

Politics & Society

Paul McAndrew

Leaving Cert

Higher Level

2020-21

Politics & Society – Aims, Objectives & Intro...

1

Student name _____



CONTENTS

Introduction to Politics & Society course	page 4
Some Key Definitions	page 4
Objectives	page 5
Definitions	page 5
Sources	page 6
Course Structure	page 7
Key concepts of course	page 8
What is expected of you?	page 10
Key Thinkers	page 10
- Key thinkers summary with idea /quote	page 11
Assessment	page 16
Introduction to key ideas by Michael Doran	page 19

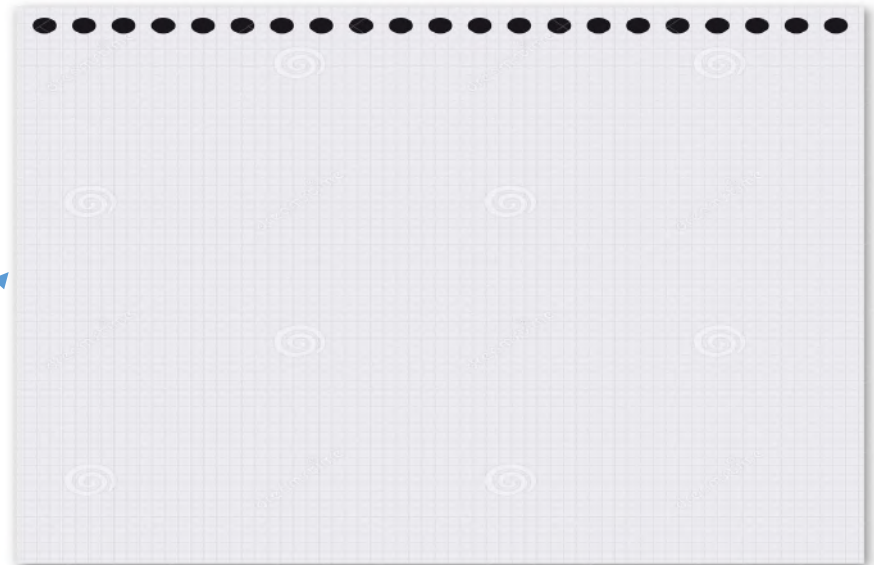


An Introduction: Politics & Society

Aims

Leaving Certificate Politics & Society aims to develop the learner's capacity to engage in **reflective & active citizenship**, informed by the **insights** and **skills** of **social & political sciences**.

What does this mean?



Download from
Dreamstime.com

15325748
Nobitor | Dreamstime.com

Definitions...

Government – a group of people with the authority to govern or control a state or country

Politics– the activities associated with the governance of a country or area.

Society– people living together in a more or less ordered community.

Political science – the branch of knowledge that deals with the state and the systems of government. It can also be described as the scientific analysis of political activity & behaviour.

Reflective – being deeply thoughtful on a matter

Qualitative research – using non-numerical data to research

Quantitative research – using numerical data to research

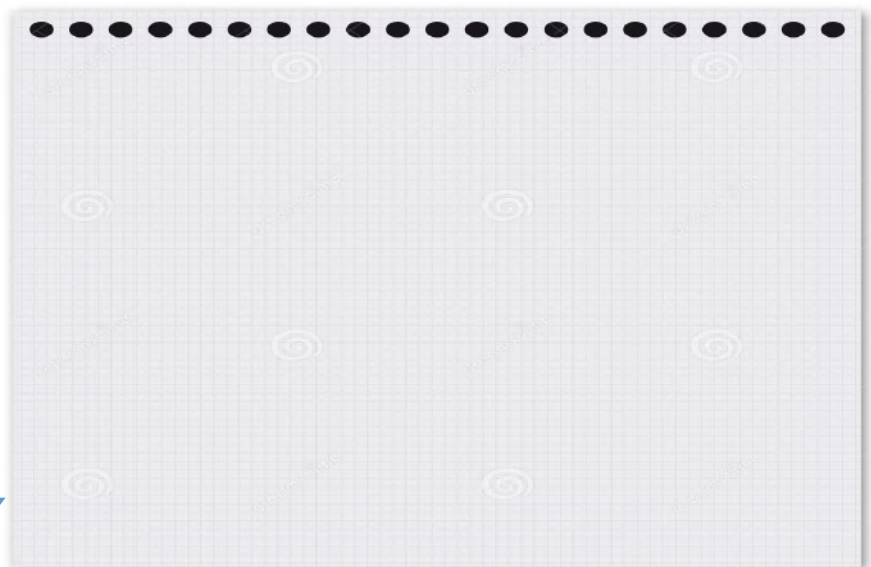
Objective information – “true” data, no bias or opinions attached

Subjective information – opinion based data, general biased

Objectives

The objectives of Leaving Cert Politics & Society course are to develop...

1. an understanding of the social systems within which people act: locally, nationally and more widely
2. an understanding of concepts which underpin contemporary systems of government & of the diverse models for making these concepts operational
3. an understanding of & a respect for human rights & responsibilities, for human dignity & for democratic modes of governance
4. an understanding of & a respect for sustainable development
5. a commitment to & a capacity for active participation in your social & political worlds
6. a commitment to & a capacity for critical, discursive & independent thinking
7. a commitment to & a capacity for engagement in peaceful & democratic means of resolving conflicts
8. a sense of care for others & a respect for & a valuing of diversity in all areas of human life within the parameters of human rights principles
9. the capacity to analyse & interpret qualitative & quantitative social & political research data, & to use such data carefully in forming opinions & coming to conclusions. **This is a very important concept.** So, what does it mean?



Sources

A reliable source is one that provides a thorough, well-reasoned theory, argument, discussion, etc. based on strong evidence.

- Scholarly, peer-reviewed articles or books - written by researchers for students, researchers and the public.
 - o Journals/Articles... written by experts in a particular field of knowledge
 - o Newspapers... well established, with reputation for reliability
 - o Websites... be careful. Not all information is objective.
 - o Books... written by experts in a particular field of Knowledge
 - o Documentaries... well researched, accurate that give an objective point of view
 - o Interviews
 - o Government statistics – e.g. CSO figures
 - o Etc

Objective – not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering & representing facts. A good & reliable source of data & information.



Subjective – based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions. Not a good source of reliable data or information.

Course Structure

Politics & Society is organised in four strands, each structured around key concepts.

These are:

Strand 1 Power & Decision-Making ... Topic 1-2

- foundational concepts in the study of Politics & Society.

Strand 2 Active Citizenship ... Topic 3-4

A focus on some of the key skills relevant to Politics & Society:

- e.g. skills in coming to reflective & informed decisions through debating & discussing ideas with other people
- e.g. skills in being an effective active citizen.

Many of the skills addressed in strand 2 (Topics 3-4) will be developed & applied through the learner's engagement in a citizenship project (CP).

This project is a central opportunity for learning in Politics & Society. It also forms part of the assessment of the subject.

Strand 3 Human Rights & Responsibilities... Topic 5-6

Strand 4 Globalisation (+ Localisation) & Sustainable Development... Topic 7-8

- Strands 3 & 4 provide opportunities to apply the foundational concepts & skills of Politics & Society in increasing depth.

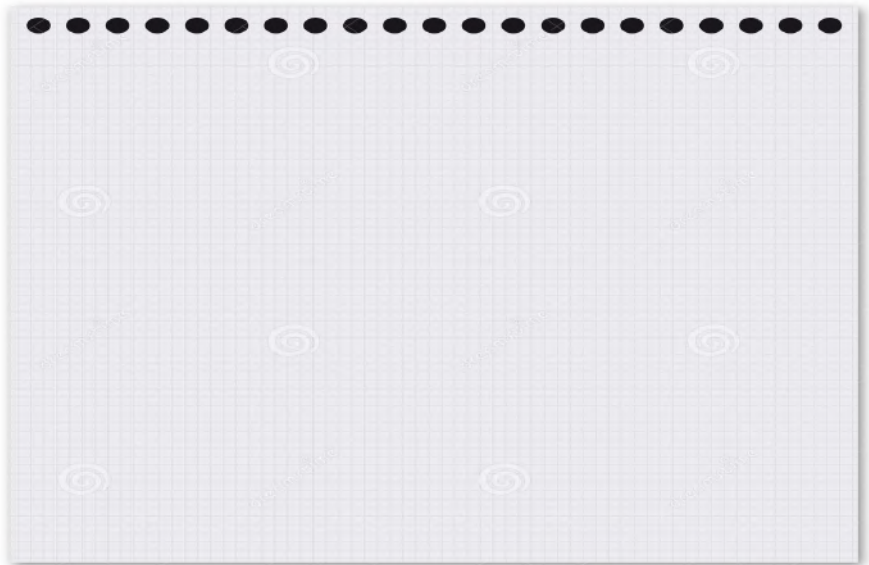
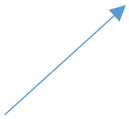
Several features also permeate these strands.

- the discussion of the local, national, European & global dimensions of the issues studied
- the exploration of the similarities & differences in social & political practices around the world
- the analysis & interpretation of qualitative & quantitative social & political research data
- the use of active, participatory, democratic & discursive practices in teaching & learning.

Politics & Society is characterised by an exploration of different ideas about the most appropriate means & ends of human participation in civic, social & political life.

So, what are these concepts...

Power & Decision-Making

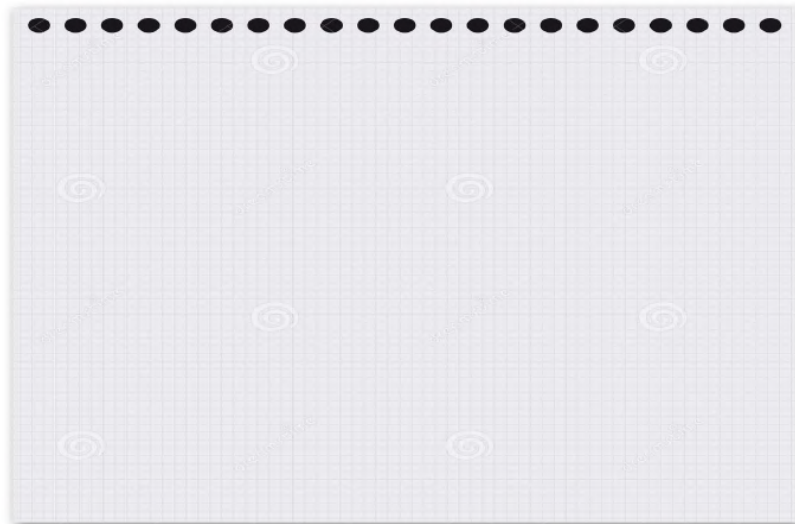


Download from **Dreamstime.com**
This watermark-free image is for previewing purposes only.



15325748
Noblicor | Dreamstime.com

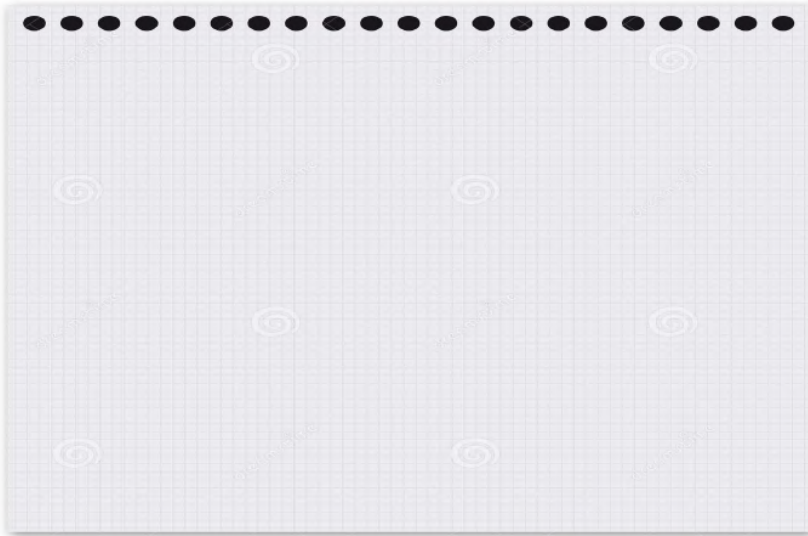
Active
Citizenship



Download from **Dreamstime.com**
This watermark-free image is for previewing purposes only.



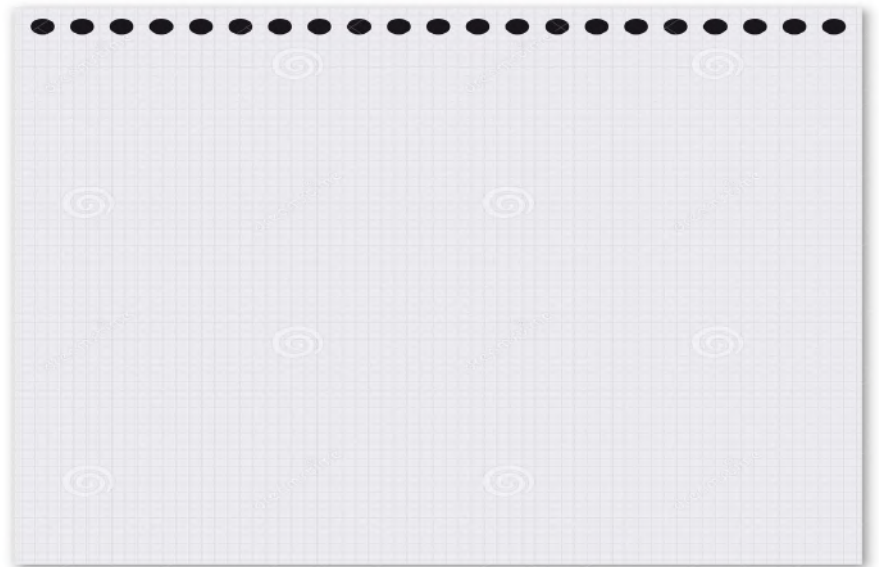
15325748
Noblicor | Dreamstime.com



Human Rights &
Responsibilities

Download from [Dreamstime.com](https://www.dreamstime.com)
This watermarked image is for previewing purposes only.

19325748
Nobilitor | Dreamstime.com



Globalisation (+ Localisation)
& Sustainable Development

Download from [Dreamstime.com](https://www.dreamstime.com)
This watermarked image is for previewing purposes only.

19325748
Nobilitor | Dreamstime.com



What is expected of you?

As a learner, you must take certain issues & look at them in their own local context, then also consider them in a broader context: through this you engage in comparative study.

Over the course of your studies, you will engage with a balance of...

- national
- European
- wider-world contexts
- with both qualitative and quantitative data.

This means that many of the topics addressed in Politics & Society follow a common structure:

- you can begin to engage with a topic through exploring how it applies to your own life or to a context that is meaningful to you
- you can then explore this topic in more detail through applying a range of different arguments to their context
- in doing this you can develop your skills of...
 - discussion
 - debating
 - analysing information
 - using these skills, you can come to informed & accurate conclusions
- you can compare your own context to another context at national, European or global level
- you can explore how various activists & thinkers have contributed to the development of some of these key ideas.

Key Thinkers

One of the features of Politics & Society is that learners will engage with the ideas of a range of thinkers, activists & writers on social & political issues.

Those studying at Higher level will be able to identify some specific writers & the contribution these writers have made to social & political thought. The writers selected in the specification include women & men from Ireland, from Europe & from the wider world.

Contemporary writers are included as well as more historical figures. It is not intended that these would be regarded as the definitive selection of great thinkers in the field. Rather it is intended that they would demonstrate some of the diversity of, & ongoing change in, thinking on social & political issues.

Topics 1&2...

Power and decision Making – education/national/international level

- 1) Thomas Hobbes
- 2) John Locke
- 3) Karl Marx
- 4) Robert Nozick
- 5) John Rawls
- 6) Sylvia Walby
- 7) Kathleen Lynch
- 8) Noam Chomsky

Topic 5&6

Rights and Responsivities – Ireland, Europe/the world

- 9) John Locke
- 10) Robert Nozick
- 11) John Rawls
- 12) Paulo Freire
- 13) Martha Nussbaum
- 14) Kathleen Lynch

Topic 7&8

Globalisation & Sustainability – identity & development

- 15) Thomas Hyland Eriksen
- 16) Kwame Anthony Appiah
- 17) Benedict Anderson
- 18) Edward Said
- 19) Samuel Huntington
- 20) Vandana Shiva
- 21) André Gunter Frank
- 22) Daron Acemoglu & James Robinson (Why Nations Fail)
- 23) Séan McDonagh

Key Thinkers with key idea/quote...

Topics 1&2...

Power and decision Making – education/national/international level

1) Thomas Hobbes

- a. The Social Contract... We, the people, agree to obey the law and to respect the authority of the sovereign, whose power is indivisible and unlimited.
- b. For Hobbes, anyone arguing for individual freedoms and rights had not grasped that the basic security that civilised life took for granted would only endure as long as strong, centralised rule existed.

2) John Locke

- a. In Locke's philosophy, the government is bereft of a right to power, serving only on its received trust of the society. Locke also espouses the imperative of continuous consent. If a person wishes to participate in a society, then consent of birth is not enough, they must continuously consent to being a subject of the commonwealth.
- b. If the government does not have the continuous support of the people, then it is illegitimate.

3) Karl Marx

- a. For Marx, the only way to have a just, equitable society and to cease what he saw as the exploitation of the working class, the capitalistic system must be destroyed.
- b. However, he also acknowledged that the working class had first to develop what is known as "class consciousness": an awareness of common vested interests and the need for collective political action.

4) Robert Nozick

- a. believed that only a minimal state was justified
- b. The role of the minimal state was to protect the natural rights of the individual (including property)
- c. was critical of taxation, wealth redistribution and welfare as he believed these impinged on the rights of the individual

5) John Rawls

- a. believed it was just to redistribute wealth in the interests of those who were the least well off. He justified this under his 'two principles of justice'

6) Sylvia Walby

- a. the role of patriarchy in maintaining female inequalities
- b. Walby has brought all forms of feminism together and offered her unifying analysis
- c. She believes that the patriarchy operates in six forms: in the home, in the workplace, via state policies, through male violence, sexuality, and in institutions such as religion and the media
- d. Walby asserts that there are two main forms of patriarchy: private and public. She believes that women have overcome private patriarchy to a great extent but public patriarchy continues to operate.

7) Kathleen Lynch

- a. We need to promote relational justice and gender justice, Lynch argues, if we are to recognise the importance of affective equality.
- b. She points out that while economic, political and cultural inequalities are all publicly recognised (and many seek re-distribution of wealth, income and resources, as well as parity of political representation/participation and respect and recognition of differences to address each of these respectively), very little attention is given to care-related inequalities, not only in the doing of care work (which is highly gendered, and also classed and raced, in both paid and unpaid forms) but in terms of securing equal access to love and care in our lives, at both individual and collective levels.
- c. While she has committed her life to highlighting issues of human rights she believes that 'a human rights framework operating alone is highly individualistic – it assumes people have the capacity to claim their rights...but many do not. Those who are least powerful to assert their rights can be ignored or treated unjustly (e.g. carers, children, intellectually disabled people)'.
- d. Therefore, she suggests that a rights-based approach to justice needs to be aligned with an ethics of care.

8) Noam Chomsky

- a. In Chomsky's view, although those in power might—and do—try to obscure their intentions and to defend their actions in ways that make them acceptable to citizens, it is easy for anyone who is willing to be critical and consider the facts to discern what they are up to
- b. The point of this self-governance is to make each citizen, in Thomas Jefferson's words, "a direct participator in the government of affairs." He believes that there will be no need for political parties. By controlling their productive life, he believes that individuals can gain job satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment and purpose. He argues that unpleasant and unpopular jobs could be fully automated, carried out by workers who are specially remunerated, or shared among everyone.

Topic 5&6

Rights and Responsibilities – Ireland, Europe/the world**9) John Locke (see previous)****10) Robert Nozick (see previous)****11) John Rawls (see previous)****12) Paulo Freire**

- a. he wished to develop education for critical consciousness leading to social transformation.
- b. He believed a problem- posing pedagogy based on the learner's present interests and experiences
- c. The aim of education is humanization and liberation

13) Martha Nussbaum

- a. believes that liberal education she argues should be Socratic - committed to creating critical and independent minds.

- b. Believed there should be room is thereby left for the exercise of human freedom'. So for example, governments should provide health care but cannot force people to take up healthy life-styles. Nussbaum argues that the following list of central capabilities, which must be afforded to citizens if rights are to be attained.
- c. 'Many women all over the world find themselves treated unequally with respect to employment, bodily safety and integrity, basic nutrition and health care, education, and political voice. In many cases these hardships are caused by their being women, and in many cases laws and institutions construct or perpetuate these inequalities'.

14) Kathleen Lynch (see previous)

Topic 7&8

Globalisation & Sustainability – identity & sustainable development

15) Thomas Hyland Eriksen

- a. The world is moving too fast and needs to slow down, allowing localisation catch up with the global pace
- b. He suggests that the world is overheated. Change has been happening 'too fast, unequal and uneven'.
- c. Counter... Martin Sandbu ... the "Economics of Belonging".

16) Kwame Anthony Appiah

- a. Identity is not innate... it is a social construct and therefore not real
- b. "The truth is that there are no races"

17) Benedict Anderson

- a. The nation is imagined, according to Anderson, because it entails a sense of communion or "horizontal comradeship" between people who often do not know each other or have not even met. Despite their differences, they imagine belonging to the same collectively, and they attribute to the latter a common history, traits, beliefs, and attitudes.

18) Edward Said

- a. Western knowledge about the East is not based upon facts or reality but on certain preconceived ideas and stereotypes.
- b. "Arabs, for example, are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization. Always there lurks the assumption that although the Western consumer belongs to a numerical minority, he is entitled either to own or to expend (or both) the majority of the world resources. Why? Because he, unlike the Oriental, is a true human being."

19) Samuel Huntington

- a. His main thesis was that in a post-cold war world future wars would be fought not between countries, but between cultures.
- b. "We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against.'

20) Vandana Shiva

- a. 'globalisation is giving rise to new slavery, new holocausts, new apartheid. It is a war against nature, women, children and the poor. A war which is transforming every community and home into a war zone. It is a war of monocultures against diversity, of big against small, of war time technologies against nature'.
- b. Shiva is particularly critical of large western chemical corporations who seek to promote their products in the developing world for profit without regard to the economic and cultural sensitivities of local contexts.

21) André Gunter Frank

- a. Frank's main argument was that in our interconnected, globalised world, some countries are winners, whilst others are losers.
- b. According to dependency theory, the people of less-developed countries are not to blame for the failure of their societies to develop. Instead, he suggested that Western nations deliberately failed to develop these countries.
- c. He argued that historically, 'core' nations such as the USA and UK, who made up the elite 'metropolis', exploited 'peripheral' nations by keeping them as satellites in a state of dependency and under-development.
- d. Developed nations become wealthy by exploiting the poorest nations and using them as a source of cheap raw materials and labour.

22) Daron Acemoglu & James Robinson (Author of book; Why Nations Fail)

- a. Prosperous countries have inclusive political and economic systems within their society or nation: allowing citizens feel and be included in the building of the economy and policies of the country
- b. Poverty is caused by extractive political and economic systems with a nation that take from their citizens: thus prosperity struggles to flourish

23) Séan McDonagh

- a. Pope quoted in Laudato Si' was Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who says "if you destroy the rainforests, if you destroy biodiversity – of course climate change – (and) if you interfere with our waters or air, these are sins".
- b. "The people of Bangladesh will suffer, not the Americans or the Europeans who actually put most of the carbon into the atmosphere.
- c. "... Great Barrier Reef, which is the largest living organism on the planet, twenty per cent of the coral polyps died because the surface temperature changed by over one degree Celsius – that's how delicate life in the oceans is. It was (due to) two combinations – the combination of climate change and the El Nino"... "It's horrendous that the Australian and Queensland governments don't see it as an extraordinary crisis. But you can't do coal, and look after your coral (at the same time).
... "You have a country where you have plenty of sunshine, you have a country where you have all kinds of possibilities for alternative energy, so do you put your money into new technologies that are not based on fossil fuels or do you keep stacking up the companies who are making a fortune selling fossil fuel to India and China?"
"These are concrete questions."

Assessment

Assessment in Politics & Society will be carried out through two assessment components:

1. **Report on a citizenship project (20% of the total marks)**
2. **Written examination (80% of the total marks).**

Assessment will be based on the aims, objectives & learning outcomes as outlined in the specification.

The citizenship project (CP) will be based on a brief issued annually by the SEC. The brief will outline several (4) topics, from which you will choose one for their CP. The brief will also outline the parameters for the project & for the report which will be submitted to the SEC for assessment.

The report on a CP will assess the ability to use the knowledge & concepts of Politics & Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities, & your capacity to reflect upon & evaluate what they have learned or achieved from being an active participant in civil, social & political life.

The written examination will assess the ability to apply the knowledge & concepts of Politics & Society to make arguments about political & social issues & the skills of analysing & interpreting qualitative & quantitative data on social & political issues.

The written examination will be available at Ordinary & Higher level & will examine the following:

- knowledge & understanding
- analysis & interpretation of qualitative &/or quantitative social & political data
- capacity to form reasonable & logical argument—clarity & coherence in argument & management of ideas.

The percentage of total marks allocated to this component is 80% as previously stated.

The written examination will be two & a half hours long (150 mins) & will have three sections, arranged according to question type

Question type	Options	Response Format	Weighting Higher Level
1. <u>Short answer</u> questions	Set number of questions	Completed on paper	10%
2. Short answer & extended response questions on <u>data- based</u> case study	Set of unseen questions	Constructed response	30%
3. <u>Discursive</u> essays	Number of topics given	Essay	40%

Section 1 (Short answer questions)

... allows for the knowledge of the candidate to be assessed in relation to Power & Decision-Making, Active Citizenship, Human Rights & Responsibilities and Globalisation (+ localisation) & Sustainable Development.

Section 2 (Short answer & extended response questions on a data-based case study)

... allows the candidate to be assessed in relation to their skills of thinking critically & independently;

- of analysing & interpreting qualitative & quantitative social & political research data;
- & of using such data carefully in coming to conclusions.
- Those being assessed at Higher level will also be assessed on their capacity to come to conclusions by drawing on their wider knowledge from the study of Politics & Society of Power & Decision-Making, Active Citizenship, Human Rights & Responsibilities and Globalisation (+ localisation) & Sustainable Development.

Section 3 (Discursive essays)

... allows for the knowledge of the candidate to be assessed in relation to Power & Decision-Making, Active Citizenship, Human Rights & Responsibilities and Globalisation (+ localisation) & Sustainable Development

... as well as their skills in critical, discursive & independent thinking and in using qualitative & quantitative data carefully in coming to conclusions.

A high level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a thorough knowledge and understanding of Politics & Society facts, concepts & methods from the whole specification & with few significant omissions.

Candidates consistently apply their knowledge & understanding of Politics & Society to both familiar and new contexts.

- They accurately analyse & evaluate qualitative & quantitative data from different sources where appropriate;
- manipulation of data, where appropriate, will be almost flawless.
- Candidates present logical arguments & ideas which are clearly based on evidence.

A moderate level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a good knowledge of Politics & Society facts, concepts & methods from many parts of the specification.

- Candidates apply their knowledge & understanding of Politics & Society to familiar contexts and in some new contexts.
- They carry out adequate levels of analysis & evaluation on qualitative & quantitative data from different sources where appropriate;
- much of their manipulation of data will be correct.
- Candidates present arguments and ideas which, in the main, are based on evidence.

A low level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a limited knowledge & understanding of Politics & Society facts, concepts & methods.

- Candidates select appropriate facts, concepts and methods to apply to familiar contexts.
- They carry out basic manipulation of data correctly.
- Candidates present explanations which are referenced to some evidence, often from familiar contexts.

Introduction – What is Political Ideology? By Michael Doran...

The everyday practice of **politics is shaped by a range of political concepts and ideas**. This influence affects the opinion people hold on what are the best economic and social policies that a government should introduce. Should taxation be increased or lowered? Are social welfare policies too limited or wasteful? What level of access to abortion should be permitted by the state? The language of politics refers to terms such as ‘*freedom*’, ‘*equality*’, ‘*rights*’ and ‘*justice*’. These terms can be interpreted differently by people. This can be seen if the term ‘*equality*’ is considered. What exactly is meant by the term? Are all people equal? Are people entitled to equality of opportunity? Should equal wages be applied to everyone?

Such **differences of opinion are reflected by the political parties/movements that exist within a state**. The opinions that a person has on various issues will determine who a person decides to give political support to. This has led to a **variety of political ideologies**, i.e., **conservatism, liberalism, socialist, communist, fascism**, etc. It is important to understand what these ideologies mean. What **political values or beliefs** are held by people who support each of these political viewpoints? How does liberalism differ from conservatism? What differences exist between communism and socialism? It is because of these questions that it important to start by attempting to precisely define ‘political ideology’.

A political ideology is a set of ideas and principles that guide political views and decision-making. Ideology **shapes how a person views the world**, i.e., their beliefs and values. It influences a person’s political thoughts and actions. The ideology adopted by people will then **determines how society and the state’s economy is organised**.

- Political ideology has three key features that affect personal/government politics;
 - It shapes a person’s existing **world-view** – an **opinion** on present day politics
 - It provides a **vision** of how politics can be used to establish an ideal society.
 - People can choose the **course of action** to govern or change society, i.e., should the existing social/political order be preserved, modified or overthrown?

Political ideology is used as the basis for **establishing the system of governments** across the world. These range from **liberal democracies** in Western Europe to **absolute monarchies** (Saudi Arabia) or totalitarian systems (North Korea). Ideology has also shaped the present structure of nation states. Many countries that exist today are a reflection of the political ideal of **nationalism**, i.e. the idea that people **share a common national identity**.

Political ideology has shaped our world today. For some countries, a commonly shared ideology acts as a **social cement** as it **binds all the various social groups together with unifying beliefs and values**. In Muslim countries, the Islamic religion has bonded their societies together. In Western Europe, the various political groupings operate within the **framework of a democratic system**. In other countries a ruling group can impose its ideology on the people. There are several historical examples of this, e.g. Nazi Germany.



The Political Spectrum – Left Wing and Right Wing...

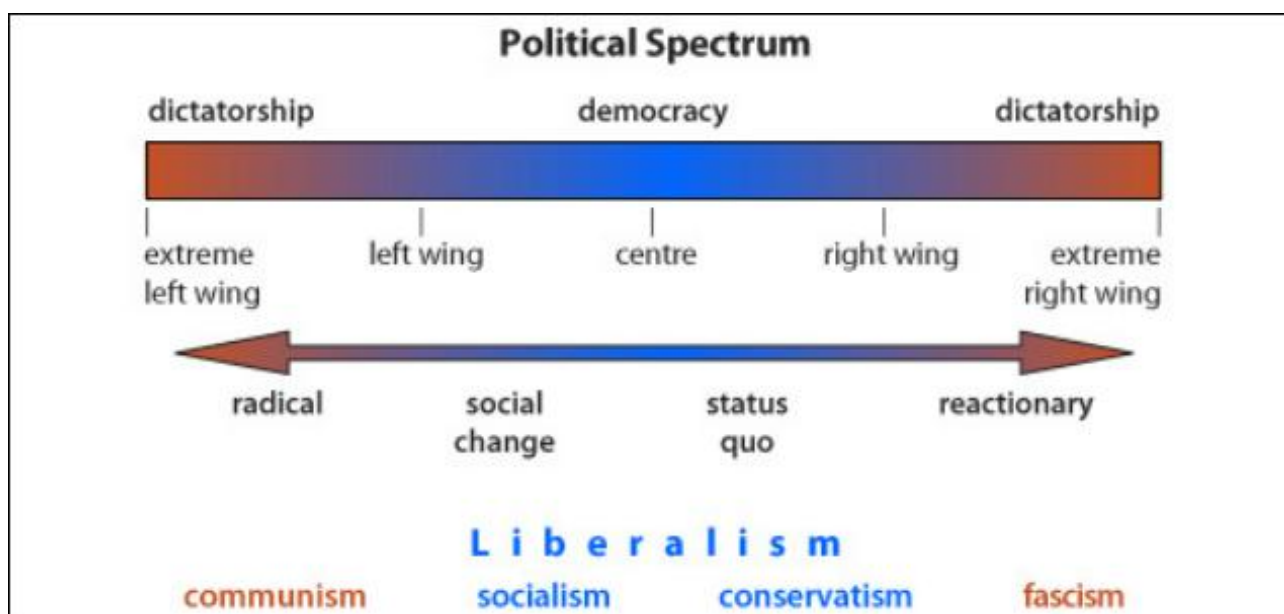
Before the 19th century, most government systems were based on some form of **monarchy**. Political movements did develop that looked to bring about **democratic change**. Political viewpoints ranged from those who wanted to **maintain the old political system** to those who wanted to **reform or overthrow it**. These political stances were most vividly shown during the time of the **French Revolution**. It was during these years that modern politics began to divide into divisions that were described as **'right'** (right wing) or **'left'** (left wing). They came from the seating arrangements used in the French National Assembly of 1789.

- **Right** – this was used to describe those who sat on the right side of the Assembly. They supported the monarchy. It has come to describe those who are politically **conservative**.
- **Left** – this was used to describe those sat on the left side of the Assembly. This included those who wanted to reduce the powers of the monarchy. It has come to describe those who want to achieve a more **egalitarian** society, i.e. **a more politically equal society**.

Since the Industrial Revolution, the changes in society led to the rise of more political viewpoints and ideologies. These included **liberalism**, **socialism** and **communism**. In the 20th century other ideologies developed, e.g. **fascism** and **variations of communism**. Even now in the 21st century, **political ideology continues to evolve**, e.g. **environmentalism**.

Despite this widening range of political ideologies, politics is still classified under the broad description of 'left' and 'right'. To make sense of these ideologies and how they relate to each other, the concept of the **political spectrum** has been developed. This **arranges political ideologies** in a **linear order** from extremes of the political left to the extremes of the political right. This has commonly led to the terms **'left-wing'** and **'right-wing'** being used to identify a person's political beliefs. **Political parties** are routinely referred to as being on the 'left', 'centre' or 'right' of politics. **Political policies** are said to right-wing or left-wing.

- The variations of the political spectrum are shown in the diagram below.



Left-Wing Politics...

Political views on the ‘left’ tend to be supporters of the ideals of **socialism**. They are committed to **greater economic equality** and the **redistribution of wealth**, i.e., a more **egalitarian** society. As you move further leftwards along the political spectrum, you will find the extreme left – **Communism**. In practice, communist states have been **authoritarian** in their exercise of politics. In reality, supporters of the moderate left and supporters of the authoritarian left have little to agree on as the political gap between them is much too wide.

- **Key Thinker:** Karl Marx.

Right-Wing Politics

Political views on the ‘right’ are generally referred to as conservative. They want society to mostly continue as. Reform should come about gradually. Economically, those who hold ‘right-wing’ views usually support the **capitalist** economic system. They view economic equality as being impossible to achieve. In modern times, conservatives have **resisted social change** such as abortion rights, same-sex marriage, etc. Right-wing is a very broad term. In Europe, conservative parties have supported the principles of liberal democracy. As you move rightwards along the political spectrum, you will come across the ideology of **fascism**. This too is an authoritarian political belief. In recent decades (especially in the USA), a variation of political conservatism has become influential. This is **libertarianism**.

- **Key Thinker:** Robert Nozick.

The Political Centre

The political centre is often referred to as ‘**liberalism**’. It seeks to uphold the **rights of the individual** and the principles of representative democracy. It seeks to avoid the extremes of both ‘left’ and ‘right’. It often seeks to regulate the free market capitalist economy while avoiding extremes of wealth. In recent times, liberalism has become linked with ‘progressive’ policies such as LGBTQ+ issues, support for refugees/immigrants, women’s rights, etc.

- **Key Thinker:** John Locke.

A Revised Version of the Political Spectrum

