



OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY

Scoil na hEolaíochta Polaitiúla
agus na Socheolaíochta
School of Political Science
and Sociology

BA Joint Honors Year 3: Sociological & Political Studies

Student Handbook



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Welcome

I would like to welcome all third and final year BA Joint-Honors (Political Science and Sociology) undergraduates and returning students to University of Galway for the 2026/27 academic year.

I hope that you will all enjoy your course in Politics and Sociology, as well as the cultural and social activities that University of Galway and the city of Galway have to offer. I encourage you to discover a rich student experience both inside and outside the classroom. At University of Galway you'll find a vibrant landscape of organised groups, activities, and experiences that enable you to make friends, belong and flourish and build your Universal Skills Passport - **USP - University Skills Passport - University of Galway**.

As you near the completion of your undergraduate studies, I encourage you to take this important time to reflect on your future aspirations and explore the wide range of opportunities available to you—whether through postgraduate education, professional development programs, or entry into the workforce aligned with your academic and personal goals. I am happy to meet with you and discuss these options.

All teaching takes place in person, on campus. Attend all your lectures and seminars and take part actively. As you progress through your final year of undergraduate study, you will have gained valuable insight into your strengths, preferences, and identity as a learner; recognizing that each individual navigates this important stage in their own unique way, please know that I am here to support and guide you throughout your learning journey, offering assistance to help you achieve your academic and personal goals.

This handbook gives you the key information about your course. Please read pages 1-10, and the information concerning your year of study, carefully.

My office hours are Wednesdays 12-1pm, please do not hesitate to call in (room 304, Áras Moyola). I am also contactable by e-mail at Jacqueline.murphy@universityofgalway.ie

Best of luck in academic year 26/27!

Jacqueline Murphy
Final Year Coordinator, BA Joint-Honors (Political
Science and Sociology)
School of Political Science and Sociology
University of Galway



Important Information

1. Academic Calendar Dates

Here you will find a list of important upcoming dates for the 26/27 academic year, including; study weeks, exam dates, holidays, etc.: [Academic Term Dates - University of Galway](#).

2. Attendance

It is the duty of a student to attend every scheduled lecture/tutorial and to undertake other academic activities (such as essay assignments, project work, seminars, tutorials etc.) as required in each of the subjects, unless prevented by some unavoidable cause of absence. Students, therefore, are strongly recommended to attend all module lectures and tutorials. In the case of the latter, without weekly participation (i.e. by keeping up with the prescribed or recommended readings and by making a contribution to class discussion) it is highly unlikely that students will produce work of a standard expected from small-group teaching and learning.

3. Canvas

[Canvas](#) is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). A VLE is a web-based application designed to facilitate lecturers in the management of modules for their students, especially by helping lecturers and learners with course administration. A VLE is used to supplement face-to-face lectures and tutorials. Learn all about Canvas [here](#).

4. Referencing

The School of Political Science and Sociology advises that students **must use** the Harvard (UL) Referencing Style for all assignments and essays. Details on the Harvard (UL) referencing style, and examples, are available from the University of Galway library [here](#).

5. Academic Writing Centre

[The Academic Writing Centre \(AWC\)](#) provides one-on-one tutorials and email consultations on essay writing. These are free and available to everyone, regardless of experience or grade average. They are located in the main Library.

6. Academic Integrity Policy

[Academic integrity](#) is a fundamental value of any university community. As a principle, it assumes that all student interactions with the academic institution are entered into in the spirit of honesty. This value gives the student responsibility for ensuring that all assignments that they submit for academic purposes are their own work.

7. Disability Support Service (DSS)

Disability support is available to University of Galway students who need support or reasonable accommodations due to the impact of a disability, ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a specific learning difficulty. These supports are provided through DSS. Click [here](#) for further information.

8. Exam Support

Student Services have a range of valuable supports on offer to help you both before and during exams. Workshops, helplines and online resources are just some of the many options available and have been developed. [Here](#) is a list of useful policies and procedures. You will also find information about exam repeats, appeals, deferrals, past papers, alternative arrangements, etc.

9. Student Enquiry Centre

For any enquiries about student life, services and support, contact the [Student Enquiry Centre](#). You can drop into them on the first floor of the Arts/Science Concourse from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. You can also email SEC@universityofgalway.ie.

10. Chaplaincy

[The Chaplaincy](#) is here to help students navigate the challenges associated with university life. Don't know who you need to speak to? That's where Chaplaincy comes in. They are available on campus for a chat from Monday - Friday and are here to listen.

11. Counselling

[Student Counselling](#) provides a free hybrid service of in-person and online one-to-one counselling. They also provide group counselling and workshops. Seeking counselling is normal here and is not a sign that you are unable to cope, but of strength and resourcefulness. Counselling support about 10% of the student population each year. Any problem, large or small, if unresolved, is welcomed here.

12. Examination and Assessment Process

Student examination and assessment in the University is governed by a set of [important policies and processes](#) which outline:

- a) the academic rules which all programmes and modules must comply with for the awarding of degrees and
- b) the way in which exams and assessment are conducted.

The University's degree structure and assessment process is aligned to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System to allow for recognition of awards across Europe.

Consequently, programmes are structured in multiples of 5 ECTS, with 60 ECTS making up a full year of undergraduate study and 90 ECTS for postgraduate study.

Degree classification is normally based on a student's results in pre-final (30%) and in final (70%) year and degree awards are classified from pass to first class honours. Results are approved by the University's College Exam Boards with independent validation of marks by External Examiners. College Boards, Academic Council and its sub-Committee, Academic Standing Committee are the key decision-making bodies in relation to student examination and assessment.

The School of Political Science and Sociology uses a categorical marking system across all programmes. These categorical marks are applied only at the level of assessed components (and NOT overall modular marks) to foster consistency across the programme and achieve a better distribution of marks across degree grades.

Fail: 0, 25, 35

Pass: 42, 45, 48

Lower Second: 52, 55, 58

Upper Second: 62, 65, 68

First: 72, 75, 78.

13. Extensions and Deferrals

If you are unable to submit your work on time, you must apply to the Module Coordinator or Seminar Leader for an extension no later than 24 hours in advance of an assessment deadline. If granted, the maximum extension will be no more than one week (7 calendar days). This requirement applies to all students, including those with a LENS (Learning Educational Needs Summary) report. If you have extenuating circumstances where more than 7 calendar days are required, the authorisation process depends on the weighting of the piece of assessment:

- Where the module assignments of course work constitutes less than 30% of the overall mark, this will be considered by the Module Coordinator or Seminar Leader in line with the [Extenuating Circumstances policy](#).
- Where the module assignments and coursework constitutes over 30% of the overall mark, you must apply 7 days in advance of the assessment deadline directly to the College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies following the [Extenuating Circumstances policy](#) and completing the Extenuating Circumstances form. The extension request must be based upon a medical certificate and/or relevant supporting documentation.

14. Late submission without an extension

For module assignments and work constituting 20% or less of the overall mark: if you submit an assignment after the deadline without submitting an extension request and/or extension request approval, the work will be marked and a penalty will be applied.

- Late submissions will be penalised at a rate of 2 marks per day off the mark originally awarded. (E.g. if the essay merits a mark of 68, and was submitted one day late, the mark will go down to 66).
- No work is accepted or marked if submitted more than 7 working days after the deadline without an extension.

15. Feedback On Assignments

Feedback timeframe policy: normally, assignments will be marked within 3 weeks from the submission deadline.

Feedback from your lecturer/seminar leader is provided through [Canvas](#).

16. Parking Information

There are different types of spaces on campus, including spaces for staff permit holders only, student permit holders only, shared use (staff student permit holders), visitor/non-permit holder pay-and-display/Pay by Phone (P&D) spaces.

You need a permit to park in University of Galway, or you can buy a ticket from P&D machines or Pay by Phone. Please note, that P&D tickets only apply to spaces marked in blue adjacent to the meters - P&D tickets do not allow you to park anywhere else. Permit holders can use P&D spaces, but you must buy a ticket.

Your permit/P&D ticket allows you to park in specific places and you must familiarise yourself with the zones, and which permit applies to what carpark. There are also 'reserved' spaces and loading bays - do not park in these.

You may use the universally accessible parking spaces if you display a valid and registered 'blue badge' permit issued by the IWA.

Student parking permits are available through an online system for registered students. Allow plenty of time on your first visit to campus with your car.

17. Class Representatives

The Class Rep is the Voice of your Class and represents the views of the majority of the class. They help to solve both individual and class-wide problems. If you decide to run for Class Rep, your responsibilities will include communicating between your class and the course lecturers, attending Comhairle Chomhaltas na Mac Léinn and your College Council meetings to help formulate Student Union policies and arranging class parties, hoodies etc.

18. Student Complaints Process

The purpose of the Student Complaints Procedure is to provide a formal mechanism for students to have their complaints heard and resolved. The Procedure is not intended to be a disciplinary one, However, the Complaints Procedure provides students with an opportunity to raise issues of concern to them, frequently makes recommendations for improvements to University processes and, where appropriate, can provide redress to students.

It is intended that this complaints procedure will allow for matters to be dealt with fairly, transparently and in a timely fashion, for the benefit of current and future students and the wider University Community.

Programme Structure: Semester 1

In the final year of the BA, students select modules from a suite of 'semi-core' and 'specialist elective' modules that span the disciplines of Political Science and Sociology.

What is the difference between a 'semi-core' module and a 'specialist elective module'?

The semi-core modules are taught in lecture theatres to large groups of students. These modules offer students an in-depth understanding of society and politics in both the Irish and international contexts. Students are encouraged to critically engage with and explore a range of themes, topics, issues and questions by attending weekly lectures and studying the learning materials provided by the lecturers.

Elective modules are typically taught to small groups of students, enabling students to acquire specialist knowledge in a specific subject area, as well as providing the opportunity for a more active and participatory approach to learning than is possible in the large-group lecture modules.

Semi-core modules are paired, and students select one from each pair. Specialist elective modules are available in semester 2 only.

If you are 3BA1, 4BA4, or BA Connect student taking Sociological and Political Studies as a subject, you are required to take three Semi-Core modules in semester 1. In semester 2 you should register for your choice of modules that does not create a clash in your Schedule.

If you are a BA Government student, or on a Denominated BA programme (e.g. BSS1; 4BYF), you should contact your Programme Director who will advise you on 'required' and 'optional' modules in Soc & Pol.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your Modules Schedule does not clash with your other Subjects. Ensure there is no clash in regard to Day and Time when selecting your module.

For Semester 1, students must register for 3 semi-core modules: ONE from each PAIR below

Module Code	Module Title	ECTS	Semester	Core/Semi-core
SP404	Development and Change	5	1	Semi-Core
Or SP3197	Thinking Politically: The Power of Ideas	5	1	Semi-Core
SP4134	Politics of Peace and Conflict	5	1	Semi-Core
Or SP3195	Equality, Diversity & Collective Action	5	1	Semi-Core
SP3208	Contemporary American Politics	5	1	Semi-Core
Or SP3199	Care, Power and Information	5	1	Semi-Core

The module outlines, as well as any relevant course information, will be made available on Canvas and during the lectures.

Programme Structure: Semester 2

For Semester 2, students must register for 3 modules: 1 Core, 1 Semi-Core and 1 Elective module.

Module Code	Module Title	ECTS	Semester	Core/Semi-core/Elective
SP3139	Comparative Government and Politics	5	2	Core
SP405	Contemporary Social Thought	5	2	Semi-Core
Or SP3137	Youth and Society	5	2	Semi-Core
	Choose 1 elective from the list below	5	2	Elective*

Module Code	Title	ECTS	Semester
SP3192	Sociology of Religion	5	2
SP3129	Sexualities, Genders and Diversities		
SP721	Ocean & Marine Politics	5	2
SP4131	Smart & Liveable Cities & Suburbs	5	2
SP3218	Politics in practice - Art and Activism	5	2
SP420	Sociology of the Environment	5	2
SP3194	Theories of Nationalism	5	2
SP3193	Introduction to Social Work	5	2
SP3101	'Community': Significance & Change	5	2
SP3103	European Union: Polity, Political Economy, & International Role	5	2
SP3198	Songs of Rebellion: Power, Resistance, and Affect	5	2
SP3150	Teaching Methods for the Politics and Society Classroom	5	2
SP3213	Contemporary African Politics	5	2
SP1304	Women, Men and the Economy: Critical Explorations of Theory and Policy	5	2
SP4136	Politics and Society in Rural Ireland	5	2
SP3211	Empathy in Action	5	2

MG3115	Megatrends	5	2
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*** All elective modules are subject to change.**

Programme Timetable and Contact Details

Semester 1

EITHER: SP404 Development & Change Tuesday 3.00 – 4.00pm O’Flaherty Theatre Wednesday 4.00 – 5.00pm O hEocha Theatre AMB1021	Su-Ming Khoo Contact: suming-khoo@universityofgalway.ie
OR: SP3197 Thinking Politically: The Power of Ideas Monday 11.00 – 12.00am Fottrell Theatre AMB1022 Thursday 3.00 – 4.00pm O hEocha Theatre AMB1021	Allyn Fives/Kevin Ryan Contact: allyn.fives@universityofgalway.ie kevin.ryan@universityofgalway.ie
EITHER: SP4134 Politics of Peace and Conflict Thursday 4.00 – 5.00 pm IT250 Friday 3.00 – 4.00 pm O hEocha Theatre AMB1021	Sarah Jenkins and Niall Ó Dochartaigh Contact: sarah.jenkins@universityofgalway.ie niall.odochartaigh@universityofgalway.ie
OR: SP3195 Equality, Diversity & Collective Action Thursday 4.00 – 5.00 pm O’Flaherty Theatre Fri 3.00-4.00 pm IT250	Stacey Scriver Contact: Stacey.scriver@universityofgalway.ie
EITHER: SP3208 Contemporary American Politics Wednesday 6.00 – 8.00 pm O’Flaherty Theatre	Kevin Leyden Contact: kevin.leyden@universityofgalway.ie
OR: SP3199 Care, Power, Information Tuesday 6.00 – 7.00 pm IT250 - THEATRE (250), FIRST FLOOR Thursday 6.00 – 7.00 pm AMB-1022 FOTTRELL THEATRE	Su-Ming Khoo and Judith O’Connell Contact: suming-khoo@universityofgalway.ie judith.oconnell@universityofgalway.ie

Programme Timetable and Contact Details Semester 2

SP3139 Comparative Government & Politics Tuesdays 3-4 Kirwan Building Wednesday 4-5 O'hEocha Theatre AMB1021.	Kevin Leyden, Sarah Jenkins Contact: kevin.leyden@universityofgalway.ie
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Either SP405 Contemporary Social Thought Monday 11.00 – 12.00am O hEocha Theatre AMB1021 Thursday 3.00 – 4.00pm O hEocha Theatre AMB1021	Diana Stypinska Contact: diana.stypinska@universityofgalway.ie
Or SP3137 Youth & Society Thursday 4.00-5.00 pm Anderson AC002 Friday 3.00 – 4.00pm IT250	Bernadine Brady Contact: bernadine.brady@universityofgalway.ie

Note: You cannot register again for a module that you have already taken.

SP3192 Sociology of Religion Wednesday 10.00 – 12.00 CA001	Vesna Malesevic Contact: vesna.malesevic@universityofgalway.ie
SP3129 Sexualities, Genders and Diversities Monday 12.00 – 2.00 CA117	Stacey Scriver Contact: stacey.scriver@universityofgalway.ie
SP721 Ocean & Marine Politics Tuesday 12.00 – 2.00 CSB1005	Brendan Flynn Contact: Brendan.flynn@universityofgalway.ie
SP4131 Smart & Liveable Cities & Suburbs Thursday 11.00 – 1.00 ENG 2035	Kevin Leyden Contact: kevin.leyden@universityofgalway.ie
SP3218 Politics in Practice - Art and Activism Monday 12.00 – 2.00 MY306	Kevin Ryan Contact: kevin.ryan@universityofgalway.ie
SP420 Sociology of the Environment Wednesday 2.00 – 4.00 ENG-G017	Mike Hynes Contact: mike.hynes@universityofgalway.ie
SP3134 Human Rights Advocacy: Concepts, Law and Practice Monday 1.00 – 3.00 CA115	Niamh Reilly Contact: niamh.reilly@universityofgalway.ie
SP3194 Theories of Nationalism Tuesday 12.00 – 2.00 AC204	Judith O'Connell Contact: judith.oconnell@universityofgalway.ie
SP3193 Introduction to Social Work Wednesday 12.00 – 2.00 ENG-2003	TBC Contact:
SP3101 'Community': Significance & Change Thursday 10.00 – 12.00 CA002	Brian McGrath Contact: brian.mcgrath@universityofgalway.ie
SP3103 European Union: Polity, Political Economy, & International Role Thursday 11.00 – 1.00 CA003	Gerry Fitzpatrick Contact: Gerard.fitzpatrick@universityofgalway.ie

SP3198 Songs of Rebellion: Power, Resistance, and Affect Monday 1.00 – 3.00 CA101	Diana Stypinska Contact: diana.stypinska@universityofgalway.ie
SP3150 Teaching Methods for the Politics and Society Classroom Wednesday 1.00 – 3.00 CA002	Lisa Walshe Contact: lisa.walshe@universityofgalway.ie
SP4136 Politics and Society in Rural Ireland Tuesday 1.00-3.00 CA004	Mícheál Ó Fathartaigh Contact: @universityofgalway.ie
SP3211 Empathy in Action Tuesday 9.00-11.00 Ideas Lab	Neil Ferguson Contact: neil.ferguson@universityofgalway.ie
SP3213 Contemporary African Politics Wednesday 2pm-4pm AMB-G036	Sarah Jenkins Contact: sarah.jenkins@universityofgalway.ie
SPL304 Women, Men and the Economy: Critical Explorations of Theory and Policy Tuesday 11-1 Venue: CA003	Nata Duvvury Contact: nata.duvvury@universityofgalway.ie
MG3115 Megatrends Wednesday 4.00-6.00 Venue TBC	Yixin Qiu Contact: yixin.qiu@universityofgalway.ie

Module Descriptors

SP404 Development and Change

Lecturers: Su-Ming Khoo

This course is a critical introduction to development studies. It focuses on the meanings of 'development' and the debates surrounding the definition and measurement of 'progress' or 'good change'. We examine the different priorities attached to development efforts, critically challenging mainstream economic growth perspectives with alternative or ethical feminist, humanistic and ecological approaches. In current times of multiple crises and challenges, this course suggests that ideas about global 'progress' matter a lot and urgently need to be debated.

The course opens by discussing four main approaches to 'progress' – economic growth, equality, human rights and capabilities. Economy-focused perspectives are different from ethical or values-based perspectives. The question of sustainability adds a fifth perspective that places limits on progress defined as economic growth, while the question of gender equality pushes us to question what is happening within aggregate populations or countries. The issues illustrate how 'development' involves problems of data and measurement, but also deeply sociological, philosophical and political questions about values, meaning and purpose. Persisting demands for growth are challenged by pressures of inequality, both within and between the societies of the Global South and Global North. We explore these contrasting perspectives on progress through the lenses of three major global issues for policy and public action: agriculture and food, health and security. An issue-based approach enables us to open out debates with evidence and perspectives from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe.

The course material invites you to question conventional assumptions about economic and societal progress or 'development'. It also introduces leading actors in global development – which include UN agencies and programmes, governments, notionally 'free' and globalized markets, and non-governmental and grassroots organization. These have different roles and niches in directing policy, organizing social protection and security and protecting and fulfilling rights.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: weekly in-person lectures

Assessment: MCQ exam (30%) and final essay (2000 words, 70%).

Language of instruction: English

Core texts: Assigned readings

SP3197 Thinking Politically: The Power of Ideas

Lecturer: Kevin Ryan

Thinking politically can be described as a method. It can also be described as an art form in the ancient sense of 'art', which means practical skill or craft. Either way, as a method or as an art form, thinking politically is a practice which is powered by ideas. Practising the art of thinking politically requires decisions on the part of practitioners – what to think about, and how to go about doing it. In this module, the 'what' question maps onto the topics explored during the lectures: gender and sexuality, social security and social rights, racism and racialisation, the climate emergency and political communication; the courage of truth and fearless speech. The 'how' question bears down on the practical application of the learning materials, i.e. materials that help us to think politically about issues and problems that matter. To this end, students taking this module will study political theory in conjunction with other materials, including film, music, and works of fiction. The 'what' and the 'how' questions meet as 'text' (materials to think with) and 'context' (politically salient issues to think about). Prerequisites: None Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply. Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person lectures. Assessment: Mid-term MCQ exam (30%), end of semester exam (70%) Language of instruction: English.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person lectures.

Assessment: MCQ (30%), end of semester exam (70%) Language of instruction: English

Core text: Assigned Readings

SP4134: Politics of Peace and Conflict

Lecturer: Sarah Jenkins

Contemporary conflicts frequently unfold as complex emergencies in which political violence, humanitarian crisis and civilian insecurity become deeply intertwined. They involve multiple actors pursuing competing and often shifting objectives, making the conflict itself difficult to understand and efforts to intervene fraught with political and ethical dilemmas. Why do conflicts emerge and escalate? How can violence be contained or brought to an end? What roles can negotiation, humanitarian action, civilian protection and international intervention play? And what is required to move beyond the end of fighting towards a more just and sustainable peace? This module equips students to explore these questions through three broad themes: understanding violent conflict, managing violence, and building peace after violence. Students will learn how to analyse the actors, conditions and dynamics that drive and sustain contemporary conflicts. They will then critically examine different approaches to managing conflict, including negotiation, mediation, humanitarian action, peacekeeping and civilian protection, before exploring the challenges of conflict transformation and peacebuilding in the aftermath. Throughout the module, students will apply key concepts, theories and analytical tools to contemporary cases and evaluate the difficult choices, trade-offs and unintended consequences involved in responding to violence and pursuing peace.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person lectures.

Assessment: Continuous assessment (30%); end of semester exam (70%)

Language of instruction: English

SP3195 Equality, Diversity & Collective Action

Lecturers: Stacey Scriver

In this module, students will have the opportunity to deepen knowledge on, and engage with, contemporary issues of diversity and equality advocacy. Students will explore the kinds of social movements and collective activism that have driven, shaped or challenged human rights internationally, taking a 'bottom-up' approach. Case studies will be used for in-depth exploration of tensions between equality and diversity and to examine the forms, functions and outcomes of collective action in relation to the cases considered. Students will be assessed through a combination of mid-term assignment and a final written exam.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: weekly in-person lectures

Assessment: 30% Continuous assessment by mid-term assignment; 70% end of semester exam.

Language of instruction: English

Core texts: Assigned readings

SP3208 Contemporary American Politics

Lecturer: Kevin Leyden

This module explores contemporary politics and political institutions in the United States. Students are introduced first to the basics of the American democratic system and then to examples of contemporary political issues. The module examines the basic American policy-making system, contemporary public opinion and voting behaviour, aspects of American foreign policy, and the election of Donald Trump in 2016, his defeat in 2020, and his return to the Presidency in the 2024 election. The module will also examine pressing contemporary issues such as race-relations, gun violence, foreign policy, abortion, populism, economic inequality, concerns about the state of American Democracy, and America's changing position in the world economically and politically.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: weekly in-person lectures. Lecture slides posted on Canvas. Assessment: Midterm (30%), end of semester exam (70%)

Language of instruction: English

SP3199 Care, Power, Information

Lecturer: Su-Ming Khoo

The 20th century was the century for which social scientists had described and analyzed an ongoing processes of “globalization”. In the first two decades of the 21st century, it has become clear that we already have and continue to be living together on one single but increasingly “ruinous”/“ruined” planet (e.g. Anthropocene) and in an integrated and vulnerable planetary society (e.g. COVID), but simultaneously we also exist and dwell in one world that is “made of many worlds”. Scholars, politicians, and activists propose unified responses to the processes that damage our one and very material World and that lead to various forms of injustice and inequality globally and across many different worlds through plans to “build back better” or establish “circular economies”, as well as integrate digital technologies, ecosystem services, global health, and economic development policy, finance, and law. At the same time, much of social, cultural, and economic life has migrated away from so-called “meat-space” into digital realms. These different developments are, however, related: They beg the question how do we relate to one another and to the planet today? In this module, we will address this question through three connected register of how we relate to another as all these developments require the creation and the exchange of information (I), wherein different actors establish, circulate, and execute different forms of power (P), which enable as well as constrain, ultimately, how we care (C) for one another. Social scientists (political scientists and sociologists) not only study these three CPI registers traditionally, but with the increasingly global and local challenges we are now facing, the role of the social scientists and the demands made on them by individual and institutional stakeholders is significantly changing. In this module, not only will the above sketched questions and the theoretical and methodological tools to analyze them be addressed, but also will possible futures of scholarship be developed that establish how social scientists can play the role of a critical friend that brings stakeholders and vulnerable communities together across power and information through mutual established practices of care. In conclusion, the question will be addressed If there can or even must be such a thing as a “transnational welfare state”.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person lectures.

Assessment: Mid-term assignment (30%), Final Essay (2500 words, 70%).

Assigned Readings: Assigned weekly texts.

SP3139: Comparative Government and Politics

Lecturers: Kevin Leyden, Sarah Jenkins and Brendan Flynn

This module provides an introduction to contemporary systems of government and the politics in countries around the world. It begins with an analysis of the major traditions in comparative political science, comparing methodological approaches and identifying the central questions addressed in comparative political research. Using examples from a variety of countries, the module examines subjects such as democratic governance and democratic backsliding, traditional and informal governance structures, populism, women in politics, and forms of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. By examining these different subjects students will gain insights into how universal certain domestic Irish political phenomenon are, what common causes they may share, and how different trajectories of political development are possible. The module will give students a basic grasp of the comparative method, its role in political science research, and the usefulness of comparison in understanding politics and government. The module also explores how political systems that range from authoritarian to democratic can change and how and why this can occur.

Prerequisites: none
Min/max number of students: restrictions apply
Teaching and learning method: weekly in-person lectures.
Assessment: 30% for a midterm essay and 70% end of semester exam.
Core text: assigned readings

Semi-Core module

SP405: Contemporary Social Thought

Lecturer: Diana Stypinska and Niamh Reilly

While there is much diversity in contemporary social theory, one of its central characteristics is the focus on power. *How is power enacted? How is it maintained? How can it be resisted?* – these are just a few questions that continue to animate the discussions in social and political sciences alike.

Thinking about power *systematically* entails engagement with a range of key themes, such as, ‘social order’, ‘social knowledge’, ‘social divisions’ and ‘social change’, to name just a few. Taking these as its starting points, this module will introduce you to a variety of diverse contemporary social thinkers, exploring the ways in which they approach, investigate, and conceptualise ‘power’ in their work.

Each week, we will focus on the contributions of one specific social thinker, identifying and critically evaluating the uses and limitations of his/her concepts and approach, through their application to ongoing social issues. In so doing, the module will not only introduce you to the key concepts and debates in contemporary social theory, but also equip you with a wide range of ideas that will help you to make sense of, and critically engage with, our social worlds.

Prerequisites: None. Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply. Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person lectures.
Assessment: Mid-term essay 1500 words (30%) and end of semester exam (70%).
Language of instruction: English.
Core text: Assigned readings.

OR

SP3137: Youth and Society

Lecturers: John Canavan and Bernadine Brady

This module provides learners with an opportunity to explore and critically analyse the position of childhood and youth from a sociological perspective. In the early part of the module, students will be introduced to theoretical perspectives on the phenomena of ‘childhood’ and ‘youth’, exploring how these concepts have varied across time and culture. Drawing on relevant theory and empirical research, learners will then engage in an in-depth analysis of a range of thematic issues within contemporary research on childhood and youth, including education, citizenship and political engagement, family life and relationships, and youth transitions to adulthood. On completion of this module, students will have knowledge and understanding of key theoretical perspectives on childhood and youth in society, be able to critically analyse the lives of children and youth in key areas of: education; citizenship and political engagement; family and peer relationships; youth transitions to adulthood and understand how social factors influence the life experiences and life chances of young people in childhood, youth and early adulthood.

Prerequisites: None
Min/Max number of students: restrictions apply
Teaching and learning method: weekly in-person lectures.
Assessment: Mid-term assignment (30%), end of semester exam (70%).
Language of instruction: English
Core texts: Assigned readings

Specialist Elective Modules Semester 2

SP3192: Sociology of Religion

Lecturer: Vesna Malesevic

The module is organized around the themes of how we sociologically understand and interpret the phenomenon of religion. The main emphasis is placed on the analysis of texts to encourage students to think sociologically about religion. We address the classical concepts of religion as well as contemporary theories, and discuss the social, political and cultural processes that affect transformation of religion and its institutions. We examine relationships between religion and other spheres of social life such as politics, gender, sexuality, and health.

Prerequisites: None
Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.
Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminar.
Assessment: Continuous assessment.
Language of instruction: English
Core text: Selected readings

SP3129: Sexualities, Genders and Diversities

Lecturers: Stacey Scriver

Contemporary societies can offer individuals different ways through which to experience sexuality and gender, to enact gender and sexual identities and to advocate for sexual and gender rights. But genders and sexualities continue to be contested and some gender and sexual expressions are marginalised and problematised. The objective of this module is to explore the construction, expression and management of diversity, gender and sexualities in contemporary societies, with a focus on Western Europe and North America. As an inter-disciplinary module incorporating sociology, politics, social work and gender and feminist theory, this course aims to stimulate students to rethink and re-evaluate typical/traditional understandings of the role and function of gender, sexuality and diversity. It also aims to develop students' analytical skills and critical language so students can question the gendered and normative world in which we live. Case studies that examine continuing exchanges between real-life sexualities and the contexts within which they are forged are integral to the course. The role of masculinities and femininities will be explored, particularly as they relate to economic, political and social inequalities for all genders, and how

these are inscribed into, and sometimes challenged by, law and policy. Topics include mental health; relationships and consent; domestic, sexual and gender based violence; social construction of genders and sexualities; heterosexual, gay and lesbian and queer theories.

Prerequisites: None

Min/Max no. of students: restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminar.

Assessment: Continuous assessment.

Language of instruction: English

Core Texts: Assigned readings

SP721 Ocean & Marine Politics

Lecturer: Brendan Flynn

This course explores some of the politics that happens at sea. In particular we will focus on the politics of fishing and marine renewable energy, and to a lesser extent we will look at conflicts over marine natural resources, disputes on marine boundaries, and the role of the state as regards all matters of the sea. The course explores various theoretical perspectives, in particular an emerging literature that stresses the 'social construction' of the sea, and the concept of 'resilience'. We will also examine methodological questions, or how should we study a politics of the seas? Here the focus is on exploring to what extent qualitative ethnographic methods can help shed understanding and context on complex marine based activities.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions Apply.

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminar.

Assessment: Continuous assessment.

Language of instruction: English

Core texts: Jacques, Peter and Zachary A. Smith. (2003) *Ocean Politics and Policy: A Reference Handbook*. ABC-CLIO Ltd. 333.9164 JAC

SP4131 Smart & Liveable Cities and Suburbs

Lecturer: Kevin Leyden

The year 2008 marked a turning point in global historical settlement patterns; for the first time in human history the majority of people now live in urban areas. By 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will be urban. This module explores the need to improve the way we plan and maintain our urban places in order to make them better for people and the planet. Three interrelated policy and business trends associated with urbanism are examined: Smart Cities, Liveable or Healthy Cities, and efforts to reduce the effects of car-dependent suburban sprawl. Each of these trends has importance for enhancing our quality of life and addressing climate change. Each also creates unique economic opportunities and public and social policy challenges. The course will critically examine these trends and their unique relevance internationally and for Ireland.

Prerequisites: None

Min/Max no. of students: Restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminar.

Assessment: Midterm exam (30%) & Final essay (70%)

Language of instruction: English

Core Texts: Assigned readings

SP3218 Politics in practice - Art and Activism

Lecturer: Kevin Ryan

This module brings sociology into conversation with the field of socially-engaged art, focusing specifically on power relations. The writer and curator Nato Thompson offers a neat entry-point into the field of engaged-art when he proposes that socially-engaged artists share an awareness that 'living itself exists in forms that [can] be questioned, rearranged, mobilised and undone...Whatever has a form can be criticised, disintegrated, assembled' (Thompson 2012, p. 19). This is the approach taken in this module, focusing on artists and practices that aim to disrupt, transform, or reconfigure power relations. In the first part of the course, we explore the work of leading theorists in the field, thereby opening out key questions and issues concerning consensual versus antagonistic approaches, participation v spectatorship, and collaboration as co-production. In the remainder of the course, we will explore a selection of influential artists and projects that engage with relations of power.

Prerequisites: None

Min/Max no. of students: Restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: weekly seminar

Methods of assessment and examination: continuous assessment (60%), final essay (1500 words, 40%)

Language of instruction: English

Core Texts: Assigned readings and learning materials

SP420: Sociology of the Environment

Lecturer: Mike Hynes

This module explores the relationship between social, political transformation, and environmental change, focusing in particular on sustainability questions. It seeks to answer questions about whether, and to what extent, interactions between society and the environment in Ireland and elsewhere remain hidden and how political influences shape how they are perceived. The module also looks at urban planning, sustainable, and active transport options, and aims to assess the relationship between the urban and built environments and the crucial social life it sustains. The first two parts of the module give rise to questions about environmentalism as a form of social organisation and its contributions to contemporary debates on society-environment interactions and sustainability questions. The third part of the course examines social and political developments related to the rise of environmental movements in Ireland and worldwide. What are the basic tenets of environmentalism? And is there a 'sustainable way forward'? What are the choices facing us in the 21st century? Are there pathways to alternative futures that recognise the realities of the climate crisis?

Prerequisites: attendance for this module is mandatory. Please do not select this module if you are unable to attend class every week

Min./max. no. of students: restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: weekly two-hour discussion-based seminars; students MUST read assigned texts and undertake directed activities in advance of each class

Assessment: in-class participation (10%), regular in-class discussion board posts (50%), a final 5-minute video documentary with an accompanying academic essay/descriptor of at least 1,000 words (40%)

Language of instruction: English

Core Text: assigned readings will be made available on Canvas.

SP3194 Theories of Nationalism

Lecturer: Judith O'Connell

Whilst many would agree that nationalism is a loyalty or devotion to one's nation above all others, some theorists have asked how this affiliation comes into being. Is nationalism an innate natural emotion or is it a social construct? This course will examine the main contemporary theories of nationalism, analyse key concepts and discuss classical debates in the study of nationalism. We will analyse nationalism's emergence and endurance as a factor in modern politics and society. Topics covered include: nationalism and state-building, nationalism and economic modernization, nationalism and identity, by applying these theoretical perspectives to the contemporary experience of conflict in Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminar.

Assessment: Continuous assessment.

Language of instruction: English

Core text: Selected readings

SP3193 Introduction to Social Work

Lecturer: TBC

This module provides an introduction to professional social work. It considers social work in Ireland and within an international context. The nature and diversity of social work practice is explored. Many areas of social work practice are covered including social work in child protection and welfare, mental health, disability and health care settings. Perspectives from practitioners and those who use services are included in the module. An emphasis is placed on social work with regard to: The diverse knowledge base social work draws from; Values and Ethics; Balancing support and protection; Socio-legal practice; Promoting Human rights and Social Justice; Civic Engagement and Citizenship.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply.

Teaching and learning methods: Two-hour lecture (on campus) per week.

Assessment: Participation (10%), Continuous assessment (30%), Final essay (60%).

Language of instruction: English

Core text: McGregor C and Pat Dolan (2021) *Support and Protection Across the Lifecourse: A Practical Approach for Social Work* (PART 1), Bristol, Policy Press; Doel M (2010) *Social Work: The Basics*. London, Routledge; Cree, V. (2013) *Becoming a Social Worker*. London: Routledge

SP3101: 'Community' – Significance & Change

Lecturer: Brian McGrath

'Community' remains an enduring, albeit contested, concept despite claims of its disappearance in the modern age. At the same time, globalisation, mobility, technology and a range of other phenomena have changed people's experiences and understandings of 'community'. The experience of changing community life will be located through significant critical themes, which include among others: belonging, conviviality, neighbourliness, place, identity and migration. The module will also examine cases of local conflicts and consensus-style development that shape and are shaped by interpretations of 'community'. Empirical cases will be drawn from a range of international studies to explore these issues and themes.

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminars.

Assessment: Continuous assessment & final essay.

Language of instruction: English

Core text: Assigned readings

SP3103: European Union: Polity, Political Economy and International Role

Lecturer: Gerry Fitzpatrick

This course aims to analyse the 'European Project' – an 'Unidentified Political Object' – through a discrete combination of three approaches: those of Political Theory, Political Economy and International Relations

(IR). Students are not expected to be *a priori* theoretically *au fait* with academic scholarship in these three fields: you shall effectively be practically acquainted with and use political theory, political economy and IR ideas in analysing the various facets of the European Union (EU).

The course shall be taught in four parts: first, we shall examine critically the historical origins of the European Idea and its 1980s 're-launch'; secondly, we will try to understand what the EU actually is, what it represents in terms of the political theory of the State and legitimacy; thirdly, the origins, progress and problems of the political economy of the Euro shall be dissected; and finally, the global meaning, role and positioning of the EU shall be assessed. If structure is a function of purpose – what exactly is the purpose of the EU in the 21st century and how should it appear and work?

Prerequisites: None

Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminar.

Assessment: Continuous assessment.

Language of instruction: English

Core texts: Assigned readings

SP3198 Songs of Rebellion: Power, Resistance, and Affect

Lecturer: Diana Stypinska

This module explores the ways in which music operates as a means of challenging, disrupting, and resisting the social order. It encourages students to reflect on the relationship between art, power, and resistance by critically engaging with a wide range of 'protest' songs. To this end, the module critically analyses specific pieces of music through the application of a wide range of conceptual tools drawn from critical, decolonial, race, and feminist theories. It intends to advance students' sociological imagination by fostering the awareness of the value of the 'aesthetic dimension' as a means of dissensus, with a particular emphasis on the theme of social change.

Prerequisites: None. Min./max. no. of students: Restrictions apply. Teaching and learning methods: weekly in-person workshops.

Assessment: Presentation (50%) and Critical Comment 1500 words (50%) OR Final Essay 3000 words.

Language of instruction: English.

Core text: Assigned readings.

SP3150 Teaching Methods for the Politics and Society Classroom

Lecturer: Lisa Walshe

This module aims to provide students with the ability to examine and critically engage with the Leaving Certificate subject 'Politics and Society'. It will provide students with clear knowledge and understanding of the subject specification, the strands of study and the topics of learning and discussion. It will give students the skills to identify and employ a range of materials, resources and teaching methodologies, which will allow them to effectively teach and engage with the subject. The module aims to provide students both with the skills and the confidence to provide a collaborative, participative and democratic learning environment for those studying the subject in a post primary school context.

Prerequisites: None

Min/Max no. of students: Restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: weekly in-person seminars.

Assessment: Continuous Assessment

Language of instruction: English

Core Texts: Assigned readings

SP3213 Contemporary African Politics

Lecturer: Sarah Jenkins

This module will introduce students to some of the main debates and issues in contemporary African politics, exploring them within their historical, social and cultural contexts. Africa has often been neglected in the study of politics and international relations, and has been subject to media representations that dismiss it as a continent universally ravaged by conflict, state collapse, famine, and disease. This module seeks to challenge these perspectives. Recognising the diversity and heterogeneity of the African experience, the module will explore the factors that have influenced social, economic, and political trajectories across the continent, and will consider both the challenges and opportunities in Africa's contemporary domestic and international affairs. The module is organised along three central themes: a) colonial legacies and the nature of the contemporary African state; b) contemporary security and development challenges; and c) Africa's international relations. By the end of the module, students should have a broad understanding of the politics of Africa, and its position in global affairs.

Prerequisites: None

Min/Max no. of students: Restrictions apply

Teaching and learning methods: Weekly in-person seminar

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment comprised of a collaborative podcast episode and accompanying reflective report.

Language of instruction: English

Core Text: There is no single 'core' text that covers the whole module, but students may find the following helpful introductions to some of the key topics addressed in the module: Thompson, Alex, 2023, *An Introduction to African Politics*, 5th edition, Abingdon: Routledge; Cheeseman, Nic, David Anderson, and Andrea Schelibler, 2015, *The Routledge Handbook of African Politics*, Abingdon: Routledge.

SPL304 Women, Men and the Economy: Critical Explorations of Theory and Policy

Lecturer: Nata Duvvury

The COVID19 crisis has followed as the Irish economy was finally recovering from the 2008 financial crisis. The gains in employment made by women in the recovery phase have now been undermined as the COVID crisis has unfolded in the last year and half. The oscillation in women's employment poses a challenge to our understanding of the economy and society. Can we discern a shift from the implicit male breadwinner model of economic and social policy? If so, why does there continue to be marked differences in the experience of women and men in the economy with persistent wage differentials, occupational and sectoral segregation and unequal work-life balance? This module will explore a) feminist critique of mainstream economic models, b) the changing structure of economic activity, including social reproduction, and explanations for the persistence of gender inequalities in the labour market, and c) the implications of economic and social policies such as taxation, social welfare and employment policy.

Prerequisites: None

Min/Max no. of students: Restrictions apply

Teaching and Learning Methods: Weekly in-person seminar

Assessment: Continuous Assessment

Language of instruction: English

Core Text: Assigned Readings

Contact Details

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