

Foundation Scholarship Examinations 2025-26

**Examination Papers set by Trinity College Dublin's Political
Science Department**

Guidance for Students

Jesse Dillon Savage dillonsj@tcd.ie

Introduction

The Foundation Scholarship examinations provided by the Political Science department 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, with the addition of one further paper, Introduction to Political Science Research, which is a new SF module offered by the department for the first time in 2024-25, meaning there are now a total of six examinations offered by the department.

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.

Paper description									
Paper 1: Political Science General Paper 1									
Paper 2: Political Science General Paper 2									
Paper 3: Political Science History of Political Thought Paper									
Paper 4: Political Science Comparative Politics Paper									
Paper 5: Political Science International Relations Paper									
Paper 6: Political Science Introduction to Political Science Research Paper									

Credit Profile in Political Science in Senior Fresh	No. of SF credits taken in Political Science by end of Semester 1	Number of papers taken in Political Science	Papers to be taken (M = mandatory, O = optional)					
			Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5	Paper 6
40 SF credits (20 by end Sem 1)	20	3	M		O	O	O	O
JF credits only	n/a	1		M				
40 SF credits (20 by end Sem 1)	20	2	M		O	O	O	O
20 SF credits (10 by end Sem 1)	10	2	M		O	O	O	O
20 SF credits (10 by end Sem 1)	10	1	M					

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 Academic Registry’s website here: <https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/exams/scholarship/>.

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, history of political thought or introduction to political science research—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 four 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, the history of political thought question, or the introduction to political science research 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

William Phelan

Topic: The Politics of International Law – War and War Crimes etc

The question will deal with the development and effectiveness of international law relating to war and war crimes/crimes against humanity (etc) with a particular focus on the readings below. It will not deal with strictly legal-doctrinal analysis of international law on war and war crimes etc of the sort sometimes produced by professional lawyers.

Readings:

Please note that where a book is recommended, an extract will be placed on Blackboard for convenience, but students preparing for the Foundation Scholarship examination are invited to read the books as a whole.

John Q Barrett The Nuremberg Trials : A Summary Introduction [on Blackboard]

Gary Bass - "Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals" Chapter on Nuremberg Trials on Blackboard.

D Bosco, *Rough Justice: The International Criminal Court in a World of Power Politics* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014) . Extract on Blackboard.

John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II, (Norton, 2000) extract on Blackboard.

Gary Bass, Judgment at Tokyo: World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia (Knopf, 2023), *extracts on Blackboard*.

Norbert Frei Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration (Columbia, 2002), extract on Blackboard.

F. Hirsch "Soviet Judgment at Nuremberg: A New History of the International Military Tribunal After World War II" (Oxford 2020) extract on Blackboard.

IV Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War* (Cornell, Ithaca, NY 2014) chapter on violation of Belgian neutrality on Blackboard.

Jo, Hyeran and Beth Simmons (2016). 'Can the International Criminal Court Deter Atrocity?' *International Organization* 70: 443-475.

Mark Lewis "The Birth of the New Justice: The Internationalization of Crime and Punishment 1919-1950" pp. 14-26 on Blackboard.

Samuel Moyn Humane : How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War (Verso, 2021), extract on Blackboard

Judith Shklar Legalism (Harvard University Press, 1964), extract on Blackboard
René Staedtler, 2020 *THE PRICE OF RECONCILIATION: WEST GERMANY, FRANCE AND THE ARC OF POSTWAR JUSTICE FOR THE CRIMES OF NAZI GERMANY, 1944-1963* (2020 PhD Dissertation) Extract on Blackboard (nb full dissertation will not be made available).

Sandra Wilson Why were there no war crimes trials for the Korean War? *Journal of Global History* (2021), 16: 2, 185–206

Willis, James F. (2014). *Prologue to Nuremberg: The Politics and Diplomacy of Punishing War Criminals of the First World War*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press [extract on Blackboard]

Giacomo Chiozza & Joseph M. Grieco Reluctant ratifiers: The crime of aggression at the International Criminal Court, *International Interactions* (2025)

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03050629.2025.2556327>

Sample Question :

1. Why do states pursue the punishment of acts of aggressive war, war crimes and crimes against humanity in international politics?

HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Peter Stone

Topic: Militant Democracy

The Athenian democracy employed a variety of instruments to protect itself from antidemocratic forces (notably disgruntled aristocrats) who could potentially subvert the democracy from within. *Ostracism*, a procedure employed in the 5th century BCE whereby the Athenians could exile a citizen for ten years by popular vote, is often regarded as one such instrument. In modern democracy, the term *militant democracy* is employed to describe practices like this, especially those that restricted or violated ordinary democratic rights (such as the rights to vote or run for office). The term is widely associated with Karl Loewenstein, an exile from Nazi Germany who published a seminal pair of papers on the topic in 1937. Democratic theorists since Loewenstein have debated the appropriateness of such measures, exploring whether, and to what extent, a democracy can protect itself using seemingly antidemocratic measures.

The History of Political Thought question for the Political Science 1 paper this year will deal with the theory of militant democracy. What sort of measures does a democracy have available to protect itself? And how many of these measures are democratic? Are such measures anathema to modern liberal democracies, even if they were palatable in ancient Athens? Or can such Athenian practices as ostracism inform democratic self-defense today?

Readings:

Note: The Sajó book chapters are available on the module's Blackboard page. The other books are on reserve at the library. All other readings below are available online.

Kirshner, Alexander S. 2014. *A Theory of Militant Democracy: The Ethics of Combatting Political Extremism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kirshner, Alexander S. 2016. "Legitimate Opposition, Ostracism, and the Law of Democracy in Ancient Athens." *Journal of Politics* 76 (4): 1094-1106.

Loewenstein, Karl. 1937a. "Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights, I." *American Political Science Review* 31 (3): 417-432.

Loewenstein, Karl. 1937b. "Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights, II." *American Political Science Review* 31 (4): 638-658.

Malkopoulou, Anthoula. 2016. "De-Presentation Rights as a Response to Extremism." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 19 (3): 301-319.

Malkopoulou Anthoula. 2017. "Ostracism and Democratic Self-Defense in Athens." *Constellations* 24 (4): 623-636.

Malkopoulou, Anthoula and Kirshner, Alexander, eds. 2019. *Militant Democracy and Its Critics: Populism, Parties, Extremism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Sajó, András, ed. 2004. *Militant Democracy*. Utrecht: Eleven International Publishing.

Stone, Peter and Malkopoulou, Anthoula. 2022. "Allotted Chambers as Defenders of Democracy." *Constellations* 29 (3): 296-309.

Sample Question:

Is militant democracy inherently illiberal?

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Dr Noah Buckley

Topic: Prosperity and Democracy

The maintenance of good institutions like democracy and achieving liberty and prosperity are closely linked. During the semester, we examined ways that political systems can fail to produce such outcomes—civil rights, democracy, broad-based prosperity—and ways that countries may be able to attain them. This question will deal with the complex ties between institutional quality and prosperity. Economic success may support the flourishing of democracy, though modern China challenges this conclusion. Democracy may help generate prosperity, but inequality and stagnation across the globe today brings this conclusion under question as well. Both well-established and more recent scholarship has much to say about how and why democracy and the political economy are connected. This question will ask you to try to cut through this labyrinth of theory and empirics to draw some conclusions about how they are, in fact, connected.

Readings:

Acemoglu D. and Robinson, A. (2006) *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Chapters 1 and 2.

Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*. Crown Books.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. *The narrow corridor: States, societies, and the fate of liberty*. Penguin UK, 2019.

Boix, C. and Stokes, S.C. (2003) 'Endogenous Democratization.' *World Politics*, 55(4), 517-549.

Bolt, Jutta, Leigh Gardner, Jennifer Kohler, Jack Paine, and James A. Robinson. *African political institutions and the impact of colonialism*. No. w30582. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2022.

Brownlee, Jason, and Kenny Miao. "Debate: Why Democracies Survive". *Journal of Democracy* 33, no. 4 (October 2022): 133–49.

Bunce, V. and Wolchik, S. (2011) *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Collier, P. (2017). "Culture, Politics, and Economic Development." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20, 111-125.

Geddes, B., (2007) 'What Causes Democratization?' Boix, C. and Stokes, S.C. eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) Ch. 14.

Gerring, J., Thacker, S. C., & Alfaro, R. (2012). "Democracy and human development." *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1), 1-17.

Hellmeier, S. and Bernhard, M. (2023). 'Regime Transformation From Below: Mobilization for Democracy and Autocracy From 1900 to 2021.' *Comparative Political Studies*, 56(12), 1858-1890.

Huntington, S.P. (1993) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press).

Inglehart, Ronald, and Christian Welzel. "Changing mass priorities: The link between modernization and democracy." *Perspectives on politics* 8, no. 2 (2010): 551-567.

Levitsky, S. and Way, L. (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism. Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Lust, E. (2011) 'Missing the Third Wave: Islam, Institutions, and Democracy in the Middle East.' *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 46, 163–190.

Mares, Isabela, and Lauren Young. 2016. "Buying, Expropriating, and Stealing Votes." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 267-88.

Przeworski, A. et al. (2000) *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and well-being in the World. 1950-1990* (Cambridge: CUP) Esp. Ch 2.

Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Riedl, R. et al. (2020) 'Authoritarian-Led Democratization.' *Annual Review of Political Science* 23: 315-332.

Robinson, J.A. (2006) 'Economic Development and Democracy.' *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9, 503-527.

Ross, Michael. L. 2015. "What have we learned about the resource curse?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 239-259.

Truex, Rory. "The Myth of the Democratic Advantage." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 52, no. 3 (2017): 261-277.

Sample Question:

Can democracy flourish in the face of economic inequality and stagnation?

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Dr Redmond Scales

Topic: **Mixed Methods Research Designs**

The question will deal with debates around the use of mixed methods research designs in social science research. Mixed methods research designs have been a prominent feature within political and social science research. Arguments for the use of mixed methods designs have stated their importance for increasing the validity of our research. While arguments against that the use of mixed methods approaches are 'insufficiently rigorous' compared to carrying out a purely quantitative or qualitative research designs.

Readings:

- Álvarez, M.M., Borghi, J., Acharya, A. and Vassall, A., 2016. Is Development Assistance for Health fungible? Findings from a mixed methods case study in Tanzania. *Social Science & Medicine*, 159, pp.161-169.
- Bader, J. and Faust, J., 2014. Foreign aid, democratization, and autocratic survival. *International Studies Review*, 16(4), pp.575-595.
- Berg-Schlosser, D., 2012. *Mixed methods in comparative politics: Principles and applications*. Springer.
- Bergman, M.M., 2011. The good, the bad, and the ugly in mixed methods research and design. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 5(4), pp.271-275.
- Brown, K. and Mondon, A., 2021. Populism, the media, and the mainstreaming of the far right: The Guardian's coverage of populism as a case study. *Politics*, 41(3), pp.279-295.
- Bryman, A., 2007. Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(1), pp.8-22.
- Bryman, A., 2008. Why do researchers integrate/combine/mesh/blend/mix/merge/fuse quantitative and qualitative research. *Advances in mixed methods research*, 21(8), pp.87-100.
- Bryman, A., 2016. *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- Creswell, J.W. and Clark, V.L.P., 2017. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage publications.
- Creswell, J.W., 1999. Mixed-method research: Introduction and application. In *Handbook of educational policy* (pp. 455-472). Academic press.
- Creswell, J.W., Plano Clark, V.L., Gutmann, M.L. and Hanson, W.E., 2003. Advanced mixed methods research designs. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 209(240), pp.209-240.
- Johnson, R.B., Russo, F. and Schoonenboom, J., 2019. Causation in mixed methods research: The meeting of philosophy, science, and practice. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 13(2), pp.143-162.
- Kemper, E.A., Stringfield, S. and Teddlie, C., 2003. Mixed methods sampling strategies in social science research. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 12(2), pp.273-96.
- Knack, S., 2004. Does foreign aid promote democracy?. *International studies quarterly*, 48(1), pp.251-266.
- Lieberman, E.S., 2005. Nested analysis as a mixed-method strategy for comparative research. *American political science review*, 99(3), pp.435-452.
- Mahoney, J., 2010. After KKV: The new methodology of qualitative research. *World Politics*, 62(1), pp.120-147.

McKim, C.A., 2017. The value of mixed methods research: A mixed methods study. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 11(2), pp.202-222.

Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Leech, N.L., 2010. Generalization practices in qualitative research: A mixed methods case study. *Quality & Quantity*, 44(5), pp.881-892.

Parmelee, J.H., Perkins, S.C. and Sayre, J.J., 2007. "What About People Our Age?" Applying Qualitative and Quantitative Methods to Uncover How Political Ads Alienate College Students. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), pp.183-199.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. eds., 2010. *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. sage.

Thaler, K.M., 2017. Mixed methods research in the study of political and social violence and conflict. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 11(1), pp.59-76.

Sample question:

Can mixed method research designs help increase validity of ones findings?

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.

Ahmed, Amel, and Rudra Sil. 2012. “When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism—or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (4): 935–953.

Bates, Robert H. 1997. “Area Studies and the Discipline: A Useful Controversy?” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 30 (2): 166–169.

Bates, Robert H., Chalmers Johnson, and Ian Lustick. 1997. “Controversy in the Discipline: Area Studies and Comparative Politics.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30 (2): 166–179.

Blyth, Mark. 2006. “Great Punctuations: Prediction, Randomness, and the Evolution of Comparative Political Science.” *American Political Science Review* 100 (4): 493–498.

Blyth, Mark M., and Robin Varghese. 1999. “The State of the Discipline in American Political Science: Be Careful What You Wish For?” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 1 (3): 345–365.

Desch, Michael. 2015. “Technique Trumps Relevance: The Professionalization of Political Science and the Marginalization of Security Studies.” *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (2): 377–393.

Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2004. “A Perestroikan Straw Man Answers Back: David Laitin and Phronetic Political Science.” *Politics & Society* 32 (3): 389–416.

George, Alexander L. 1994. “The Two Cultures of Academia and Policy-Making: Bridging the Gap.” *Political Psychology*: 143–172.

George, Alexander L. 1997. “Knowledge for Statecraft: The Challenge for Political Science and History.” *International Security* 22 (1): 44–52.

Laitin, David D. 2003. “The Perestroikan Challenge to Social Science.” *Politics & Society* 31 (1): 163–184.

Laitin, David D. 2015. “A Tale of Two Eras: The Caucus and Perestroika.” *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (2): 420–422.

Levine, Daniel J., and David M. McCourt. 2018. “Why Does Pluralism Matter When We Study Politics? A View from Contemporary International Relations.” *Perspectives on Politics* 16 (1): 92–109.

Munck, Gerardo L., and Richard Snyder. 2007. “Debating the Direction of Comparative Politics: An Analysis of Leading Journals.” *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (1): 5–31.

Ward, Michael D. 2016. “Can We Predict Politics? Toward What End?” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 1 (1): 80–91.

Sample Question:

How have debates over methodology and relevance shaped the direction and identity of politic science as a field?

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. Ancient Athens was the birthplace of politics. To what extent do you agree with this statement?
2. Why did Plato oppose democracy in the Republic?

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 that syllabus (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. Why do some authoritarian regimes hold meaningful elections?
2. What is clientelism and how does it work?

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.

POLITICAL SCIENCE 6

The examination “**Political Science 6**” can only be taken by students enrolled in POU22040 (Introduction to Political Science Research). 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 POU22040 (Introduction to Political Science Research).

Sample questions:

1. What does it mean to be an ethical researcher in Political Science?
2. How should a piece of research in Political Science be evaluated?
3. “Political scientists cannot produce research that has both internal and ecological validity.” Evaluate this statement.