



**SP1125**  
**'Introduction to Politics'**  
**Module Handbook**  
**2024-25**

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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.*

*Gerry Fitzpatrick, 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, Gerry Fitzpatrick, Email: [gerard.fitzpatrick@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:gerard.fitzpatrick@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](mailto:brendan.flynn@universityofgalway.ie))

Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh ([niall.odochartaigh@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:niall.odochartaigh@universityofgalway.ie))

Dr Kevin Ryan ([kevin.ryan@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:kevin.ryan@universityofgalway.ie))

Dr Allyn Fives ([allyn.fives@universityofgalway.ie](mailto: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, Gerry Fitzpatrick ([gerard.fitzpatrick@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:gerard.fitzpatrick@universityofgalway.ie)) and/or the College office ([artsundergrad@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:artsundergrad@universityofgalway.ie)).

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](mailto: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 Gerry Fitzpatrick ([gerard.fitzpatrick@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:gerard.fitzpatrick@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<br>(Sept. 9) | Induction / Introduction to Politics and Sociology                            |
| Week 1 (Sept. 16)           | Introduction to Politics  |
| Week 2 (Sept. 23)           | Block 1: 'Parties and Power'<br>Dr Brendan Flynn                              |
| Week 3 (Sept. 30)           | Block 1: 'Irish Parties'<br>Dr Brendan Flynn                                  |
| Week 4 (Oct. 7)             | Block 2: 'Democracy and its Discontents'<br>Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh          |
| Week 5 (Oct. 14)            | Block 2: 'Democracy in Divided Societies'<br>Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh         |
| Week 6 (Oct. 21)            | Block 3: 'Introduction to Political Ideologies & Liberalism'<br>Dr Kevin Ryan |
| Week 7 (Oct. 28)            | Block 3: 'Conservatism and Socialism'<br>Dr Kevin Ryan                        |
| Week 8 (Nov. 4)             | Block 4: 'Anarchism'<br>Dr Allyn Fives  |
| Week 9 (Nov. 11)            | Block 4: 'Multiculturalism and Feminism'<br>Dr Allyn Fives                    |
| Week 10 (Nov. 18)           | Exam Revision Lectures  |
| Week 11 (Nov. 25)           | Exam Revision Lectures<br>[LAST WEEK OF TEACHING]                             |
| Week 12 (Dec. 2)            | Study Week  |
| Week 13 (Dec. 9)            | DEC. 9TH – 20TH - SEMESTER 1 EXAMINATIONS                                     |
| Week 14 (Dec. 16)           | DEC. 9TH – 20TH - SEMESTER 1 EXAMINATIONS                                     |

## 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<br>and<br>Wednesdays 13:00-14:00 O'Flaherty Lecture Theatre | Tuesdays 12:00-13:00 O'Flaherty Lecture Theatre<br>and<br>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 | <b>To be confirmed</b><br>(During the exam period:<br>9 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> December 2024) | 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 weeks 10 and 11.



## 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 ‘2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto: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/](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

**Democracy and its Discontents** *Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh*

This week we examine key concepts in democracy including popular sovereignty, representation and the separation of powers and introduce you to contemporary debates on the challenges to democracy, including the rise of authoritarianism and national chauvinism, and declining public participation.

We look then at how democracy works in practice in the Republic of Ireland. Comparing Ireland with other democracies, we critically analyse the distribution of power between parliament, government and Taoiseach, focusing on recent reforms aimed at strengthening the involvement of parliament in law-making and increasing the opportunities for deliberation and public participation. We consider how Ireland fits into wider debates on the challenges to democracy.

Essential reading

Heywood, Andrew (2019 or 2024) Ch. 4 Democracy and legitimacy In Politics 5th or 6th edition. Macmillan (especially the section on 'Democracy') AND the section on 'Modern systems of Political rule' in Ch. 5 'Regimes of the Modern World.

Additional readings

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

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.

## Week 5

**Democracy in Divided Societies** *Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh*

In deeply divided societies the principle of majority rule can lead to the permanent exclusion of large sections of the population from the exercise of power. This exclusion can undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions, contributing in some cases to the breakdown of order. This week's lectures explain the distinctive challenges facing democratic systems in societies that are deeply divided along ideological or ethnonational lines and introduce you to debates around power-sharing. We look then in detail at one important example of power-sharing: the institutions of government in Northern Ireland that were established by the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. We examine how they ensure that all major groups in society are guaranteed a place in government, consider the criticisms of institutionalised power-sharing and analyse the concept of consociational power-sharing.

Essential 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 *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, Vol. 3. Oxford University Press. Especially pp.178-204; 207-210; 216-219.

## Week 6

**Introduction to Political Ideologies & Liberalism** *Dr Kevin Ryan*

This week the first lecture will be an introduction to studying political ideologies, followed by a lecture on liberalism. In the lectures this week, we will be exploring the following questions:

1. how can we define 'political ideology'?
2. how can we locate the origins of liberalism, socialism, and conservatism?
3. what do we mean by the political 'left' and the political 'right'?
2. what are the main ideas that characterise liberalism, and to what extent has liberalism changed as we track it through time?

Essential reading

Andrew Heywood (2017 or 2021) *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. 6th or 7th Edition. Palgrave: London (e-copy available on Canvas and through the library catalogue).

For this week students should read chapter 1 (Political ideologies and why they matter) and chapter 2 (Liberalism)

Additional readings

## 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).

## Week 7

### **Conservatism and Socialism** *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/Right political spectrum, focusing on Conservatism. We then pivot to the Left and explore Socialism:

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

#### Essential reading

Andrew Heywood (2017 or 2021) *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. 6th or 7th Edition. Palgrave: London (e-copy available on Canvas and through the library catalogue).

For this week students should read chapters 3 (Conservatism) and 4 (Socialism).

#### Additional readings

##### 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).

##### 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 8

### **Anarchism** *Dr Allyn Fives*

In this week, we examine 'anarchism'. It challenges the conventional understanding of politics. Anarchists maintain that contemporary (including 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.

Essential Reading

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

Additional 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.

## Week 9

**Multiculturalism and Feminism** *Dr Allyn Fives*

In this week, we move on to 'multiculturalism' and 'feminism'. 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. 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.

## Multiculturalism

Essential Reading

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

Additional 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).

## Feminism

Essential reading

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

Additional 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.

## 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.