Contemporary Politics and Public Policy

Module Title	Contemporary Politics and Public Policy
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	8
Module number/reference	TBC
Parent programme(s) the plural arises if there are embedded programmes to be validated.	Higher Diploma in Politics and Society
Stage of parent programme	Award
Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)	1
Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS)	ECTS
Module credit number of units	10
List the teaching learning and assessment modes	The module will be taught in-class and assessed by continuous assessment (100%).
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence	As per course entry requirements.
Pre-requisite module titles	No
Co-requisite module titles	No
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No	No
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements) If staff not in post at present, specify qualifications and experience required	A minimum Level 9 qualification in Political Science, Public Policy or closely cognate area is required.
Maximum number of learners per centre (or instance of the module)	25
Duration of the module	12 weeks
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week (see * below	3
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module	Lecture hall, white board, computer, and projector. Library Resources

Analysis of required learning effort										
Effort while in contact with staff						Contact Hours for the Module				
Classroom and demonstrations		Mentoring and small-group tutoring		Other (specify)		Directed e-learning	Independent learning	Other hours (specify)	Work-based learning	Total effort
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner					
36	1:10						214			250

Allocation of Marks Within the Module					
	Continuous Assessment	Supervised Project	Practical	Final Exam	Total
Percentage Contribution	100%				100%

Module aims and objectives

This module aims to explore the way that public policy shapes our lives and the different forms that politics takes. It addresses a variety of ways of thinking about politics and provides some of the key concepts and analytical frameworks used in analysing politics. This includes examining the practices involved in organizing public life, regulating who gets involved in decision-making and on what terms, and shaping how much influence they get to have over those decisions, whether at local, national or transnational level.

A distinctive feature of this module is its applied nature. As part of developing learner's skills in undertaking political and policy research, this module also focuses on building critical media literacy skills that facilitate learners' active engagement in current affairs. The module provides the opportunity to develop learner capacity for rigorous oral and written argument. Class discussion and the research assignment aim to 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.

The methodological nature of the Introduction to Contemporary Politics module provides learners with analytical and research skills in preparation for the Action Project in the module *Citizenship, Identity and Belonging.* Following from the *Introduction to Politics* module in semester 1, learners are introduced to the theory and logic of research and specific methodological approaches and to the range of research methods generally employed in political and social science research. Attention will be paid to research design, data collection, elementary data analysis, and writing skills. This is relevant to MIPLOs 3, 4, 5.

Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:

1. Understand policymaking processes, and the relationship between civil society and the development of public policy (MIPLO, 1, 2, 4)
2. Display strong critical media literacy and critically evaluate the impact of digital culture and new technologies on how politics is mediated and understood (MIPLO, 1, 2, 4, 5, 8)
3. Present a rigorous oral and written argument and demonstrate strong analytical and presentation skills (MIPLO, 1, 3, 4)
4. Demonstrate practical skills and competencies in quantitative and qualitative research methods in political and social research, including the analysis and interpretation of data and an understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and contextual suitability of different methods of inquiry (MIPLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 7)

Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall proposed Programme Learning Outcomes

This module introduces learners to contemporary politics and public policy and develops learners' skills in researching and analysing current affairs. It has three components: Developing student

understanding of key in contemporary politics; Developing student literacy and numeracy skills through engaging in political and policy research; Equipping students with skills to identify, analyse and interpret trends. This module informs each of the modules and particularly meets (MIPLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). This builds on and compliments the development critical media literacy skills in *Media Studies and Digital Skills* module that facilitates learner's active engagement in current affairs in a cross-disciplinary manner and develops the capacity of the learner to think critically and analytically.

There is a significant focus in this module on the development of practical skills. The combination of practical skills with key concepts and theories provides a strong basis for the transfer of knowledge, skills and competencies to other modules, and presents an opportunity for integrated assessment strategies that encourage learner engagement and highlight the connection between theory and practice and will foster a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of the relationship between political institutions and civil society.

Information provided to learners about the module
College Prospectus specifies module name, stage and ECTS. College website and programme handbook to contain (in addition to above) short description of module content, module learning outcomes, prerequisite modules, and assessment mechanisms. Module Moodle Page and Module Handbook to contain (in addition to above) schedule of classes and topics, detailed assessment information with titles and submission dates, full bibliography, and list of learning resources.

Module content, organisation and structure
Indicative Module Content:

Public Policy and the Policymaking Process
Understanding Public Policy, Policymaking Processes, Policymaking in Ireland, Policy Actors, Formulating Policy, Evidence-Based Policy Making, Policy Analysis

Politics of the European Union
History and Evolution of the EU; *European Institutions and Political Actors of the European Union; Policy Processes of the European Union*

International Relations and Global Governance
Multilateral Institutions; United Nations; The World Bank; The IMF; Non-state actors: multinational corporations and international non-governmental organisations; War in Global Politics; Migration and refugees; Global environmental politics; Climate change

Civil Society, Interest Groups and the Media:
Introduction to Civil Society, Interest Groups, The Impact of the Media, The Challenge of New Technologies, Corporatism (Social Media and Democracy, Fake News, Citizen Journalism, Post-Truth Politics, Infotainment, Disinformation, Critical Media Literacy, Media and Political Culture, Transparency and Accountability in Media, Political Orientation)

Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills:
Textual Analysis, Content Analysis, Validity and Reliability, Citation, Referencing, Evaluating Sources, News Sources, Primary and Secondary Sources, Social Media as Data, Rigour in Research, Oral Presentation Skills, Public Speaking, Political Argumentation; Analysing and Interpreting Data; The use of statistics in social and political science, Data Arrays and Graphs.

Relevant Case Studies on Current Affairs:
Brexit, American Elections, Global Pandemic, Hungary, Hong Kong, India, The Arab Spring; Conflict

Relevant Case Studies on Public Policy:
COVID19, Environment, Housing Policy, Governance, Health, Migration, the Environment

Module teaching, learning and assessment strategy
Lectures, discussion forums, case studies and group exercises. Learners will, in small groups, break down the material in tutorials for greater examination of the issues. Prescribed readings will be used to encourage engagement by learners and will provide a basis for formative assessment or assessment for learning (Carlow College Teaching and Learning Strategy).

Module summative assessment strategy
This module will be assessed by three assignments:

100% Continuous Assessment
- 10% In class activities and debate
- 30% Online Quizzes (Data based questions on public policy and the policymaking processes; case studies)
- 60% Research 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 (3000 words). A shortened version of the Research Assignment will be included as part of the final E-Portfolio in the *Pedagogy* module.

Nature of assessment materials

Assessment	Weighting	MIMLO
In Class Debate	10%	1, 2
Online Quizzes (x3)	30%	1
Research Assignment	60%	2, 3, 4

Timetabling, Learner Effort and Credit

Timetable	Learner Effort	Credit
3 hours face to face, one night per week for 12 weeks	250 hours combined contact hours, learning and assessment	10 ECTS

Work-based learning and practice-placement
N/A

E-learning
N/A

Module physical resource requirements
Classes will be delivered in standard lecture theatres. Requirements include projectors, whiteboards, audio-visual equipment, and WiFi. Access to the Learner Gateway and Library resources are also a requirement.

Reading lists and other information resources
Essential Reading *(Selected Chapters):*
Garner, R., Ferdinand, P. and Lawson, S. (2016) *Introduction to Politics*. (3rd edition). Oxford: Oxford 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). Palgrave.

Heywood, A. (2021) *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. (7th edition). New York: Bloomsbury.

Lelieveldt, H. and Princen, S. (2017). *The Politics of the European Union*, Revised 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, P. and Newburn, T. (2012) *Reading the Riots: Investigating England's Summer of Disorder*, London School of Economics Research Online: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/46297/1/Reading%20the%20riots%28published%29.pdf

MacCarthaigh, M. (2008) *Government in Modern Ireland*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

McCormick, J. (2020). Under*standing the European Union: A Concise Introduction.* UK: Palgrave.

Runciman, D. (2014) *Politics: Ideas in Profile.* London, Profile Books.

Websites:

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI): https://www.esri.ie/

European Migration network (EMN): https://emn.ie/

Essential Sources:

In addition to these readings, learners should keep up to date on current affairs by reading daily newspapers or engaging with news websites. A list of online sources and websites will be provided to learners as part of the module overview. Learners will also be asked to engage with content written by high-quality journalists and/or academics.

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

Ethical Considerations

N/A

Re-Assessment Procedures

All details regarding compensation, penalties for late submissions, policy around repeat examinations/assessments, pass standards at programme, module, and assessment level, max completion period are outlined in the College's *Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards*. Where a learner does not successfully complete the module, they will have the opportunity to repeat the assessment in line with the College's *Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards*.