



SP1125
'Introduction to Politics'
Module Handbook
2023-24

KEY CONTACTS:

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Please Note:

Every effort has been made to ensure that the details contained in this module outline are accurate at the time of publication. The School reserves the right to make changes or correct errors as necessary and, in this event, we will ensure that you are notified, and changes amended into the latest version of the outline.

Welcome to 'SP1125: Introduction to Politics'!

This Handbook includes all the essential information about the module so please familiarise yourself with it carefully. You are expected to refer to this Handbook on a weekly basis.

However, if you have any questions that are not covered here, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or any of our anchor lecturers, directly.

We hope that you will enjoy this module and we look forward to meeting you all soon.

Dr Diana Stypinska, First Year Programme Coordinator

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Module Introduction

This lecture module provides an introduction to political science, in part by focusing on Irish examples but it also explores the big ideas and concepts that dominate political debate today. The module covers a number of diverse topics: (1) political parties and Irish parties; (2) the unique political institutions of Ireland, notably the Oireachtas; (3) and political ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, socialism and anarchism are also examined.

Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the module the student should be able to demonstrate attainment of key competencies and knowledge as outlined in the following Intended Learning Outcomes:

LO1	Familiarity with the comparative approach contrasting Irish party politics with the wider phenomenon of political parties.
LO2	A critical understanding of Irish political institutions in a comparative perspective.
LO3	A comprehensive understanding of political ideologies and how these are relevant to political debate today.

Module Contact Information

Your first point of contact for all queries relating to this module is First Year Programme Coordinator, Dr Diana Stypinska (diana.stypinska@universityofgalway.ie).

If you have any questions about the material covered in the lectures, please contact the relevant lecturer:

Dr Brendan Flynn (brendan.flynn@universityofgalway.ie)

Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh (niall.odochartaigh@universityofgalway.ie)

Dr Kevin Ryan (kevin.ryan@universityofgalway.ie)

Dr Allyn Fives (allyn.fives@universityofgalway.ie)

Our expectations of you

Your Responsibility

Be Present	Be Prepared	Participate
<div> </div> <p>Attend all modules that you registered for:</p> <p>Lecture modules: 2 hours per week.</p> <p>Please note that your attendance of all timetabled sessions is compulsory and closely monitored.</p>	<div> </div> <p>Complete the required learning and reading activities each week.</p> <p>You will be expected to discuss these with your Lecturers and Classmates.</p>	<div> </div> <p>Complete all learning activities and assessments.</p> <p>At University, you join a 'community of practice'. Learning is active and collaborative.</p> <p>We want to hear your ideas and understanding of the new topics you are engaging with.</p> <p>You will participate in weekly discussions and activities to demonstrate this new understanding.</p>

What to do if you experience difficulties

If you are experiencing difficulties that are having a negative impact on your studies, it is important that you let us know so that we can help or offer guidance on where you can seek assistance. Any *information relating to your circumstances will be held in strictest confidence.*

The Golden Rule: deal with these issues as they occur by contacting the First Year Coordinator, Dr Diana Stypinska (diana.stypinska@universityofgalway.ie) and/or the College office.

If you encounter difficulties with any aspect of a module or with the First Year programme in Soc & Pol, we are here to help, but you need to let us know. We welcome feedback from students and an important part of our job is to support you in your studies.

Any issues you may have that have not been resolved with the seminar leader/programme coordinator in the first instance can also be raised with our Deputy Head of School, Dr Vesna Malesevic (vesna.malesevic@universityofgalway.ie).

As a constituent unit of the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, the School is subject to the oversight by the Dean of Arts and issues relating to School decisions can also be raised with the Dean's office (contact details can be found here: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/staff/>).

The School is committed to working with **Year Representatives who are affiliated to the Student Union**. If you are interested in being a Year Rep please contact Dr Diana Stypinska (diana.stypinska@universityofgalway.ie)

Student Support Services

The University Support Services offer a range of different avenues of support.

Please see their webpages for the detailed information: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/student-services/>

Amongst many services on offer, there are the following:

- [Student Enquiry Centre](#)
- [Things not going right](#)
- [Your Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Counselling](#)
- [Student Advisors](#)
- [Accommodation](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Student Health Unit](#)
- [Chaplaincy](#)
- [Creche](#)

Learning Needs Assessment (LENS)

Students with a disability are entitled, under law, to reasonable accommodations to enable them to participate on more equal terms with their peers. Supports and reasonable accommodations are determined through an individual needs assessment, taking into account the nature and impact of the disability, evidence of disability, and course requirements.

Below is a list of the most recommended reasonable accommodations. This list is not exhaustive, and it is important to note that not all students will be eligible for all accommodations.

- Advice, Support and Advocacy
- Exam Accommodations
- In-class Accommodations
- Learning /Skills Support
- Assistive Technology
- Placement Support
- Other Specialised Supports

Incoming first-year students are welcome to register for disability support. We recommend you do so as soon as possible after starting your course or receiving a diagnosis.

Please note: Registration with the Disability Support Service (DSS) is a separate process to registering as a student in the University of Galway.

Students with evidence of a disability, ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a specific learning difficulty can register with the DSS. You only need to register with the DSS once and this remains in place for the duration of your course.

For more information please see: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/disability/>

Module Overview

Teaching Week	SP1125: Introduction to Politics
Induction Week (Sept. 11)	Induction / Introduction to Politics and Sociology
Week 1 (Sept. 18)	Introduction to Politics
Week 2 (Sept. 25)	Block 1: 'Parties and Power' Dr Brendan Flynn
Week 3 (Oct. 2)	Block 1: 'Irish Parties' Dr Brendan Flynn
Week 4 (Oct. 9)	Block 2: 'Government and Parliament in the Republic of Ireland' Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh
Week 5 (Oct. 16)	Block 2: 'Government and Parliament in Northern Ireland' Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh
Week 6 (Oct. 23)	Block 3: Political Ideologies 1 – 'Liberalism, Socialism' Dr Kevin Ryan
Week 7 (Oct. 30)	Block 3: Political Ideologies 1 – 'Conservatism, Nationalism' Dr Kevin Ryan
Week 8 (Nov. 6)	Block 4: Political Ideologies 2 – 'Anarchism, Multiculturalism' Dr Allyn Fives
Week 9 (Nov. 13)	Block 4: Political Ideologies 2 – 'Feminism, Ecologism' Dr Allyn Fives
Week 10 (Nov. 20)	Revision Lectures
Week 11 (Nov. 27)	No Lectures Study Week
Week 12 (Dec. 4)	No Lectures Exam Week
Week 13 (Dec. 11)	No Lectures Exam Week

Lecture Timetable

You are expected to attend two lectures per week. You should adhere to the timetable of your designated lecture group.

GROUP A is for BA Joint Honours (1BA1) students combining Sociological and Political Studies with subjects such as English, Archaeology, French, Maths/Mathematical Studies, Economics, etc.

GROUP B is for students taking Sociological and Political Studies as part of other Programmes (for example, Bachelor of Science Social Science or Bachelor of Arts Child, Youth and Family: Policy and Practice, etc.).

Group A	Group B
Tuesdays 11:00-12:00 Kirwan Lecture Theatre and Wednesdays 13:00-14:00 O'Flaherty Lecture Theatre	Tuesdays 12:00-13:00 O'Flaherty Lecture Theatre and Thursdays 11:00-12:00 Kirwan Lecture Theatre

Assessment

Type of assessment	Date	% of the overall mark for the module
End-of-semester MCQ exam	To be confirmed (During the exam period: 4 th -15 th December 2023)	100%

Exam

You will be assessed by a Multiple Choice Question exam.

Exam paper will consist of 64 questions. You will have two hours to answer the questions (with extra time granted to students who have exam accommodations specified in their LENS reports).

Multiple choice questions (MCQs) will be the traditional 'choose one from a list' of possible answers.

There is no negative marking – each question you get wrong will incur a 0 (zero) mark instead of -1 or -2 etc. You are not 'penalised' for an incorrect answer; only correct answers are counted.

You will need to get half of the questions right to pass the exam and get the mark of 40%.

Additional exam guidance will be provided in week 10.

Exam Regulations

The University Policy on Exam Regulations can be accessed here:

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/registry/exams/policiesprocedures/QA229---Exam-Regulations.pdf>

Deferrals

If you need to defer a module (in which case you will be examined for that module during the autumn exam – technically called the ‘2nd sitting’), you should contact the College Office which manages all deferrals.

The University deferral procedures are outlined in this document:

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/registry/exams/policiesprocedures/QA234---Deferral-of-Examinations---A-guide-for-students.pdf>

For further information on deferrals please contact Catherine McCurry in the College Office at collegearts@universityofgalway.ie

Official Examination Results

The Examinations Office releases official examination results.

Further information is available here: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/exams/results/>

Consultation Day

Consultation day is organised by the University after 1st sitting results release. It gives an opportunity to the students to seek informal recheck of their submitted work and the mark achieved. It is a requirement of the University to go through informal recheck first before proceeding with an Appeal.

Rechecks & Appeals

The Examinations Office has a procedure for dealing with queries relating to marks awarded for modules:

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/registry/exams/policiesprocedures/QA235---Procedure-for-the-Discussion-Checking-and-Appeal-of-Examination-Rresults---Feb-2021.pdf>

Repeat Examination / Second Sitting

For information on repeats please see the Examinations Office webpage:

https://www.universityofgalway.ie/exams/timetable-advice/examinations_faqs/repeats_faq/

Module Outline

Week 1

Introduction to Politics

In the Introductory Lectures, Politics lecturers – Dr Brendan Flynn, Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh, Dr Kevin Ryan and Dr Allyn Fives – will talk to you about their research expertise and introduce the content of the lectures that they will deliver this semester.

Week 2

Parties and Power *Dr Brendan Flynn*

These lectures examine the political party as a key phenomenon in modern liberal democracies, and even states that are not democratic. Why are political parties so salient given that party membership has often been declining, at least for most western countries? We also take some time to figure out ideological differences between parties on the ‘left-right’ and the ‘libertarian-authoritarian’ spectrum.

Essential reading

Heywood, Andrew [2019] “Party Politics and Party Systems” pages 245-265 in Heywood, A. Politics, 5th edition. Macmillan.. 320 HEY

Recommended reading

Heywood, Andrew [2019] “A Crisis of Party Politics and Questions for Discussion”, pages 266-268 in Heywood, A. Politics. 5th edition Macmillan. 320 HEY

Crepaz, Markus M. L. [2017] “Chapter 2-Political Parties” pp.19-53 in European Democracies, 9th edition. Taylor & Francis Group. Available online through library website.

Week 3

Irish Parties *Dr Brendan Flynn*

In these lectures we examine Ireland’s political parties and their unique history, dominated by two very similar ‘civil-war’ parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, both of whose origins can be traced back over 100 years. Yet why is Irish politics dominated by parties who originate as far back as 1905, if we include Sinn Fein?

Essential reading

Weeks, Liam (2017, 2010) “Chapter 5, Parties and the Party System”, pp.137-167 in Coakley, John., and Michael Gallagher, (eds). Politics in the Republic of Ireland. 5th/6th ed Routledge; In Association with PSAI Press. 320.9417 POL

Note: there are two editions of this book in the library, both as ebooks and as hard copies. The 6th edition 2017 is probably ideal but the 5th, from 2010 is fine as well because these chapters are really explaining the historical setting.

Recommended Reading

Coakley, John (2010, 2017) "Chapters 1-2-the Foundations of Statehood, Society and Political Culture" pp.3-64 in Coakley, John., and Michael Gallagher, (eds). *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*. 5th/6th ed., Routledge ; In Association with PSAI Press. 320.9417 POL

Week 4

Government and Parliament in the Republic of Ireland Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh

This week's lectures examine the relationship between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government in the Republic of Ireland, comparing Ireland with other democracies. We critically analyse the distribution of power between parliament, government and Taoiseach, focusing on the recent reforms aimed at strengthening the involvement of TDs in law-making. We investigate whether too much power is concentrated in the office of Taoiseach.

Required reading

Gallagher, Michael (2018) Ch. 7 The Oireachtas: President and parliament. In Coakley and Gallagher *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, 6th edition. Our focus is on the material dealing with Dáil Éireann

Additional readings

Elgie, Robert & Fitzgerald, Peter (2005) The President and the Taoiseach. In Coakley and Gallagher (2005) *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, pp.313-320 [on the Taoiseach]. Note that this is the **4th edition**.

O'Malley, Eoin & Martin, Shane (2018) Ch. 10 The government and the Taoiseach. In Coakley and Gallagher *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, 6th edition.

Heywood, Andrew (2019) Ch. 15 Assemblies. In *Politics* 5th edition. Macmillan. Especially the section on 'Performance of Assemblies'.

Week 5

Government and Parliament in Northern Ireland Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh

Northern Ireland's devolved political institutions were established by the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 and are underpinned by the principle of consociational power-sharing. The institutions have faced repeated crises however and have been suspended several times since they were first set up. In this week's lectures we examine how the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly function, examine the factors that contribute to ongoing instability and critically analyse the concept of consociation.

Required reading

Coakley, John (2018) Ch.13 Northern Ireland and the British dimension. In Coakley and Gallagher *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, 6th edition. The first half of the chapter provides useful background. The material we focus on begins on page 332.

Additional readings

Nagle, John (2018). Between conflict and peace: An analysis of the complex consequences of the Good Friday Agreement. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 71(2), 395-416.

O'Leary, Brendan (2019) Ch. 3.5 The Making, Meaning(s), and Tasks of the 1998 Agreement. In his *Treatise on Northern Ireland*, Vol. 3. Oxford University Press. Especially pp.178-204; 207-210; 216-219.

Week 6

Liberalism and Socialism *Dr Kevin Ryan*

This week students are required to watch a short recorded lecture on Canvas (approx. 10 minutes), which is an introduction to studying political ideologies and is intended as preparation for the lectures on Liberalism and Socialism. In the lectures this week, we will be exploring the following questions:

1. how and why did liberalism and socialism emerge (think here of the historical context)?
2. what are the main ideas that distinguish liberalism from socialism and socialism from liberalism?
3. how have liberal and socialist ideas been organised into distinctive forms of political action (including but not limited to political parties)?

Essential reading:

Andrew Heywood (2021) *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. 7th Edition. Palgrave: London (e-copy available through the library catalogue).

For this week students should read the chapters on Liberalism & Socialism.

Further reading (recommended):

Liberalism

- Chapter 3 in Goodwin, B. (2007). *Using political ideas*. 5th Edition. John Wiley (320.5 GOO).
- Chapter 5 in Garner, R., P. Ferdinand & S. Lawson (2009). *Introduction to Politics*. Oxford University Press (320.GAR).
- Part 3 in Ball, T. & R. Dagger (2017). *Ideals and ideologies: a reader*. 10th edition. Pearson Education (e-copy available).

Socialism

- Chapter 5 in Goodwin, B. (2007). *Using political ideas*. 5th Edition. John Wiley (320.5 GOO).
- Chapter 5 in Garner, R., P. Ferdinand and S. Lawson (2009). *Introduction to Politics*. Oxford University Press (320.GAR).
- Parts 5 & 6 in Ball, T. & R. Dagger (2017). *Ideals and ideologies: a reader*. 10th edition. Pearson Education (e-copy available).

Week 7

Conservatism and Nationalism *Dr Kevin Ryan*

The lectures for this week continue from last week's topics. With the first topic, we move to the 'right' of the Left/Centre/Right political spectrum, focusing on Conservatism. We then look at a political ideology which can be more difficult to classify, thus requiring a slightly different approach: Nationalism. To help you to organise your thoughts, you can approach the lectures and the readings with these questions in mind:

1. how and why did conservatism and nationalism emerge (think here of the historical context)?
2. what are the main ideas that distinguish these political ideologies, and how do conservatism and nationalism compare with liberalism and socialism?
3. how have conservative and nationalist ideas been organised into distinctive forms of political action (including but not limited to political parties)?

Essential reading:

Andrew Heywood (2021) *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. 7th Edition. Palgrave: London (e-copy available through the library catalogue).

For this week students should read the chapters on Conservatism & Nationalism.

Further reading (recommended):

Conservatism

- Chapter 7 in Goodwin, B. (2007). *Using political ideas*. 5th Edition. John Wiley (320.5 GOO).
- Chapter 5 in Garner, R., P. Ferdinand and S. Lawson 2009. *Introduction to Politics*. Oxford University Press (320.GAR).
- Part 4 in Ball, T. & R. Dagger (2017). *Ideals and ideologies: a reader*. 10th edition. Pearson Education (e-copy available).

Nationalism

- Chapter 11 in Goodwin, B. (2007). *Using political ideas*. 5th Edition. John Wiley (320.5 GOO).
- Chapter 5 in Garner, R., P. Ferdinand and S. Lawson (2009). *Introduction to Politics*. Oxford University Press (320.GAR).
- Part 7 in Ball, T. & R. Dagger (2017). *Ideals and ideologies: a reader*. 10th edition. Pearson Education (e-copy available).

Week 8

Anarchism, Multiculturalism *Dr Allyn Fives*

In this week, we examine both 'anarchism' and 'multiculturalism'. Both theories challenge the conventional understanding of politics. Anarchists maintain that contemporary liberal regimes cannot have authority over us because they fail to guarantee personal autonomy: that instead order must arise spontaneously if it is to have legitimacy. Multiculturalists maintain that contemporary liberal politics fails as a response to cultural diversity: that what we need instead is a politics of recognition and not liberal toleration.

Anarchism

Essential Reading:

Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 6th edition (Palgrave 2017), Ch. 5.

Recommended Readings:

John Horton, 'Anarchism,' in *Political Obligation*, second edition (Palgrave, 2010), pp. 106–34.

R. P. Wolff, 'The conflict between authority and autonomy,' in J. Raz (ed.) *Authority* (New York: New York University Press 1990 [1970]), pp. 20–31.

Multiculturalism

Essential Reading:

Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 6th edition (Palgrave, 2017), Ch. 10.

Recommended Readings:

Charles Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition,' in A. Gutmann (ed.) *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, 1994 [1992]), pp. 25-73.

Iris Marion Young (1989) 'Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship,' *Ethics*, 99(2), 250–74.

Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2005).

Will Kymlicka *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Week 9

Feminism, Ecologism *Dr Allyn Fives*

In this week, we move on to 'feminism' and 'ecologism'. Feminism asks us to re-imagine politics and power by focusing on paternalism: the unequal power of men over women. Feminist politics focuses on challenging gender inequality and/or the differences between men and women and how those differences have been distorted so as to benefit men. Ecologism asks us to re-consider whose interests matter most and also whether we can (or should) control the natural world. Ecological politics focuses on sustainable development and/or a radical commitment to the equal moral worth of all organisms.

Feminism

Essential reading:

Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 6th edition (Palgrave, 2017), Ch. 8.

Recommended Readings:

Carole Pateman, "'The Disorder of Women": Women, Love, and the Sense of Justice', *Ethics*, 91(1) (1989): 20–34.

Carol Gilligan, *In a different voice* (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

Talia Mae Bettcher, 'Trans Feminism: Recent Philosophical Developments', *Philosophy Compass*, 12 (2017), 11pp.

Ecologism

Essential reading:

Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 6th edition (Palgrave, 2017), Ch. 9.

Recommended Readings:

John Gray, *Straw Dogs* (Granta Books, 2002).

Jorge Pinto, 'Freedom and Ecological Limits', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 24(5) (2021): 676–92.

Arne Naess (1973) 'A Defence of the Deep Ecology Movement,' *Environmental Ethics*, 6 (1984), 265-70.

Week 10

Revision Lectures

This week all the anchor lecturers will deliver presentations on their respective topics, emphasizing the key areas for revision and providing you with some useful exam tips.