analysis, framing etc.). It is expected that students will set aside time weekly to work on their projects, and that they will progress their ideas in between supervision meetings.

3.8.2. Dissertation proposal

The first half of Hilary Term will be spent narrowing down the area chosen by students to a topic that is feasible to investigate as part of an MSc dissertation. Students will submit a **dissertation proposal** on Turnitin.com by March 11th. This will be reviewed by their supervisor and the MSc Director, and will consist of 250-500 words and will cover the following:

- 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.).

While it is normal to continue to refine the project after this date (e.g., in the event that the proposed data is not accessible), students should consider treat this deadline as a milestone after which substantial changes to their topic or research question are discouraged. The proposals will be assessed by the Course Director and the supervisor with students being alerted to concerns that must be addressed going forwards. Where the proposal has received approval to proceed from the supervisor and Course Director, students who plan to use interviews or similar processes for their dissertation research should at this stage start the process of obtaining ethical approval to engage in such data collection (see below).

3.8.3. Research Ethics

It is important to be aware of the need for all students on the Programme to comply with the School's research ethics policy. Full details of this policy can be found at <http://www.tcd.ie/ssp/research/ethics/>.

The most consequential aspect of the policy is that if you are planning to collect data from human subjects (through observe, interview, opinion poll, experiment etc.), 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. In addition, **no student should submit an application for ethical approval without having first spoken with their supervisor.**

All ethics approval requests must be submitted by 1 May at the latest; since data collection cannot commence until ethical approval has been granted, it is recommended that applications be submitted before this deadline. It will not be possible to submit requests for ethics approvals after 1 May or during the summer.

3.8.4. Dissertation seminar

Instruction finishes on April 12th. However, students should be aware that they must be present for a dissertation seminar during Trinity Term, at which they will present their work in progress.

The dissertation seminar will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for the first several weeks of Trinity Term.

At each seminar, there will be a small number of student presentations, each of which will be followed by comments from a student discussant plus general discussion from the audience (the entire class, plus module instructors).

All students will serve as both presenter and discussant at the seminars and are also expected to attend in order to give feedback to their fellow classmates. These seminars not only represent an invaluable forum to get feedback from a wide audience, but also to get ideas from watching the other presentations about how to approach a particular project. **The most successful dissertations are generally produced by students who have fully engaged with these seminars, both by providing feedback to and by receiving it from their classmates.**

Further information about the seminars, as well as presenter and discussant assignments will be circulated at the end of Hilary Term.

3.8.5. End of Supervision

Supervision ends on May 24th, with students expected to work on their dissertations independently over the rest of the summer prior to submission in August. Students are strongly encouraged to produce and submit a rough draft of their dissertation to their supervisor prior to the end of supervision.

This draft will necessarily be short, very preliminary, and may not contain any empirical results. However, students are encouraged to produce a paper that consists of a rough literature review, methodology, results section. This will enable supervisors to provide concrete feedback on existing direction of the project, and to highlight areas that need greater consideration.

Students are expected to be in Dublin, attending College, both for the dissertation seminars (until May 2nd) and until the end of supervision (May 24th). Where students wish to leave Dublin after the dissertation seminars end but before the end of supervision, they will have to approach their supervisor to request that arrangements be put in place to continue supervision online. Such arrangements are dependent on the supervisor's willingness to agree to the request. Students should be aware that all aspects of the programme, including supervision, are delivered on Irish Standard Time. Supervisors will not be available to meet outside of normal working hours to accommodate supervisees who have travelled to different time zones.

3.9. External Examiner

Dr Stéphane Baele.

3.10. Progression Regulations

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

3.11. Student Feedback and Module 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.

4. STUDENT WELFARE

4.1. Class Representatives

At the start of the semester, the Course Director will arrange for the election of two class representatives. These representatives will serve as points of contact for students enrolled in the class and will be able to bring issues that affect the group to the attention of the Course Director. The Course Director will also consult with the class reps throughout the year about the progress of the cohort and to solicit informal feedback on the programme.

4.2. Supports for Students

There are a range of supports available to postgraduates studying at Trinity College. We list some important ones below, but students are encouraged to seek out more of what Trinity has to offer by consulting its website.

The Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS), offers free, independent, and confidential support, guidance and advocacy to registered postgraduate students. It can be accessed online at: <https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/>. PAS provide support on any matter that may impact upon a postgraduate's time at Trinity.

Some of the most common issues students come to PAS to discuss include study-related stress or worry; concerns about academic progress; supervisor-relationship concerns; extensions and going off-books; queries regarding regulations and academic appeals; bullying; plagiarism and disciplinary cases, financial assistance.

Postgraduate students 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 an online step-by-step guide which can be found here: <https://www.tcd.ie/disability/current/RAApplication.php> 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/>.

Where students have been provided by Disability Services with a LENS report, they may draw this to the attention of their instructor or dissertation supervisor when making a request for an accommodation.

Student Learning and Development offers a range of supports to postgraduate students who are navigating the transition from directed to more self-directed learning. The full range their services can be found on their site: <https://student-learning.tcd.ie/postgraduate/>.

For students who are applying for jobs or getting ready to do so, Trinity's Career Service (<https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/>) offers a wide range of supports to our current and former students. The Department will arrange an information session with a representative of the Service to help start the conversation around next steps after completing this programme.

Finally, the Health Service (<https://www.tcd.ie/collegehealth/>) and the Student Counselling Service (https://www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/) help to support the wellbeing of our students during their time at Trinity.