

The department's **Undergraduate Noticeboards** are situated one floor below the departmental office. Entering the department's building, you can reach them by taking the first lift as far as floor 3, then turning left. From 1 Foster Place, you can find them in the corridor opposite room 4.07.

On these noticeboards you will find timetables, tutorial lists, and other module-specific information.

## **DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

### **UNDERGRADUATE HANDBOOK**

This handbook contains:

- (i) information on lectures;
- (ii) information on seminars / tutorials;
- (iii) information on the presentation of written work;
- (iv) guidelines on writing essays;
- (v) advice on essay writing;
- (vi) information on examinations;
- (vii) criteria and marking scheme for degree classes;
- (viii) information on plagiarism and on how to ensure you avoid committing this serious offence;
- (ix) information on how to supply citations and references;
- (x) an overview of the Department of Political Science undergraduate programme.

## LECTURES

In the first three years of your degree, and in certain final-year modules, lectures are the main arena where the teaching process takes place. Lectures offer an overview of specific topics, provide guidance in fields where the literature may contain different interpretations and arguments, and highlight the kind of questions that academics work on. In effect, a lecture provides a 50-minute synthesis of a large amount of material that most students will not have the time to read and digest themselves. In addition, not everything has been said in print, and some information and ideas are best expressed verbally and visually.

The department does not teach by distance learning and hence, although attendance at lectures is not formally made compulsory, it is nonetheless expected and it is a valuable part of the learning experience. Do not expect that the material presented in lectures will be made available on the internet. Lectures are a significant resource for students – take full advantage of them!

## SEMINARS AND TUTORIALS

These terms are often used interchangeably and may also be referred to as ‘classes’. They differ from lectures in that whereas inevitably students are, for the most part, listening and taking notes at a lecture, in tutorials a small group discusses some topic arising out of the module. In most modules, tutorials meet fortnightly through the academic year. They are usually taken by a teaching assistant (TA) rather than by the lecturer, so that students get a different perspective on the module. Tutorials are not substitute lectures where students who did not attend a lecture can expect to be filled in on what they missed. Tutorials give students the opportunity to ask questions and put forward their views about the topic under discussion and to thrash out the issues. The tutorial moderator is not there to inform and instruct but, rather, to moderate what should be a lively discussion among students.

Tutorials work only if students do some preparation for them. That does not mean reading all of the recommended literature, but you do need to read something and think about the issues in advance so that you have some points to make. Tutorials work only if students come along prepared to contribute; clearly, if all members of a group take out their notepads at the start and prepare to take down the points made by the tutorial moderator or by other students, they will not work. That approach is discouraged not only because it entails trying to ‘piggyback’ or ‘free-ride’ on the work of others, but also for the simple reason that the more you put into a tutorial the more you will get out of it. As well as learning something about the topic under discussion, students learn about how to make points and how to participate constructively in the small-group setting in which they may well spend time operating in their post-graduation careers. Not every student is comfortable putting forward their thoughts and opinions in front of a group, but this is likely to be something you will do in your post-university career and it gets easier with experience.

At tutorials, attendance is expected and is recorded. Non-attendance at tutorials may be reported to your tutor as it often indicates that a student is having difficulties and is becoming disengaged from his or her studies. In some modules, marks are deducted for non-attendance in order to encourage students to participate fully in the module.

## WRITTEN WORK

For most modules you are required to present written work during the year, as detailed on the individual module handouts. This work normally counts for a specified percentage of the final mark, and unsubmitted work obviously receives a mark of zero, so students who do not submit the required number of essays by the appropriate dates will automatically forfeit a percentage of their result. Please read the notes below carefully, and observe them when preparing your essays. Note that the preparation and submission of coursework is not simply a method of gaining ‘points’: it is part of the learning process, through which you acquire mental skills that will be of value in your future careers. A great deal of time will be spent on evaluating your coursework, and you will be given extensive comments, from which you should try to learn how to do (even) better next time.

**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.**

### Notes on the Presentation of Written Work

If you observe the following points, you will be doing yourself a good turn, by complying with the rules and conventions that govern scholarly work. Most comments apply equally to work for all your modules, so note them carefully.

1. Essays should be within the word limits set by individual lecturers: aim to produce a concise argument, not a great quantity of flowery prose. Don’t assume that the lecturer won’t mind if you exceed the word limit by 5%, 10% ...; stick to the specified limit.
2. Written work should be TYPED, with double or one-and-a-half SPACING and AMPLE MARGINS (see below).
3. LEAVE A MARGIN of at least ONE INCH (ideally more) at the left-hand side (for the marker’s comments), and make sure the pages are NUMBERED.
4. LIST YOUR SOURCES at the end of your work. ACKNOWLEDGE ALL QUOTATIONS or other references to other people’s work, in the same way as a scholarly book or article does, to show when you have borrowed other people’s ideas or words (see below on how to ensure you do not commit the serious offence of PLAGIARISM).
5. All work must be submitted via turnitin.com, which among things acts as a plagiarism detector. Details of how to submit will be supplied for individual modules.

An essay **MUST** be your own work, even though based on that of other writers. **PLAGIARISM** – direct copying, from a book, an article, a web site or another student – **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**: it will lead to automatic failure and the matter will be reported to the student’s tutor and the dean of the faculty; severe penalties are likely to ensue, including possible exclusion from the exam or even the College, in accordance with College policy. **College takes a tough line against offenders.**

## GUIDELINES ON WRITING ESSAYS

The following is a guide on how to get the most out of writing essays. All stages are important – including the last one.

### **1 Understand the question**

Don't simply plunge in. STOP and THINK about what the question is getting at. Make sure you have understood the question and its implications.

### **2 Collect ideas**

YOUR ideas. THINK about the issues raised by the question. Read as much as you can (take advantage of the fact that TCD has one of the best university libraries in Europe), make notes, and arrange your ideas in such a way that you can organise them easily later. Ask yourself further questions about the topic so that you will know what points to look for in the reading. Then do the reading, making notes and asking further questions as they suggest themselves.

### **3 Organise your ideas: Plan**

Your aim is to present the ideas in a coherent argument that hangs together logically in (usually) about 1,500–2,000 words (depending on individual module specifications). So don't be afraid to SELECT and REJECT. Don't throw in every single point you have come across just because it is there in your notes. Part of the exercise is to train you to make judgements about your material – which is important and which is not? Material rejected for a particular essay is NOT a waste of effort.

### **4 Write a rough draft**

Get the ideas down according to your plan, not worrying too much at this stage about grammar and spelling. BUT do make sure

- a your facts are accurate
- b you know what you are trying to say
- c you say it.

It's a good idea to write an essay according to a three-step process: say what you're going to say; say it; say what you've said. This will involve writing an introductory paragraph outlining the approach you intend to take, and a concluding paragraph stating your conclusions.

Then leave it overnight. Don't try to produce an essay at one sitting.

### **5 Prepare the final draft**

Tidy up the rough draft altering the contents where necessary, correcting the spelling and grammar. When you are making use of material from books or articles, always give the source, by means of a citation/reference (see below). Make certain you are satisfied with your essay before you hand it in.

### **6 Learn from the essay**

When it is returned your essay will have comments written on it. Study these. Go over the essay while it is still fresh in your mind and identify how you might have done better, so that you will do better the next time.

## ADVICE ON ESSAY WRITING

Essays are an integral part of the teaching and learning process in this department, aimed at developing the skills of acquiring information, assessing it, making judgements about it in relation to the themes raised, and presenting arguments in a logical and coherent form.

### **In assessing your essays, those marking them will be looking for the following:**

- 1 the ability to identify the issues raised by the title of the essay;
- 2 the ability to select items of information relevant to those issues;
- 3 the organisation of those items into a logical and coherent argument, which reflects your considered views on the topic. The argument should be supported by relevant evidence, i.e. suitable factual detail and quotation, accurately presented;
- 4 evidence of wide and appropriate reading;
- 5 the ability to assess and to critically evaluate the material encountered in the sources consulted
- 6 scholarly presentation, i.e. clear and accurate use of English, legibility, accurate rendering and full acknowledgement of all quotation, bibliography;
- 7 the very best essays will display qualities of originality, not merely synthesising existing material but, having assimilated existing knowledge as embodied in the literature, offering your own fresh perspective on a question.

### **Low marks will usually be due to one or more of the following**

- 1 failure to answer the question, introduction of information or arguments not central or irrelevant to the questions raised by the title of the essay;
- 2 lack of understanding of the subject and concepts under discussion; confused arguments;
- 3 failure to plan, jumping from point to point and back again, repetition, 'telling the story' in simple descriptive style instead of picking out and analysing the key issues;
- 4 insufficient factual information, vagueness, or generalisations unsupported by evidence;
- 5 plagiarism, i.e. copying from elsewhere (a book, article, the internet etc) without acknowledgement or copying from another student. This will incur severe penalties (see further information below);
- 6 too great a reliance on a single source, resulting in a narrowness of analysis or interpretation; uncritical or passive regurgitation of material gleaned from sources;
- 7 poor communication. It is your job to communicate clearly to the reader what you want to say. If you leave the reader in doubt as to your meaning because of misuse of words, bad grammar, bad spelling or punctuation etc., then you have failed to communicate adequately.

## EXAMINATIONS

The great majority of Political Science modules are assessed by a combination of coursework and examinations, with the latter being the dominant component in determining the overall mark.

To answer examination questions well, you need a good degree of knowledge of the material: what was said in the lectures, what is in the relevant textbook chapter (if applicable), what points you discovered in the further reading you did.

However, knowledge alone does not determine the exam mark, and two people who know approximately the same amount might still get very different exam marks. The way you use your knowledge, the way you evaluate it, and the way you tailor it to the question are all important. Here are some points that are worth bearing in mind:

- (i) make sure that you are answering the question. Don't just churn out all you know on a topic; select those aspects of your knowledge that are relevant to answering the specific question, and make sure that your answer actually does address that question.
- (ii) don't just regurgitate lecture notes. Lecture notes are intended to be useful, but they do not come on tablets of stone. Learn to supplement them by additional reading, evaluate them, criticise them.
- (iii) don't adopt an uncritical attitude to the material you've read. If you encounter an argument X in a book by author A, you might present this as: 'X' – meaning, 'A says X, so X must be true'. Better is: 'A says X' – which shows that you are aware that X is merely a argument by A rather than an unquestionable truth. Better still: 'A says X but B says Y', showing that you are aware of different interpretations within the literature.. Best of all: 'A says X, B says Y, and for the following reasons my view is ...' Be aware that there are disagreements within the political science literature, and, especially as you move into the later years of the degree programme, that you're expected to know about these.
- (iv) make sure your exam answers are presented clearly. Write legibly, leave an empty line between paragraphs, start each question on a new page, etc.
- (v) fill in the cover page correctly. In the line 'Degree / Diploma', write the name of the degree course you're following: BESS, PPES, HistPol, LawPols, PolGeog, European Studies, SocSocPol, Visiting student, etc. Enter, in the column on the right-hand side of the page, the numbers of the questions you have answered. And fill in the boxes near the bottom of the page, making it clear how many answer books you're submitting and which number the current one is: 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.

**Criteria and marking scheme for degree classes in  
School of Social Sciences and Philosophy**

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**First class honors** **I** **70–100**

First class honors in the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy is divided into grade bands which represent excellent, outstanding and extraordinary performances.

*A first class answer demonstrates a comprehensive and accurate answer to the question, which exhibits a detailed knowledge of the relevant material as well as a broad base of knowledge. Theory and evidence will be well integrated and the selection of sources, ideas, methods or techniques will be well judged and appropriately organised to address the relevant issue or problem. It will demonstrate a high level of ability to evaluate and integrate information and ideas, to deal with knowledge in a critical way, and to reason and argue in a logical way.*

**70–76 EXCELLENT**

First class answers (excellent) demonstrate a number of the following criteria:

- comprehensiveness and accuracy;
- clarity of argument and quality of expression;
- excellent structure and organization;
- integration of a range of relevant materials;
- evidence of wide reading;
- critical evaluation;
- lacks errors of any significant kind;
- shows some original connections of concepts and theories;
- contains reasoned argument and comes to a logical conclusion.

This answer does not demonstrate outstanding performance in terms of independence and originality.

**77–84 OUTSTANDING**

In addition to the above criteria, an outstanding answer will show frequent original treatment of material. Work at this level shows independence of judgement, exhibits sound critical thinking. It will frequently demonstrate characteristics such as imagination, originality and creativity.

This answer does not demonstrate exceptional performance in terms of insight and contribution to new knowledge.

**85–100 EXTRAORDINARY**

This answer is of a standard far in excess of what is expected of an undergraduate student. It will show frequent originality of thought, a sophisticated insight into the subject and make new connections between pieces of evidence beyond those presented in lectures. It demonstrates an ability to apply learning to new situations and to solve problems.

What differentiates a first class piece of work from one awarded an upper second is a greater lucidity, a greater independence of judgement, a greater depth of insight and degree of originality, more evidence of an ability to integrate material, and evidence of a greater breadth of reading and research.

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**Second Class, First Division****II.1****60–69**

*An upper second class answer generally shows a sound understanding of both the basic principles and relevant details, supported by examples, which are demonstrably well understood, and which are presented in a coherent and logical fashion. The answer should be well presented, display some analytical ability and contain no major errors of omissions. Not necessarily excellent in any area.*

Upper second class answers cover a wider band of students. Such answers are clearly highly competent and typically possess the following qualities:

- accurate and well-informed;
- comprehensive;
- well-organised and structured;
- evidence of reading;
- a sound grasp of basic principles;
- understanding of the relevant details;
- succinct and cogent presentation; and
- evaluation of material, although these evaluations may be derivative.

One essential aspect of an upper second class answer is that it must have completely dealt with the question asked by the examiner. In questions:

- (i) all the major issues and most of the minor issues must have been identified;
- (ii) the application of basic principles must be accurate and comprehensive; and
- (iii) there should be a conclusion that weighs up the pros and cons of the arguments.

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**Second Class. Second Division**                      **II.2**                      **50–59**

*A substantially correct answer which shows an understanding of the basic principles.*

Lower second class answers display an acceptable level of competence, as indicated by the following qualities:

- generally accurate;
- an adequate answer to the question based largely on textbooks and lecture notes;
- clearly presentation; and
- no real development of arguments.

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**Third Class Honors**                      **III**                      **40–49**

*A basic understanding of the main issues if not necessarily coherently or correctly presented.*

Third class answers demonstrate some knowledge of understanding of the general area but a third class answer tends to be weak in the following ways:

- descriptive only;
- does not answer the question directly;
- misses key points of information and interpretation
- contains serious inaccuracies;
- sparse coverage of material; and
- assertions not supported by argument or evidence.

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**Fail**                      **F1**                      **30–39**

*Answers in the range usually contain some appropriate material (poorly organised) and some evidence that the student has attended lectures and done a bare minimum of reading. The characteristics of a fail grade include:*

- misunderstanding of basic material;
- failure to answer the question set;
- totally inadequate information; and
- incoherent presentation.

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**Bad Fail**                      **F2**                      **0–29**

Answers in this range contain virtually no appropriate material and indicate little understanding of basic concepts – or, in the worst cases, cannot be said to amount to a serious attempt.

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## PLAGIARISM

*Plagiarism* is an essentially dishonest activity and as such is a very serious offence for any member of the academic world, staff or student. Essentially, plagiarism consists of presenting someone else's work as your own. The crudest form of plagiarism is presenting a whole paper, or substantial sections of a paper, as if they were written by you when in fact they were written by someone else. The plagiarised source may be a piece of published work, the unpublished work of a student or academic, or something downloaded without attribution from the internet. Less extreme forms of plagiarism involve incorporating passages from the work of others in your own writing, without attributing these passages to those others. Even if you paraphrase the work of others and present it without attribution as your own, this is still plagiarism. In addition, copying another student's work, or enlisting someone else to write part or all of a piece of work on your behalf, constitutes plagiarism.

All essays must be submitted via the plagiarism detector [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) (specific details will be given with each module), which compares each essay with its entire database of published work and previous essays from all over the world. It will indicate a plagiarism issue if your essay significantly draws on anything already in its database. This includes previous essays written by yourself, so do not 'self-plagiarise' by 'using' a significant amount of the same essay twice in different modules without checking with the lecturer just how much use you can make of something you wrote previously on a similar topic.

Plagiarism is regarded and treated as a very serious offence within the Department of Political Science and within Trinity College as a whole. All students should complete the online tutorial on plagiarism. Full details of this and on College policy on plagiarism can be found on the College website at <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism>

Plagiarism can be avoided by following a few simple guidelines. The essential point to remember in this context is that we all, as students and academics, use and build on the work of others. There is nothing whatsoever to be ashamed of in doing this, but the key is that we do it in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement. When we use the work of others, therefore, either we quote their words directly and put these in quotation marks, or we paraphrase these. Either way, we provide an explicit citation of the work we are referring to, in the text, in a footnote, or both. To fail to do this is to risk being accused of plagiarism.

Gross cases of plagiarism, in which a paper presented is substantially the unacknowledged work of someone else, are of course beyond excuse and redemption. The occasional foolish or misguided student who attempts this is usually detected immediately because, quite apart from the role of plagiarism detection programs such as [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com), those who will be reading your coursework are very experienced at reading a wide range of work in their field and will sense very quickly that something is wrong.

More typical cases of plagiarism arise in the grey area between sloppy note taking and a misunderstanding of the point that using the work of others is perfectly appropriate if it is duly acknowledged. As they read the work of others, people often put direct quotations into their notes. Unless they are very careful about note taking, they can easily lose track of the distinction between what the author has said and how the reader has reacted to this. If people fail in their notes to put direct quotes in quotation marks or to record the precise source of all quotations and pieces of paraphrased argument taken from some source, and if they then transform sections of their notes into parts of a paper, the net result can be more or less inadvertent plagiarism. Despite the fact that it may arguably be inadvertent, this still constitutes plagiarism; it gives a very bad impression of the author and is typically detected immediately by the person receiving the piece of coursework, who knows the literature well.

It is very important, therefore, for students to get into the habit of taking professional notes on their reading, clearly noting the full sources of any quotation, either taken directly or paraphrased. It is impossible to be too scrupulous in recording the sources of your ideas. The more information you include when writing about them, the easier you will find it to return to them when, as will surely be the case, you need to do so. There's nothing more infuriating than to come across a brilliant quotation in your notes, only to discover that you simply can't use it because you haven't recorded a proper citation!

## CITATIONS AND REFERENCES

As outlined above, it is very important that you do not plagiarise when producing a piece of coursework, behaviour for which the penalties are severe.

It is essential that the source for your material is always clear to the reader. This does not apply only to direct quotes from a book or article – it applies to any point that you are taking direct from something that you have read. Even if you paraphrase the work of others and present it without attribution as your own, this would constitute plagiarism.

Thus you should be sure that

- (i) direct quotes should always be enclosed in quotation marks so that it is clear that you are not claiming to have written the phrases yourself;
- (ii) you always give the source of ideas and facts, including the precise page reference. The point of citing sources is that they can be checked, so a vague reference such as ‘Katz and Mair 2009’, ‘Keohane 1984’ or ‘Oatley 2012’ is not much use in that regard. Specify the page number(s) – not just for a direct quote, but for any point.
- (iii) you cite *your* sources, not your source’s sources. In other words, if you’re reading a book published in 2016 and it contains a quote from a book published in 1966, make it clear that you discovered the point in the 2016 book – don’t seek to give the impression that you consulted the 1966 book and found the quote yourself.

While the Department of Political Science does not impose a rigid style regarding the format of referencing, it is worth following the suggestions below.

You will find it easiest to use ‘Harvard-style’ referencing – that is to say, do not use footnotes to give citations but rather embed the reference in the text like this (Sorauf, 2003, p. 734) or (Bailey, 1999, pp. 13–14).

Then at the end of the essay you need to supply a list, in alphabetical order of author, of all the works that you have cited. Don’t list works that you haven’t referred to (the marker will not be impressed by a long list of works that you clearly haven’t consulted). This list of references needs to supply full details of the work in question.

For a book it must give name of author(s), name of book, place of publication, date of publication, and year of publication, like this:

Kessel, John H. 1968, *The Goldwater Coalition: Republican Strategies in 1964*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

For a chapter in a book it should supply all the details, like this:

Dehouse, Renaud, 2006. ‘European integration and the nation-state’, ch 3 in Martin Rhodes, Paul Heywood and Vincent Wright (eds), *Developments in West European Politics*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

For an article it must supply the name of author(s) and journal, the title of the article, the number and if possible part of the volume in which the article appeared, and the page numbers of the article, like this:

Jacobson, Gary C., 2015. ‘How do campaigns matter?’, *Annual Review of Political Science* 18:1, pp. 31–47.

The internet has a lot of useful information – BUT you should treat it with caution given that anyone with access to a computer can put unverified statements there. In particular, wikipedia, while it may be useful as a location of a potted overview of a topic, is NOT an authoritative source for anything and should not be relied on as a source for any academic work including module essays. The web is useful primarily as a means of gaining information about, say, political developments or political facts, from sources such as official sites. Information gleaned from the web should be referenced as with points taken from any other source, eg:

The Oireachtas has 21 committees in all (source: [http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/oireachtasbusiness/committees\\_list/#d.en.2547](http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/oireachtasbusiness/committees_list/#d.en.2547), accessed 18 September 2015).

## Overview of undergraduate programme

Political Science modules are open to students following a number of different programmes: principally History and Political Science (TR012), PPES (TR015), Law and Political Science (TR020), Political Science and Geography (TR029), and the Moderatorship in Economic and Social Studies (TR081).

Students following each of these programmes select modules from a range that is offered by the department each year. In the Freshman years (first and second year), these modules are general reviews of broad fields of study; in the Sophister years (third and fourth year) they tend to be more specialised. Modules in the first three years of the programmes are, characteristically, taught by lectures, supplemented by regular discussion tutorials; modules in the final year are, for the most part, taught mainly or entirely by weekly seminars in which students are required to be active participants. A detailed list of the modules that are available in the current academic year can be found elsewhere on this website.

Module choices made in one year affect the options available in later years, since programmes as a whole, and individual modules, may have prerequisites. For example, the option of taking single honors Political Science in final year is open only to those who have taken a certain number of Political Science modules in earlier years, including the JS module *Research Methods*. Full details of module and programme requirements can be found in the College Calendar at <http://www.tcd.ie/calendar>

**Junior Freshmen** (1st year students) take an introductory module in Political Science as one of a varied group of introductory modules; the aim of Introduction to Political Science is to introduce some of the main concepts in the analysis of politics as a particular form of human activity.

There are three Political Science modules in the **Senior Freshman** (second) year. These provide a broad overview of areas such as the major themes of political and social philosophy in the Western tradition, comparative politics, and international relations.

The range of choice and the scope for specialisation increases in the Sophister years. **Junior Sophister** (third year) modules are offered in a range of areas of the discipline. In this year, the module in *Research Methods* is compulsory for all students intending to graduate with a single honors Political Science degree.

In the **Senior Sophister** (fourth) year, modules are taught mainly in smaller groups, usually through seminars in which students are required to be active participants. The range of modules varies from year to year; occasionally modules are offered by advanced graduate students who have developed expertise in a particular area of Political Science.