

Contemporary Politics and Public Policy

7.1 Module Overview									
Module Number		Module Title	Contemporary Politics and Public Policy						
Stage of Principal Programme			1	Semester	2	Duration. <i>(Weeks F/T)</i>	12	ECTS	5
Mandatory / Elective (M/E)	M	Hours of Learner Effort / Week	2.3						
Analysis of required hours of learning effort									
Teaching and Learning Modalities					✓if relevant to this module	Approx. proportion of total (hours)			
Contact Hours									
In person face-to-face					✓	28			
Synchronous									
Indirect/Non-Contact Hours									
Asynchronous									
Work Based									
Other:									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> independent reading, engagement with VLE, research and preparation of assessments 					✓	97			
Total						125			

Pre-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Co-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	120
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.	
Role e.g., Tutor, Mentor, Lecturer, Research Supervisor, etc.	Qualifications & experience required
Lecturer	A minimum level 9 qualification in Politics/Sociology or closely cognate area
Tutor	A minimum level 9 qualification in Politics/Sociology or closely cognate area
	Staff - Learner Ratio X:Y
	1:120
	1:20

Assessment Techniques – percentage contribution				
Continuous Assessment	40%	Proctored Exam – in person	60%	Practical Skills Based
Project		Proctored Exam - online		Work Based
Capstone (Y/N)?	N	If Yes, describe		

7.2 Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)	
MIMLO	Related MIPLO #
On completion of this module a learner will be able to:	
1. Identify and explain some of the core concepts used in political analysis.	1
2. Contrast different political systems and forms of political power.	1

3. Understand the policymaking processes, and the relationship between civil society and the development of public policy.	1, 2
4. Demonstrate practical skills and competencies in analysing current affairs reviewing texts of political texts.	2, 3

7.3 Indicative Module Content, Organisation and Structure

This module has a dual focus – it introduces the study of politics and establishes a foundation for some of the main concepts and vocabulary of political science. The module provides an introductory guide to important themes and issues related to the study of politics, such as the state, regime types, and political change and behaviour. It also introduces learners to some of the study skills develops learners' skills in researching and analysing current affairs. The module will introduce learners to political and social science research methods and provide learners with a foundational knowledge of the theoretical dimensions of conducting research in the field of political and social sciences. A variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods, data sources and methods of data analysis are explored.

Learners will learn about the relationship between public policy, civil society and contemporary politics and explore the interplay between actors that shape and influence public policy in Ireland. The methodological nature of the Introduction to Contemporary Politics module provides learners with valuable analytical and research skills in preparation for progressing onto politics modules in Stage 2.

This module explores the way that public policy shapes our lives and the different forms that politics takes. A distinctive feature of this module is its applied nature, and emphasis on political and social change. As part of developing learner's skills in undertaking political and policy research, this module also focuses on building critical media literacy skills that facilitates learner's active engagement in current affairs in a cross-disciplinary manner.

This module provides the opportunity to develop learner's capacity for rigorous oral and written argument. Class discussion and the research assignment will foster a critical approach that will encourage learners to re-evaluate commonly accepted ideas, to consider alternative explanations for important social and political developments, and to support conclusions with carefully deployed evidence. Learners will have an opportunity to carry out research into political life, developing analytical and debating skills.

1. *Thinking about Politics*
2. *Foundational Concepts in Politics*
3. *Participation and Public Opinion*
4. *The State: Power and the Legitimation of Authority*
5. *Ideologies and the Political Spectrum*
6. *Gender and Politics.*
7. *Intersections and Implications for Contemporary politics and Public Policy – Critical Perspectives*
8. *Democracy and Democratic Government*
9. *Contemporary Public Policy*
10. *Civil Society, Interest Groups and the Media*
11. *Political Representation and Political Parties*
12. *Electoral Systems and Elections: Elections and Appointment of the Houses of the Oireachtas; The Northern Ireland Executive and the European Parliament*
13. *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills (Introduction to Quantitative and Qualitative Research; Methods of Collecting and Analysing Data)*

Relevant Case Studies on Current Affairs
Relevant Case Studies on Public Policy

7.4 Work-based learning and practice-placement (if applicable)

N/A

7.5 Specific module resources required (if applicable)

N/A

7.6 Application of programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies to this module

The module teaching and learning strategy is based on the core objectives of enabling learners to develop knowledge of policy processes and current affairs while strengthening oral, written and debating skills and competencies news media literacy. The module is also focused on the development of learner capacity to engage in critical evaluation and analysis in a political context.

Research Assignment

The Research Assignment asks learners to research choose three sources of information about a contemporary news topic (i.e. the Brexit Referendum) from news sources with different political orientations. Learners are asked to evaluate the sources with reference to content, style, reliability of the information they contain. This offers an opportunity for learners to build critical skills in research, critical thinking and academic writing (meeting MIMLOs 1, 2, 4).

Written Exam

The two-hour proctored exam asks learners to answer two out of five questions. This examines the learners understanding of the core concepts, empirical case studies and theories studied in the course (meeting MIMLOs 1, 2, 3, 4).

7.7 Summative Assessment Strategy for this module

MIMLOs	Technique(s)	Weighting
1, 2, 4	Research Assignment	40%
1, 2, 3,4	Exam	60%

7.8 Sample Assessment Materials

Research Assignment

Sample Assignment:

Learners will be asked to choose three sources of information about a contemporary news topic from different political orientations and evaluate the sources with reference to content, style, reliability of the information they contain.

Exam

Sample Questions:

1. What do the concepts of 'left' and 'right' mean in contemporary politics, when referring to the role of the state in the economy?
2. What are the main differences between presidential and parliamentary systems of government?
3. Select an area of public policy in Ireland (housing, health, environment, migration or education), that you wish to either challenge or support. Present a summary of your argument with specific reference to either its initiation, formulation, implementation, or evaluation.
4. The Brexit debate highlights the tension between economic growth and the welfare of working people. How can policymakers strike a balance between these competing priorities, and what are the long-term consequences of ignoring one in favour of the other?
5. The use of misleading statistics and inflammatory language has become a hallmark of political discourse. How can citizens and journalists discern fact from fiction in a world where truth is often subjective? What role should the media play in holding politicians accountable for their statements?
6. Critically analyse the impact of contemporary politics on public policy formulation and implementation. In your response, consider how intersecting social categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability shape individuals' experiences and access to political power and

resources. Discuss how these intersecting identities influence the development, implementation, and outcomes of public policies, with reference to specific policy areas or case studies.

Marking of assessments will be in line with the Marking Assessment Guidelines as outlined in Section 3.3 of the College's [Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards](#) unless otherwise indicated.

7.9 Indicative reading lists and other information resources

Indicative Core Reading:

Chadwick, A. (2013) *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coleman, S. and Blumler, J. (2009) *The Internet and Citizenship: Theory, Practice and Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garner, R., Ferdinand, P. and Lawson, S. (2020) *Introduction to Politics*. (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heywood, A. (2019) *Politics*, (5th edition). London: Palgrave.

Stoker, G. (2006) *Why Politics Matters*. London: Palgrave.

Walby, S. (1986) *Patriarchy at Work: Patriarchal and Capitalist Relations in Employment*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Weldon, SL. (2006) The Structure of Intersectionality: A Comparative Politics of Gender. *Politics & Gender*. 2(2) 235-248.

Other Relevant Texts:

Caramani, D. (2008) *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hague, Rod and Harrop, Martin (2001) *Comparative Politics*. London: Palgrave.

Newton, K. and van Deth, J.W. (2005) *Foundations of Comparative Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Indicative Other Resources:

Peer-Reviewed Political Science Journals

British Journal of Political Science, Cambridge University Press.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science>

Contemporary Politics, Taylor and Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/ccpo20>

European Journal of Political Research, Wiley and Blackwell.

<https://ejpr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14756765>

Irish Political Studies, Routledge. <https://www.psai.ie/journal/>

International Political Science Review, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/IPS>

British Journal of Politics and International Relations, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/description/BPI>

The Journal of Economic Inequality, Springer. <https://www.springer.com/journal/10888>

Journal of European Public Policy, Taylor and Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rjpp20>

Journal of Women, Politics and Policy, Taylor and Francis Online: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ucd.idm.oclc.org/journals/wwap20>

Policy and Society, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/policyandsociety>

Political Science and Research Methods. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/political-science-research-and-methods>

Political Psychology, Wiley. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14679221>

Social Politics, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/sp>

Learners will be asked to engage with newsfeed and commentary on current affairs from a variety of resources, as well as content written by high-quality journalists and/or academics. Current affairs will be circulated via email and uploaded to the VLE.

Sample List:

- Newsfeed and Political Commentary
- Print-Newspaper Websites
- TV/News Channels

Websites:

Geary Institute for Public Policy: <https://www.ucd.ie/geary/>

ESRI – Economic Social Research Institute - <https://www.esri.ie/>

Living Wage Ireland: <https://www.livingwage.ie/>

Oxfam: <https://www.oxfam.org/en>

TASC – Think Tank for Action on Social Change: <https://www.tasc.ie/>

World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/>

Why Poverty Documentary Series: <https://www.thewhy.dk/docuseries/why-poverty#:~:text=takes%20an%20in%20depth%20look,when%20it%20launched%20in%202012.>