Foundation Scholarship Examinations 2022-23

Examination Papers set by Trinity College Dublin’s Political Science Department

Guidance for Students

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Introduction

The Foundation Scholarship examinations provided by the Political Science department have changed in 2020-21 due to the curriculum changes resulting from the Trinity Education Project (TEP). These changes resulted in political science offering five examinations, in place of the two examinations that were offered in 2016-17 through 2019-20. These differences have been retained this year.

The number and combination of papers that you should take depends on your programme plus the pathway that you are taking. There are mandatory papers for different programmes and pathways plus optional choices. The details can be found in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit Profile in Political Science in Senior Fresh</th>
<th>No. of SF credits taken in Political Science by end of Semester 1</th>
<th>Number of papers taken in Political Science</th>
<th>Papers to be taken (M= mandatory, O= optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 SF credits (20 by end Sem 1)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3 M</td>
<td>O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF credits only</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1 M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 SF credits (20 by end Sem 1)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 M</td>
<td>O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 SF credits (10 by end Sem 1)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 M</td>
<td>O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 SF credits (10 by end Sem 1)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 M</td>
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</tbody>
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Please note that the Political Science Department cannot provide you with any guidance on what examinations you should take beyond the information provided in this table.

Each examination is timed at two hours fifteen minutes. Please note that no special tutorials will be provided by academic staff relating to any of these examinations. Sample questions for each examination can be found below. Some “Frequently Asked Questions” are also answered on the Political Science Department’s website.

We wish all students good luck with the Foundation Scholarship examinations.
POLITICAL SCIENCE 1

The examination “Political Science 1” requires students to write an essay on a topic related to one of the broad areas of political science covered in Senior Fresh (SF) modules—international relations, comparative politics, or history of political thought—but addressing materials that are outside the Michaelmas Term SF module syllabi. The topics can be found below, along with an additional reading list covering each topic. Students will therefore focus on one of these topics in advance and write one essay on that topic in a two-and-a-quarter-hour examination. The exam will contain only one essay question for each of the three topics for which reading lists have been provided. Students may, at their discretion, prepare more than one topic in advance, but they will answer only one essay question in the examination. To repeat: students must answer one question for this examination—the international relations question, the comparative politics question, or the history of political thought question—and not more than one.

When writing essays for “Political Science 1”, students are expected to know relevant materials and concepts from the related SF modules, but they must demonstrate engagement with, and mastery of, the materials contained on these additional reading lists. Similarly, students may choose to do additional reading, beyond the materials contained in the provided reading lists, on these political science topics, but, again, students are expected primarily and above all to demonstrate engagement with and mastery of the materials contained on these reading lists. There is no requirement to do any additional outside readings and indeed these reading lists are already extensive and demanding. Indeed, given that these reading lists are extensive, students may wish to select and prioritize their readings from among the readings set out. If a student wishes to refer to additional readings outside these reading lists (or materials contained on module syllabuses), the student is recommended to provide a reference, indicating author, title, and year of publication if possible.

Reading lists for these topics this year are contained in this document, as well as sample questions. Students, however, are advised to prepare broadly for a variety of possible questions addressing this material.

Readings for these topics will be made available online—through the library, through the Blackboard pages of the relevant modules, or through other means.
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Eleonora La Spada

Political Science 1

International Relations

Topic: Inter-state War and Civil War in IR

Since the end of the Cold War, civil war have become a more prominent interest in international politics. The demarcations between “interstate war” and “civil war” have become increasingly blurred. A large share of literature on political violence and conflict studies has previously tended to separately study interstate conflict and civil war, treating the two as independent – if not mutually exclusive – phenomena. During the last decades a large body of literature has relaxed this assumption (e.g., Gelditsch et al. 2008). Several scholars have argued that International Relations theories have enriched research in civil war studies in several ways. This question will deal with a rigorous discussion - and evaluation - about a theoretical dialogue and integration between the these two fields of research.

Readings:


**Sample Question:**

- Civil wars have become a subject of major interest for IR scholars. Explore and evaluate how international relations theories developed in the context of interstate relations can give -or have given - significant insight to explain civil war onset, dynamics, and/or termination.
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Peter Stone

Topic: The Political Theory of Joseph Schumpeter

The Athenian democrats were much concerned with the relationship between political elites and ordinary citizens. This relationship continued to animate political scientists in the modern era, who were further concerned with the difference between democracy on the city-state level and democracy in large-scale nation-states. The modern debate on this topic produced, among other positions, the theory of democratic elitism, which stresses the inevitable centrality of political elites in any well-functioning political system, even a nominally democratic one. One of the foremost democratic elitists was Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950), a political economist much concerned with the twin collapse of both democracy and capitalism in Europe during the Great Depression of the 1930s. He offered his analysis of the problem in his book *Capitalism, Socialism & Democracy*, first published in 1942. This question will deal with the political theory of Joseph Schumpeter, with a focus upon his democratic elitism.

Readings:

There is one primary reading for this question:


The following secondary readings are also assigned:


**Sample Question:**

- What is the difference between economic and political competition for Schumpeter?
COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Lisa Keenan

Topic: capturing public opinion

This year’s scholarship general question for Comparative Politics A will focus on the topic of public opinion. Specifically, it is interested in thinking about how to measure public opinion through the use of various kinds of opinion polls.

Issues to consider include the following:

- How do we know what the public thinks?
- What are some considerations when carrying out a poll?
- How can we interpret the polls when respondents may refuse to answer?

Readings:


Sample question:

- Is it fair to say that political polling is in crisis?
POLITICAL SCIENCE 2

The examination “Political Science 2” can only be taken by students not enrolled in any SF political science module. It requires students to answer two general questions about the nature of politics. There will be a total of five questions on the exam. None of the questions will require knowledge of any SF political science module.

A reading list for this examination, as well as sample questions, can be found below. Students, however, are advised to prepare broadly for a variety of possible questions addressing this material.

Students must answer two questions out of the five offered. All questions deal with the general nature of politics, with a particular focus on the question of how best to approach the study of politics.

Readings:

The following readings make good introductions to the topic:


After reading the introductory readings, students should proceed to the following:


**Sample questions:**

1. Harold Lasswell defined politics as “Who gets what, when, and how.” Is this an adequate definition of politics?
2. Is political science really a science?
POLITICAL SCIENCE 3

The examination “Political Science 3” can only be taken by students enrolled in POU22011 (History of Political Thought A). It requires students to answer two questions relating to this module. There will be a total of five questions on the exam. There are no additional readings associated with this examination. A mastery of the materials taught in those lectures and contained on those syllabi (including of course any optional or additional reading suggestions) up to the end of the Michaelmas Term is sufficient preparation.

Students must answer two questions out of the five offered. All questions deal with material covered in POU22011 (History of Political Thought A).

Sample questions:

1. Why did Aristotle believe that some people were “slaves by nature?”
2. Examine the relationship between the Plato’s metaphysical theory of forms and his political elitism.
POLITICAL SCIENCE 4

The examination “Political Science 4” can only be taken by students enrolled in POU22031 (Comparative Politics A). It requires students to answer two questions relating to this module. There will be a total of five questions on the exam. There are no additional readings associated with this examination. A mastery of the materials taught in those lectures and contained on those syllabi (including of course any optional or additional reading suggestions) up to the end of the Michaelmas Term is sufficient preparation.

Students must answer two questions out of the five offered. All questions deal with material covered in POU22031 (Comparative Politics A).

Sample questions:

1. “Unelected judges have no right to overrule democratically elected politicians”. Discuss with reference to at least two countries.
2. Discuss the thesis that social class is no longer the dominant cleavage in European politics.
POLITICAL SCIENCE 5

The examination “Political Science 5” can only be taken by students enrolled in POU22021 (International Relations A). It requires students to answer two questions relating to this module. There will be a total of five questions on the exam. There are no additional readings associated with this examination. A mastery of the materials taught in those lectures and contained on those syllabi (including of course any optional or additional reading suggestions) up to the end of the Michaelmas Term is sufficient preparation.

Students must answer two questions out of the five offered. All questions deal with material covered in POU22021 (International Relations A).

Sample questions:

1. Is Keohane’s explanation of international cooperation the same as Axelrod’s explanation of cooperation between egoists? Answer drawing on readings and IR theory.
2. Under what circumstances do domestic lobby groups matter in international politics? Answer drawing on readings and IR theory.