

## **Politics FHS 2019-2020**

### **Internal Examiners' Report**

The Politics examiners identified the following issues in the course of the PPE and HPOL examinations this year.

**1. The effect of the switch to “open book” examinations.**

One view is that open book examinations allowed candidates to resist the temptation to show everything they could remember, and spend more time thinking about the questions asked. Another view is that candidates were tempted to over-prepare their essays, and found it hard to abandon the prepared material when answering less expected questions. The examiners suggest that these effects are discussed in departmental committees if next year's examinations are also to be "open book".

**2. Word length.**

The examiners imposed a maximum word length for essays, in order to deter candidates from dumping large blocks of prepared material into their answers. Few candidates seemed to have had difficulty sticking to the limit, though most wrote right up to the limit. The limit will also need to be reconsidered if “open book” examinations are to be held again.

**3. Plagiarism and poor academic practice.**

The new rules about plagiarism and ‘poor academic practice’ were a source of difficulty to the examiners. There were only a few cases of copying. However, a significant number of candidates paraphrased closely without full acknowledgment of their sources, and some did so repeatedly. There may have been some variation in markers’ willingness to flag such behaviour. The examiners therefore wish to recommend that the Departments and the PPE and HPOL course committees reconsider the wording of the rules to make it clearer what counts as plagiarism and poor academic practice, both to candidates and to markers.

It came as a surprise to the examiners that the Proctors, to whom referral of plagiarism cases must be made, have no capacity for investigating it, to the extent of not even possessing a working copy of the Turnitin software. The Proctors required the examiners to supply them not only with the examination script, marked up, but also with all the original sources, also marked up. This created significant additional work for the examiners. They therefore wish to recommend that, if open book examinations are to continue, resources are made available by the Departments to support the gathering and presentation of evidence to support Proctorial investigations.

**4. The classification of candidates.**

The PPE and HPOL Chairs’ reports will explain in full the classification methods adopted by the two boards. They included safety-net measures which removed the weakest papers from the classification altogether, and a more generous consideration of mitigating circumstances which often led to the disregarding of other papers. Since

the raw marks produced by examiners and assessors did not substantially differ from normal, the result was a significant uplift in the number of Firsts and Upper Seconds.

**5. Politics Subject Board**

The examiners adopted the suggestion made by last year's Politics Convenor (Stuart White) that a Politics Subject Board - consisting just of the Politics examiners and the Politics external - be established to consider the initial spread of marks for each paper, and moderate the marks where they seemed to demand it in the light of statistical analysis. The Politics Subject Board also considered instances of markers unable to agree, of short weight, late submission and breaches of the rubric. It then made recommendations on these matters to the classification boards – i.e. to the full PPE and HPOL boards. The examiners think that this was a useful innovation and propose that it be continued.

**6. The rubric of paper 202 (British Politics and Government since 1900).**

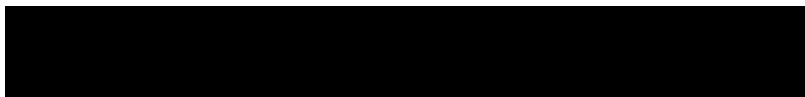
This paper has a rubric which requires candidates to 'show knowledge of events before and after 1951'. As in some previous years, a very small number of candidates failed to meet the requirement, possibly because it is not clear to them how *showing knowledge* of events before and after 1951 differs from *answering questions* on events before and after 1951. The examiners therefore wish to recommend that the rubric be changed to require candidates to 'answer questions on events before and after 1951' and that, if necessary, a Section A / Section B structure be adopted to make it abundantly clear which are which.

**7. Typewritten e-scripts**

Typewritten e-scripts were more legible than handwritten scripts. It was also helpful that both markers of an e-script could mark it at the same time, and that both markers could see it when reconciling marks.

**8. Administrative support**

In a very difficult year, the examiners are especially grateful to Durga Sapre and Violet Brand for their matchless organization and helpfulness, and also to Musashi Harukawa for his useful statistical calculations.



## Politics FHS 2020 - exam performance statistics by paper and school

	School	Takeup	Mean	St. Dev	Max	Min	>=70	>=60	>=50	>=40	Lower Q	Median	Upper Q
Total	PPE	803	66.5	4.9	83	46	26.90%	65%	7.60%	0.50%	64	67	70
	HP	160	65.6	4.86	78	54	24.40%	64.40%	11.20%	0%	62.8	65	69
	Combined	963	66.3	4.9	83	46	26.50%	64.90%	8.20%	0.42%	63	66	70
Advanced Paper in Theories of Justice	PPE	29	68.4	3.63	76	62	37.90%	62.10%	0%	0%	67	68	70
	HP	2	71	1.41	72	70	100%	0%	0%	0%	70.5	71	71.5
	Combined	31	68.6	3.58	76	62	41.90%	58.10%	0%	0%	67	68	70.5
British Politics and Government since 1900	PPE	89	64.9	6.76	82	46	19.30%	62.50%	14.80%	3.41%	61	66	69
	HP	22	65.5	3.7	72	60	22.70%	77.30%	0%	0%	63	64.5	67.8
	Combined	111	65	6.26	82	46	20%	65.50%	11.80%	2.73%	62	66	69
Comparative Demographic Systems	PPE	5	70	4.18	77	66	40%	60%	0%	0%	68	69	70
	HP	1	71	nan	71	71	100%	0%	0%	0%	71	71	71
	Combined	6	70.2	3.76	77	66	50%	50%	0%	0%	68.2	69.5	70.8
Comparative Government	PPE	46	67	3.96	77	59	21.70%	73.90%	4.35%	0%	64	67	69
	HP	12	64.7	5.21	78	58	8.33%	83.30%	8.33%	0%	61.8	63.5	67
	Combined	58	66.6	4.31	78	58	19%	75.90%	5.17%	0%	64	66.5	69
Comparative Political Economy	PPE	22	68	3.39	75	63	31.80%	68.20%	0%	0%	65	68	70
	HP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Combined	22	68	3.39	75	63	31.80%	68.20%	0%	0%	65	68	70
Government and Politics of the United States	PPE	13	66.2	4.49	74	59	23.10%	69.20%	7.69%	0%	63	66	68
	HP	6	66.7	5.05	72	60	33.30%	66.70%	0%	0%	63.2	66.5	71.2
	Combined	19	66.3	4.53	74	59	26.30%	68.40%	5.26%	0%	63	66	70
International Relations	PPE	135	66.3	4.37	75	54	25.20%	66.70%	8.15%	0%	64	66	69.5
	HP	25	64.8	4.17	72	54	12%	72%	16%	0%	64	65	67
	Combined	160	66	4.36	75	54	23.10%	67.50%	9.38%	0%	64	66	69
International Relations in the Era of Two World Wars	PPE	14	68.3	3.77	76	64	21.40%	78.60%	0%	0%	66	67.5	69
	HP	4	67	4.08	71	63	50%	50%	0%	0%	63.8	67	70.2
	Combined	18	68	3.76	76	63	27.80%	72.20%	0%	0%	65.2	67.5	69.8
International Relations in the Era of the Cold War	PPE	23	66.8	3.49	72	57	17.40%	78.30%	4.35%	0%	64.5	68	68.5
	HP	3	65	5.57	71	60	33.30%	66.70%	0%	0%	62	64	67.5
	Combined	26	66.6	3.68	72	57	19.20%	76.90%	3.85%	0%	64	67.5	68.8
International Security and Conflict	PPE	46	68.7	3.82	77	58	45.70%	52.20%	2.17%	0%	66	68	71
	HP	6	69.2	4.49	74	61	66.70%	33.30%	0%	0%	68.5	70	71.5
	Combined	52	68.7	3.86	77	58	48.10%	50%	1.92%	0%	66	68.5	71
Marx and Marxism	PPE	9	68.1	5.23	76	62	44.40%	55.60%	0%	0%	64	66	71
	HP	2	68	1.41	69	67	0%	100%	0%	0%	67.5	68	68.5
	Combined	11	68.1	4.7	76	62	36.40%	63.60%	0%	0%	64	67	71
Modern British Government and Politics	PPE	19	64.6	4.02	72	56	15.80%	73.70%	10.50%	0%	62	64	67
	HP	4	67.2	7.18	78	63	25%	75%	0%	0%	63.8	64	67.5
	Combined	23	65	4.62	78	56	17.40%	73.90%	8.70%	0%	62.5	64	67
Political Sociology	PPE	69	65.5	5.38	76	48	26.10%	60.90%	11.60%	1.45%	62	66	70
	HP	12	61.3	4.4	69	56	0%	50%	50%	0%	58.8	59.5	64.2
	Combined	81	64.9	5.43	76	48	22.20%	59.30%	17.30%	1.23%	61	65	69

no candidates in the bands 30-40 and <30

## Politics FHS 2020 - exam performance statistics by paper and school

	School	Takeup	Mean	St. Dev	Max	Min	>=70	>=60	>=50	>=40	Lower Q	Median	Upper Q
Political Thought: Bentham to Weber	PPE	13	68.5	5.58	80	63	30.80%	69.20%	0%	0%	65	66	72
	HP	3	70	6.24	77	65	33.30%	66.70%	0%	0%	66.5	68	72.5
	Combined	16	68.8	5.52	80	63	31.20%	68.80%	0%	0%	65	66.5	73
Political Thought: Plato to Rousseau	PPE	28	65.2	6.32	77	50	28.60%	53.60%	17.90%	0%	60.8	65	70
	HP	3	66.3	7.77	75	60	33.30%	66.70%	0%	0%	62	64	69.5
	Combined	31	65.3	6.33	77	50	29%	54.80%	16.10%	0%	60.5	65	70
Politics in China	PPE	14	64.7	4.08	73	57	14.30%	78.60%	7.14%	0%	63	64	66.5
	HP	5	67	6.86	76	58	40%	40%	20%	0%	64	66	71
	Combined	19	65.3	4.85	76	57	21.10%	68.40%	10.50%	0%	63	64	67.5
Politics in Europe	PPE	3	70.3	2.52	73	68	66.70%	33.30%	0%	0%	69	70	71.5
	HP	1	62	nan	62	62	0%	100%	0%	0%	62	62	62
	Combined	4	68.2	4.65	73	62	50%	50%	0%	0%	66.5	69	70.8
Politics in Latin America	PPE	9	66.9	4.83	74	58	22.20%	66.70%	11.10%	0%	64	68	69
	HP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Combined	9	66.9	4.83	74	58	22.20%	66.70%	11.10%	0%	64	68	69
Politics in Russia and the Former Soviet Union	PPE	14	67.1	4.04	75	63	28.60%	71.40%	0%	0%	64	65.5	70.5
	HP	4	66	3.37	71	64	25%	75%	0%	0%	64	64.5	66.5
	Combined	18	66.9	3.83	75	63	27.80%	72.20%	0%	0%	64	65	70.5
Politics in South Asia	PPE	11	67.7	1.95	71	65	18.20%	81.80%	0%	0%	66	68	68
	HP	1	76	nan	76	76	100%	0%	0%	0%	76	76	76
	Combined	12	68.4	3.03	76	65	25%	75%	0%	0%	66	68	68.8
Politics in Sub- Saharan Africa	PPE	16	69.1	2.6	73	65	50%	50%	0%	0%	67	69.5	71
	HP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Combined	16	69.1	2.6	73	65	50%	50%	0%	0%	67	69.5	71
Politics in the Middle East	PPE	22	65.7	5.02	73	55	31.80%	54.50%	13.60%	0%	62.2	66.5	70
	HP	5	67	3.24	71	64	40%	60%	0%	0%	65	65	70
	Combined	27	65.9	4.71	73	55	33.30%	55.60%	11.10%	0%	63	66	70
Social Policy	PPE	25	65.6	5.64	76	52	24%	64%	12%	0%	63	65	69
	HP	2	64.5	4.95	68	61	0%	100%	0%	0%	62.8	64.5	66.2
	Combined	27	65.6	5.51	76	52	22.20%	66.70%	11.10%	0%	62.5	65	69
Sociological Theory	PPE	9	66.2	5.78	73	56	33.30%	55.60%	11.10%	0%	62	66	71
	HP	1	63	nan	63	63	0%	100%	0%	0%	63	63	63
	Combined	10	65.9	5.55	73	56	30%	60%	10%	0%	62.2	66	70.2
The Government and Politics of Japan	PPE	2	68.5	0.707	69	68	0%	100%	0%	0%	68.2	68.5	68.8
	HP	1	58	nan	58	58	0%	0%	100%	0%	58	58	58
	Combined	3	65	6.08	69	58	0%	66.70%	33.30%	0%	63	68	68.5
The Politics of the European Union	PPE	7	65.7	2.5	70	63	14.30%	85.70%	0%	0%	64	65	67
	HP	3	67	7.21	73	59	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	0%	64	69	71
	Combined	10	66.1	4.01	73	59	20%	70%	10%	0%	64	65.5	68.8
Theory of Politics	PPE	100	66.2	4.67	83	50	24%	68%	8%	0%	63	66	69
	HP	24	65	4.4	75	58	20.80%	70.80%	8.33%	0%	61.5	65	68
	Combined	124	66	4.63	83	50	23.40%	68.50%	8.06%	0%	63	66	69
Thesis in Politics	PPE	12	69.8	3.17	75	65	50%	50%	0%	0%	68	69.5	71.5
	HP	8	66.5	6.12	73	57	37.50%	37.50%	25%	0%	64	67.5	70.8
	Combined	20	68.5	4.72	75	57	45%	45%	10%	0%	66.8	69	71.5

no candidates in the bands 30-40 and <30

## 201 Comparative Government

There were 58 candidates (46 PPE, 12 HP).

No questions were reported during the exam and the overall quality of answers was good and most answers sufficiently engaged with the literature. Due to COVID-19, the students had one extra hour to download and upload their scripts. The average grade across all scripts was 66.5.

The most-answered questions were Q numbers 7 (democratization/regime change), 2 (electoral systems), 8 (federalism), and 5 (clientelism). The least chosen topics were 4 (methodology), 1 (interest groups), and 6 (judiciaries).

All questions received at least one exam answer. No significant differences in marks across exam answers reported.

General impressions from examiners on relevant and popular questions.

Question 2: The best essays posed various distinctions between the different electoral systems and set out a purpose for classification (linking such systems to different outcomes). Essays discussed mixed systems and alternative classifications of electoral systems.

Question 5: Poorer answers focused on just vote buying discussion about why voter responses were not observable/punishable. Better answers discussed why parties might resort to these strategies in the first place. Strongest answers also presented case-specific evidence.

Question 7: Strong answers cited description of different “waves” of democratization (Huntington) and gave detailed description of at least two time periods. If the answer was “yes,” the essay should have given at least one example of an argument that was a viable “generalization.” Regardless of answer, the essay must engage with some specific examples of non-democratizations or democratizations. Poorer answers focused just on one factor related to democratization and do not discuss how this factor might vary over time.

Question 8: Stronger essays either made conditional arguments (defining conditions under which federalism could increase or decrease conflict), or, if they chose one direction, gave appropriate caveats given limitations of evidence. Strong essays discussed either alternative explanations for conflict or specifically detailed the mechanisms by which federalist institutions matter.

## 202 British Politics and Government since 1900

There were 111 candidates; 89 in PPE and 22 in MHP

**Question One.** Why did trade unions help to set up a Labour Party before the First World War? (18 answers)

The origins of the party were well examined, but some candidates thought that what Labour and the Trade Unions wanted was largely completed by 1914. Others covered a wide range of material, but tended to scatter it so that an argument was obscure. Candidates sometimes interpreted the word 'help' rather generously. A few paid cursory attention to it, and then turned to other factors allegedly more important such as the weakness of the Liberals or Socialism. These are both significant, but not central to the question. Most candidates rightly wrote about Taff Vale and Osborne, although sometimes thinking that legal judgments are passed by governments not law courts. Weak scripts contained little knowledge of trade unions themselves and read like entries from a textbook. The best answers were very knowledgeable and argumentative in the best sense.

**Question Two.** What kept the Liberals in office after they lost their parliamentary majority in 1910? (21 answers)

A small number of answers, some very good - partly because of their originality. Essays concentrated anywhere from what the Irish Nationalists and Labour (separately) wanted, to how the Liberals managed their own backbenchers. A few essays pursued a straightforward answer which was 'self-interest', and illustrated this answer well. More often, candidates thought that a progressive alliance was more plausible than the Conservatives, and pointed to the substantial body of post-1910 legislation. Only two brave souls took their essays into the war. 1914 was the usual end date.

**Question Three.** Why did it take until 1918 for women to gain the parliamentary vote? (45 answers)

Several essays were very similar to each other, and rather loosely structured. It was stated repeatedly that in Parliament by 1900, the battle for enfranchisement had effectively been won. The failure of the House of Commons to pass it helped to cause militancy. Asquith was mentioned in a derogatory fashion in many essays, but very often the reasons why he and others opposed enfranchisement were ignored. The war was frequently mentioned briefly or not at all, even though events since 1914 had changed parliamentary opinion decisively. A few interesting essays discussed what other changes would or could follow enfranchisement. But only a very few considered the state of the franchise movement in 1914.

**Question Four.** Was the partition of Ireland a successful outcome for any political party? (11 answers)

Most candidates were clear that partition was not successful for any party, although a few said that it was ultimately successful for government. Arguments about party often

concentrated on what parties said they wanted in 1910-14, and terms which they had to negotiate after 1919. The standard of answers was high, perhaps because the question asked specifically about partition. Candidates could not therefore end in 1918, although a few tried to do so, and tried a few guesses about what happened later. Good answers explained that 1912-14 was the first significant test of the Parliament Act, and looked at how it fared. Only a small number noticed the deep divisions within the Conservatives over an Irish settlement by 1921.

**Question Five.** Did Conservative electoral success conceal a party frequently divided in the inter-war years? (9 answers)

Whether or not the Conservatives were divided, the candidates answering the question certainly were - a pleasing diversity compared with the near unanimity of answers elsewhere. This was, in part, because some candidates thought that arguments such as continued participation in Lloyd George's coalition, or Free Trade (and other issues), were carried out through open debate. Others thought that most problems, such as how to attract women voters or how to attract Liberal voters, or attitudes to foreign affairs, were symptoms of divisions which the electorate was not allowed to see. But some candidates also disputed whether, fighting by itself, the party was so successful. Although technically interesting, weaker candidates allowed the point to dominate their essays. Strongest essays were excellent, using authors sensibly and addressing themes fluently.

**Question Six.** Was the failure to tackle inter-war unemployment due to lack of economic knowledge, or lack of political will? (4 answers)

Too few answers from which to draw helpful comments, except to note that those which contained parts of arguments drawn from inter-war as well as modern theory were impressive.

**Question Seven.** Why was the 1945 election a Labour landslide? (62 answers)

A popular question, to which answers ranged from the very basic to the very clever and interesting. The weak answers tended to lean heavily on a few authors and tell the examiners what Addison, Pugh and sometimes McKibbin thought. In these answers there was little analysis, and the weakest were little more literature reviews. There is of course, a rich literature surrounding Labour's history before 1945, the politics of the coalition, the emergence of Beveridge and Keynes in Labour's proposals and how Labour steered Britain towards a social democratic future. Good authors knew the arguments and pillaged freely amongst them to construct persuasive essays, and those with sufficient self-confidence showed originality. It was also enjoyable to read students swiping at a few old lines. As one had it: 'the electoral system harmed Labour in 1951, but had helped them in 1945.' . Another asked why if Churchill was unpopular in 1945, the same didn't apply to 1951. There were several other clear and waspish remarks, illustrating thinking as well as reading.

**Question Eight.** Why was the Labour Party so hard to lead in the 1970s and 1980s? (12 answers)

The answers, strongly and probably sensibly, concentrated on the internal affairs of Labour. Only a few looked principally to national and international affairs, claiming that these made it increasingly difficult for Labour to govern. This meant that most essays looked at a party membership at odds with the leadership, mandatory re-selection, the leadership unable to co-operate with conference, and the changing role of trade unions. Labour's period in office tended to be treated lightly, especially the failure of the Social Contract. A surprising number of answers failed to discuss the reasons for the split in 1981, or much to do with Kinnock's leadership. There was a division between those who tried chronological essays, and those who were thematic. The former were sometimes overwhelmed by the scale of what they had taken on. The latter included a few very good accounts. Finally, a few more ignored the difference between government and opposition altogether, which led to rather clumsy analyses.

**Question Nine.** What was Thatcherism designed to achieve? (71 answers)

A frequently answered question, which as usual on this topic, produced knowledgeable and occasionally overly partisan answers. A large number of essays claimed that Thatcherism was not 'designed' at all, or that it was not 'designed to achieve' particular ends. Essays pursuing such a line could then argue that what emerged was pragmatic, and attaching dates to 'Thatcherism' of little analytical value. This was not to say that 'Thatcherism' was not identifiable, just that it was not planned.

Most essays took a more conventional line. Thatcherism was designed to reduce the scale of the state economically, but to expand it in illiberal ways. Although the line is straightforward, some approaches were quite subtle. Only a few, usually weaker answers merely equated 'Thatcherism' with Thatcher, perhaps a view gleaned from basic texts. This is a welcome advance on the cruder, earlier approaches of the more aggressive interpretations. Some issues have developed since the 1990s, and were considered by thoughtful candidates as outcomes of 'Thatcherism' - Europe or privatised industries for example. However answers were constructed, the best were interesting and fluent.

**Question Ten.** Did New Labour leave Labour's traditional voters and values behind? (70 answers)

Most essays contained statements about traditional Labour, but with a curious unwillingness to be precise about what its' values were. Sometimes the values seemed to be simply the opposite of whatever Blair's governments did, which led to a tired recitation of old fashioned assumptions. Other papers accepted, without assessment, that working class demographics had disappeared, in spite of compelling evidence to the contrary, and in spite of the trade unions' continued support for Labour, even in the 2005 election. A more fruitful view was to examine how, as fifteen years had passed between the exit of Labour from office and the coming of New Labour, expectations of the traditional Labour voters might have changed, as in 1945 and 1964. The same scripts sometimes pointed out that traditional Labour voters had often been accepting of new policy. The few candidates who mentioned Brown's premiership at all were able to discuss the question title in the light of the financial



crisis. The best answers were, of course excellent. A disappointing number were determined to write 'all I know about New Labour irrespective of the question' essays. These usually omitted devolution, city academies, Gordon Brown, the Euro, Iraq, any of which could have addressed the essay title.

**Question Eleven.** Have European issues since 1945 caused more divisions within the two main parties than between them? (6 answers)

Only a few answers, the best very clear, generally arguing 'within' ,rather than 'between'. The display of knowledge of internal arguments caused by policy changes was impressive. A very small number of weak answers were valiant, but suggested a search for a third question.

**Question Twelve.** Why have the Conservatives frequently been in peacetime coalitions since 1900, but the Labour Party never? (4 answers)

The answers frequently showed considerable knowledge of party history, although sometimes less of coalitions and their composition. Some were a little too cynical, and occasionally quite amusingly. Conservative motives in particular were summarised as self-interest. Labour, more surprisingly never had the opportunity to form a coalition. More interesting was discussion of what Conservatives hoped to gain from coalition - damaging the Liberals was mentioned frequently.

## PPE and HP

### 203 Theory of Politics

#### Assessors' and examiner's report

The standard of scripts was good with no very poor scripts:

70+ 23.4%; 60+ 68.5%; 50+ 8.06% 50-: 0

There was a notable bunching of answers, with 62% of answers to the four most popular questions, on liberty and taxation, feminism and gender, egalitarianism, and state obligation. The question on liberalism and secularism was least responded to (7 answers), followed by socialism and realism (12), perfectionism and adjudication (15), conservatism (16), and rights and enforcement (17). This suggests that students are not secure in their understanding of the 'isms', despite the fact that broadly liberal values and principles are so central to our syllabus. The perfectionism and adjudication question is tough, requiring reflection on why choice between policies might be argued to entail perfectionism, and in general was responded to by candidates who were willing and able to give this a good shot.

Under conditions in which candidates could refer to their notes, and even to texts, and there were a larger number of quotations or direct paraphrases than is usual in unseen conditions, the strengths and weaknesses of scripts were very much in line with what is normal. Weak and satisfactory scripts replicated material from, and even templates of, lectures, and the standard positions from set reading. As ever, higher marks were awarded to candidates whose essays acknowledged potential objections to the lines of argument they put forward; who did not simply reconstruct positions standard in the literature or expounded in lectures, but showed effort at original thinking and evaluation of these positions; who, if not explicitly at least implicitly recognised why the question put was worth asking; and whose answers were structured clearly around the argument, and actually made the argument they said they would make. First class scripts were well organised and systematically structured, conceptually rigorous and with appreciation of the problems and puzzles of political thought and theory, drew on a solid but also extensive knowledge of the literature, and showed independent reasoning and thinking.

Question	No of answers
1. <i>Does taxation reduce citizens' freedom?</i> a popular question that was generally well done; too many candidates relied on stock libertarian responses, or the scheme of negative and positive liberty, or both, without actually getting to the detail of how, to what extent, and in what way the thesis or its contrary might be true.	66
2. <i>Must feminists choose between achieving sex and gender equality and recognising difference?</i> stronger answers managed to analyse different differences (between men and women; between women; between sex difference and gender difference) as well as interrogating the 'equality as sameness' position, while weaker ones were more superficial.	50
3. <i>Should a liberal state be secular?</i>	7

4. <i>Is an electoral system democratic if only a minority of eligible citizens actually vote?</i> better answers tended to put the normative model of majoritarianism at the centre of considerations of both democracy as such, and democratic legitimacy.	26
5. <i>Should a socialist be a realist?</i>	12
6. <i>What is the value of rights that are not legally enforced?</i>	17
7. <i>What, if anything, makes 'structural injustice' distinct from plain 'injustice' from the point of view of political theory?</i> there were some excellent attempts at this, but many candidates had only the vaguest analysis of structure and structural.	30
8. <i>Are you obligated to any greater degree to the state(s) of which you are a citizen than you are to a state in which you live?</i> stronger candidates avoided the temptation to plod through the range of accounts of obligation, and pleasingly focussed on the question of the obligations of citizenship as opposed to denizenship, temporary residence etc.	48
9. <i>'We have to be perfectionists if we are to be able to adjudicate between alternative public policies.'</i> Discuss.	15
10. <i>Should egalitarians pay more attention to individuals' suffering and disadvantage that are the effects of bad luck, or to suffering and disadvantage that are the effects of power?</i> some candidates struggled valiantly to fit the standard luck versus relational equality literature to this answer, and even better candidates for the most part took the concept 'power' for granted, failing to integrate material from the power topic into their answer.	67
11. <i>'Conservatives must believe that every person in a country must be treated equally under the law.'</i> Discuss.	16
12. <i>Can there be such a thing as a non-ideological political theory?</i>	18

## 204 Modern British Government and Politics

***Q1. Is exit from the European Union, just like entry to the EEC, a 'constitutional moment' for the UK? (3 answers)***

Only a few answers for this question. The better ones defined what a constitutional moment was, and applied their definition carefully; the weaker ones reflected on the importance of Brexit more loosely. Little was said about 'entry to the EEC' and the criteria that made it a 'constitutional moment'.

***Q2. Does partisanship strengthen or weaken the capacity of the UK House of Commons to hold the executive to account? (9 answers)***

Some good answers to this question, but too many candidates used it as an opportunity to discuss the strength or weakness of the legislature in general, and not the specific contribution of partisanship. Some thought partisanship meant combativeness or contrariness.

***Q3. Why does the UK Parliament still have an unelected upper chamber? (6 answers)***

The best answers to this question addressed the puzzle of British exceptionalism and the longevity of an unelected chamber. Weaker answers rehearsed the "House of Lords debate". Some answers also spent too long arguing for a position in this debate: for, or more usually against, introducing an elected element. This left too little space for considering why the unelected chamber was still there.

***Q4. 'Since the powers of the UK Prime Minister are not formally defined, it is impossible to say how powerful the UK Prime Minister is.' Discuss. (14 answers)***

The best answers to this question were well-informed about the powers of the Prime Minister, and the debates in the scholarly literature on how they should be understood and measured. They also thought about the implications of the difficulties of measuring power. Weaker answers related the apparently indestructible "Prime Minister versus Cabinet" debate, often with dated examples.

***Q5. If class no longer explains UK election results, what does? (8 answers)***

This was a large question to answer in the space available and tested candidates' abilities to sum up a lot of complex literature. Most of those who attempted the question did so very well, some challenging the "if" clause in the question, and others accepting it. The best answers were not only well informed, but nuanced in their treatment of the newer models.

***Q6. Has the UK party system become more two-party and more polarised? (1 answer)***

Too few answers for comment.

**Q7. Why are fewer people joining UK political parties?** (9 answers)

There were some strong answers to this question, well-informed about the academic literature and up to date with the data and its complexities. Weaker answers offered naive or speculative reasons for the changes.

**Q8. Why are relationships between UK ministers and higher civil servants deteriorating?** (3 answers)

Few answers. The weaker explanations were often quite superficial, assigning blame without much evidence among a prying media, over-ambitious ministers, and (less frequently) a civil service unfit or unwilling to satisfy these demands. The stronger explanations were more careful in examining changing external demands and expectations and the structures and processes shaping relationships at the top of the executive, or offered a more nuanced account of the 'deterioration'.

**Q9. Is the UK higher judiciary above politics?** (3 answers).

Few answers here too. 'Above politics' was not always very well unpacked, and sharper definitions and better evidence would have helped. Here too, as in some other answers, some candidates gave the impression that they were being asked to make a normative judgment about whether the judges were 'getting above themselves' these days.

**Q10. Why has there been devolution to some English cities and regions since 2010 and not others?** (2 answers)

Too few answers for comment.

**Q11. Is the devolution settlement in EITHER Scotland OR Northern Ireland OR Wales stable?** (8 answers)

The best answers defined 'stability' - itself a complex task - and offered ways of analysing whether it applied in one of the cases. Weaker answers told the story of devolution without closer analysis, or offered a descriptive commentary on the current state of events.

**Q12. 'Few claims about the effects of the media on UK politics have survived the rise of online media.' Discuss.** (2 answers)

Too few answers for comment.

## 205 Government and Politics of the United States examiners' report 2020

Question	Answers (PPE + HP)
1	10
2	4
3	14
4	6
5	5
6	7
7	0
8	1
9	2
10	0
11	8
12	0

There was again a notable clustering of answers for this year's paper; questions on the federal bureaucracy, constitutional interpretation and cities attracted no takers, while questions about exceptionalism, the presidency and race were overwhelmingly popular (perhaps unsurprisingly in the circumstances). The late move to online exams seemed to have a limited impact, mainly in limiting the weakness of less good work. Mostly this seemed to be a case of candidates being more able to demonstrate their abilities than when handwriting under slightly greater time pressure. There were fewer really weak answers and strikingly there were almost no minor factual inaccuracies. Answers were not in general excessively long (or notably longer than usual).

For questions with a significant number of answers:

Q1 (exceptionalism) received generally good answers, with the better ones engaging more directly with the question of what it would mean for exceptionalism to matter and weaker ones focusing more on a more generic explanation of exceptionalism.

Q3 (presidency) was more mixed. While all answers recognised the quotation and broadly understood its context in debates on presidential leadership, better answers showed a more sophisticated understanding of the literature which did not reduce key texts to slogans, and engaged more energetically with the question.

Q4 (parties) received good to excellent answers, showing good understanding of the relevant literature and in some cases connecting that understanding to contemporary party politics.

Q5 (voting) was answered in general well, and certainly knowledgeably, although some candidates seemed keener to talk generally about partisan animus than to answer the question.

Q6 (courts) showed candidates had a generally excellent understanding of the literature, although some struggled to answer the question. The very best answers were able to use recent court cases to show what was at stake in the question.

Q11 (race) produced a range of answers. All were intelligent and well grounded in the literature, and many made intelligent references to contemporary events (in the week before the exam was taken) without being overwhelmed by them. One or two essays struggled to find an argument. The best, of which there were quite a number, handled complex arguments sophisticatedly and incisively and drew clear conclusions.

## Report on Paper 206 Politics in Europe

There were four scripts of which two were excellent, one script was a high 2.1 and one achieved a grade below 65.

The quality of individual answers was generally high, with a few answers demonstrating excellent understanding of the theoretical arguments and using a broad range of relevant empirical examples from states across Europe.

Out of the 12 questions, eight questions attracted at least one answer, and four questions received no attempts. The detailed question breakdown is as follows:

Question	Number of Answers
1	0
2	1
3	0
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	2
8	1
9	3
10	0
11	2
12	0

Specific notes on questions with a substantial number of answers:

9 By far the most popular question, answered by three students. The best answers combined an excellent theoretical understanding of minority cabinet effectiveness with the ability to provide rich illustrative evidence from specific European states.



## **207. Politics in Russia and the Former Soviet Union**

The examination was taken by 18 candidates (14 PPE students and 4 HPol students). Marks ranged from 63 to 75, with an overall average of 67. Five candidates achieved a First Class mark.

Frequency of responses: low (up to 6), high (more than 6).

### **1) In what ways, if any, did perestroika transform the nature of Soviet politics? (High)**

A popular question. The stronger answers focused on changes in leadership, ideology and institutional processes at both the all-union and regional levels, as well as continuities in political culture. Weaker answers strayed into other aspects of perestroika, such as the economy without explaining the relevance of economic reform to the nature of politics.

### **2) Was Soviet nationalities policy ultimately responsible for the breakup of the Soviet Union? (Low)**

Generally strong answers on this question. Students showed good knowledge of Soviet nationalities policies and the opportunities that it presented for nationalist mobilisation during perestroika. They also focused on other factors that were arguably more important in accounting for the breakup of the USSR.

### **3) Are typologies useful for understanding post-Soviet politics? (none)**

### **4) Why are property rights weak in post-Soviet societies? (High)**

Most students answered this question (11 in total). The stronger answers discussed the relative importance of communist legacies, democratic development, 'partial' reform and mass attitudes. They also provided examples from a range of post-Soviet cases. Weaker answers regurgitated lecture notes without critical engagement.

### **5) 'The frequency of constitutional change in post-Soviet states is clear evidence of the weakness of institutional rules.' Discuss. (Low)**

Few students tackled this question. It produced some of the best answers, with students considering whether in fact rule change was evidence of the significance of formal rules. Discussions focused on rules such as term limits, and made good use of comparative examples.

### **6) Why did the colour revolutions fail? (Low)**

The stronger answers focused on elite and mass-level factors contributing towards the 'failure' of the colour revolutions, drawing on the extant literature. They made good use of evidence from post-revolution politics (corruption, democratic backsliding etc.) to support their arguments.

**7) Why have political parties made such a weak contribution to post-Soviet political developments? (Low)**

Stronger answers critically discussed the meaning of party weakness, comparing both governing and opposition parties. They examined the impact of differences in regime type on party development. Few students considered mass-level factors contributing towards party weakness. Good on the 'commitment problem' in authoritarian systems.

**8) Assess the importance of elections in the functioning of post-Soviet political systems. (none)**

**9) Account for the resurgence of nationalism in the former Soviet Union. (Low)**

Few students answered this question. Stronger scripts distinguished between the different forms of nationalism (minority/majority, conserving/transforming); gave good examples from across the region, and discussed the importance of the factors driving nationalist mobilisation: ethno-linguistic fractionalization, outbidding, regime consolidation, etc.

**10) Are natural resources a curse for post-Soviet countries? (High)**

Many students answered this question. The strong answers critically assessed the rentier state concept in the post-Soviet context and engaged with the comparative literature. Students made good use made of research on budget spending on elections and post-Soviet militaries. Weaker scripts listed factors without evaluating their relative importance or developing a central argument.

**11) Why is corruption endemic in post-Soviet states? (Low)**

Few students tackled this question. Stronger answers critically assessed the relative significance of Soviet legacies, political accountability, economic transition trajectories, resource wealth, and organized crime.

**12) Are international factors more important than domestic ones in explaining authoritarian backsliding in post-Soviet regimes? (none)**

## **2020 Report on Politics in sub-Saharan Africa Exam (208)**

As is the case with other papers, the 2020 examination took place under difficult and unprecedented circumstances. As in previous years, the students answered the examinations well and demonstrated very good knowledge and the ability to coherently structure arguments. Of the sixteen students who took the exam, eight had 1<sup>st</sup> class performances and eight were at 2:1 level. This is very positive, although the number of outstanding performances was smaller than in previous years (there were only two scripts at 73%, both of which showed intellectual originality of the highest calibre, and none above). This sad, the general level remained high, with virtually no disappointing scripts.

Students struggled less than last year to maintain consistency across all three essays and many performances were concentrated in the upper 2.1. area. In contrast with last year, in which two questions were not tackled by candidates, all questions had takers. While there was less budging around certain essay topics than in previous years, the question on structural adjustment was tackled often. There was a very good spread across many of the remaining questions, even if questions on military rule, public health and the politics of land attracted only one essay each. Religion, ethnicity, the political economy of development and the politics of conflict proved popular but not unduly so, and generally attracted essays of a good standard. Somewhat of an exception was the very popular question on structural adjustment programmes, which resulted in 14. essays. While in previous years the trend was towards an increase in the use of a broader set of case studies and arguments, this year too many essays proved somewhat unimaginative and narrow. A number of essays on the topic were still strong, but candidates should be aware of the need to relate interesting evidence with a broader set of arguments than the ones often brought forth. The essays on gender were again consistently good. The best essays in this examination were those that engaged the literature in a judicious and evidence-based way, rather than those that embraced well-worn positions in the literature.

Some candidates, though fewer than in the past, still lost marks for failing to define key terms or to answer all parts of a question. Those candidates that did engage with key concepts and major comparative debates in the literature developed more impressive contributions and were rewarded accordingly. One positive aspect of this year's paper, in line with the previous

years, is that students answered questions with reference to no less than thirty-three different sub-Saharan African states and showed a strong commitment to sustained comparison. The over-concentration on one case study, and its deployment across several essays, continues to be a rare occurrence. However, Kenya and Zambia were again still more frequently engaged with than other cases, though this happened in a relevant manner. The Francophone states of West Africa and the Horn of Africa saw another welcome increase in references.

The candidates could still do a better job in three areas which have been flagged out in the exam reports of previous years. First, the candidates could provide a more nuanced scoping of their answer: how representative are the cases they draw on? How were the examples chosen, and how are they situated in time and space? How generalizable are the suggested conclusions? Second, candidates could make a an effort to tackle essays, especially those that lend themselves to potentially predictable treatments (especially structural adjustment and conflict), in a more deliberately original manner, both theoretically and in terms of engaging with a broader range of case-studies. Third, a number of candidates were beholden to one scholarly reference and paraphrased its contents, used the same case studies, came to similar conclusions, etc. Candidates are expected to have read widely and to have grasped the plurality of contributions to these debates.

While these points need to be kept in mind, the overall level of empirical and theoretical sophistication of this set of scripts was again commendable, especially if one bears in mind the context in which examinations were held.

## 209 – Contemporary Politics of Latin America TT 2020

This paper was taken by nine PPE candidates. This was a very different year, given the pandemic and the necessity of taking the exam online but in the end, the quality of the scripts proved to be very high. In fact, there was a distinct clustering of marks at the top end of the upper second band. There were two clear first-class honours, together with six upper seconds and only one lower second. All the scripts had a good grasp of the comparative literature. As is usually the case, the weaker scripts struggled to engage with some of the more complicated theoretical ideas in the literature. And again, as has been the case in previous years, the weaker scripts struggled to demonstrate empirical knowledge; they simply did not know enough about the actual politics of Latin America. Even for some of the stronger upper seconds, while theoretically very strong, their weakness remained a lack of in-depth empirical knowledge. Below is the distribution of answers, by question:

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
N	2	3	4	4	1	4	1	1	2	4	1	0

This year, all questions, bar Question 12, on the middle classes in Latin America, were attempted, reflecting the increasing trend for a greater spread in the choice of questions among candidates over the last couple of years. This year, no single question dominated, with Questions 3 (on democratic transitions), 4 (on the left in Latin America), 6 (on executive-legislative relations) and 10 (on IPE and political agency) all proving equally popular. In previous years, the IPE question has failed to generate much interest. Question 3 attracted some of the strongest answers.

## **PPE/HP 210 - Politics in South Asia**

### **Exam Report 2020**

Twelve questions were set in this year's paper, with ten out of the twelve attempted by the twelve candidates who sat the examination. Question 1, which asked candidates to identify the most important transformation in India's party system since independence, was not attempted, possibly because a comparative evaluation of key transformations was required. Question 2, which asked how changes in Indian agriculture and agrarian reforms shaped Indian politics in the late twentieth century, was also not attempted. The most popular question (answered by eight out of twelve candidates) was Question 11, which asked how political transition in India in the 1980s enabled the rise of Hindu nationalist politics from the 1990s onwards. The best answers to Question 11 demonstrated an awareness of the complex social, economic and political dynamics of the 1980s (e.g. authoritarianism, deinstitutionalisation, the crisis of legitimacy of the 'secular developmental' state and the decline of the Congress, the beginnings of economic liberalisation, the rise of the 'middle classes,' agitational politics and the assertion of political pluralism – and their backlash, etc.); linked them clearly to the rise of the BJP; and were systematically presented and argued. Question 6, focusing on how caste politics has affected the dynamics of Indian democracy since 1947, was answered by seven candidates. Weaker answers tended to focus only on Dalit/lower caste politics or provided only one-sided accounts; stronger answers took a more holistic approach across caste groups and also acknowledged that other factors alongside and in intersection with caste have affected India's democratic trajectory. Question 5, centring on explanations for the weak democratic consolidation in one or more South Asian country/countries, was attempted by six candidates. The strongest answers developed a systematic framework for the analysis, examined conditions at the moment of independent state formation as well as subsequent political developments over time (such as civil-military relations), and also engaged with wider socio-religious factors, for example by examining the role of elite groups, ethnicity, and sectarianism. Questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 drew responses from between one and five candidates. The two questions with an explicit IR focus, Question 3 (nuclear weapons) and Question 10 (regional cooperation) – new topics since last year – were each attempted by two candidates. The spread of marks awarded (for the examination as a whole) was reasonably narrow, ranging from 65% (mid 2.1) to 76% (just below a mid first). Four candidates scored a mid 2.1, five scored a high 2.1, and three candidates scored a low first. Overall, the answers demonstrated sound empirical knowledge. Weaker answers were descriptive or 'listy' (such as some answers to Question 6); failed to closely address the question; or advanced either a simplistic argument, or a singular argument with no alternatives considered. Stronger answers were targeted, systematic, empirically rich, critically engaged and demonstrated broad coverage of the literature.

Kate Sullivan de Estrada, DPIR/OSGA

## **211 Middle East Politics Examiner's report: PPE/HP Finals 2020**

This paper had 27 candidates this year, a slightly lower number than usual.

The most popular questions/topics were the following.

- (1) Colonialism
- (2) Oil rents/authoritarianism
- (7) Gender
- (8) Gender/authoritarianism

These questions, where the wording was straightforward and which drew on existing reading list topics and readings, were generally well done and showed good use of the literature. The best answers referenced key conceptual frameworks to answer the question, but many also demonstrated good knowledge of the experience of different countries.

A good number of candidates also tackled the more complicated question comparing Arab nationalism and political Islam (q.6); a smaller number tackled the questions on sectarianism (q.9) and orientalism (q.2) respectively. There were few takers for the questions on class (q.10) and territorial nationalism (q.11) and, more surprisingly, on the Arab uprisings (q.5), perhaps because of its economic focus.

Overall, there were some very strong performances at the top end. Less strong answers tended to be over-simple and often short or thinly referenced. As before, the best answers combined in-depth theoretical insights with strong empirical knowledge of different states of the region. Students should be encouraged to range widely in their answers and consider examples from the whole range of MENA states rather than sticking to the major regional powers. It is also important to engage with contemporary debates about Arab states beyond the uprisings and to consider what light these debates throw on the different topics and themes covered by the course.

## Examiners' Report on 212 International Relations in the Era of Two World Wars

The paper was sat by 18 candidates, with fourteen from the Joint School of PPE and four from the Joint School of History and Politics. In the final agreed marks, five scripts achieved First Class marks (70+) and thirteen achieved Upper Second Class marks (60-70). The overall standard of scripts was very high indeed. The highest agreed mark for a script was 76. The mean final agreed mark was 68, and the standard deviation of the final agreed marks was 3.75. The distribution of questions answered was as follows:

Q No.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Answers	14	5	4	5	4	1	1	0	9	2	3	2

*Q1. Is there any point in trying to ascertain who was to blame for the outbreak of World War One?*

This was comfortably the most popular question on the paper, and answers received a very wide range of marks. Apart from a couple of answers, the level of engagement with the relevant scholarly literature was very high indeed, but the best answers were those that either stepped back a bit from the debates in the literature to offer a larger structural perspective on the origins of the war, or focussed very directly on the question of what it means to assign 'blame' in this context.

*Q2. How close did Britain and France come to achieving their war aims in the peace settlement after World War One?*

This was answered by five candidates. A couple of very strong answers were based on an excellent, theoretically-aware analysis of what British and French war aims were. Weaker answers tended to get bogged down in tangential material that, while relevant to the topic as a whole, was less important in light of this specific question (for example, taking too much time to discuss President Wilson's position).

*Q3. Did the post-war settlement in the Middle East create conditions that helped or hindered regional peace and security?*

Weaker answers here tended to be rather descriptive, and concentrated on a very narrow range of aspects of the post-war settlement in the Middle East. Strongest answers were outstanding, and developed powerful analytical themes regarding issues such as colonial penetration and minority rights protections that went far beyond more standard geopolitical analysis.

*Q4. Did the Locarno treaties represent the success of Gustav Stresemann's foreign policy?*

Most candidates argued that this was a reasonably fair judgement on Locarno, although some of the better answers saw that there were important ways in which one might question the completeness of Stresemann's 'success'. All answers on this topic were at least very competent and showed good historical knowledge.



*Q5. Did the USSR cease to pursue a revolutionary foreign policy at any point during the interwar period?*

This attracted four answers of significantly varying quality. Generally, candidates seemed to find it hard to get to grips with the concept of a 'revolutionary' foreign policy, and instead simply described the various phases of Soviet policy in a narrative without sufficient interpretive insight.

*Q6. What were the guiding principles of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's foreign policy?*

Not enough answers for comment

*Q7. How important were concerns about prestige to EITHER Japanese OR Chinese foreign policy in the interwar period?*

Not enough answers for comment

*Q8. How effectively did the members of the 'Little Entente' cooperate with each other between 1920 and 1938?*

No answers

*Q9. To what extent did the League of Nations change the nature of interactions between the Great Powers?*

This was a popular question, and as in Q1 there was a wide range of marks. The key to good answers here was not to attempt a general survey of the League's activities, but to find a good framework at the outset for thinking about the nature of Great Power interactions, and identifying ways in which one might assess whether or not this was changing as a result of the League.

*Q10. How far was US economic policy responsible for the Great Depression?*

Not enough answers for comment

*Q11. Were British efforts to appease Nazi Germany just the product of an error of judgement about Adolf Hitler's intentions?*

Only three answers: the very best was outstanding in its ability to bring formidable historical detail to bear on the question of whether British leaders were guilty of an error of judgement, and the difficulties in accurately reading Hitler's intentions.

*Q12. Why did Germany fail to defeat the USSR?*

Not enough answers for comment

## 213 International Relations in the Era of the Cold War

26 candidates (23 PPE; 3 HP)

The numbers are consistent with the previous four years and remain strong. No particular issue arose. The general standard was high: seven candidates achieved first-class marks, and nineteen obtained 2.is. There were no 2.iis or lower marks. The best answers to all questions successfully combined analytical depth with knowledge of the relevant historiography.

Most candidates chose to answer at least one or two questions from the first section of the paper. This is unsurprising, given the structure of the paper, and in line with previous years. Among the questions on thematic and regional aspects, the most popular answers were to questions 7 (on European détente), 5 (China), 12 (the Middle East), and 9 (decolonization). This year, all questions were attempted by at least one student.

Question-specific comments:

1. *Was the Korean War a cause or a consequence of the Cold War?*

One of the most popular questions (10 answers). Answers were generally good, with only one first-class answer. Many candidates treated the question as a generic one on the origins of the Cold War, while relatively few managed to discuss the specificities of the Korean War and its role in the early Cold War era.

2. *Was the US policy of 'containment' designed to maintain the status quo?*

The second-most popular question, with very good results (12 answers). A few candidates wrote first-class answers, and many more obtained high 2.is. Most candidates showed good knowledge of course of US foreign policy and managed to combine analysis of the specific policies with a discussion of the 'big picture'.

3. *'Brezhnev's foreign policy during détente was a continuation of Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence'. Discuss.*

Only 3 answers, but all very good (one first-class and two very high 2.is). All candidates discussed continuity and change effectively. The low number of answers shows that students are much more familiar with US than Soviet foreign policy. The good results obtained by the ones who answered this question suggest that 'investing' in some knowledge on the USSR pays off.

4. *To what extent were the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR two separate processes?*

The most popular question (19 answers), with 3 first-class answers, many in the 2.i range, and 2 in the 2.ii category. While most candidates stressed the role of the Soviet leadership in both processes, they also analysed the reasons why the two processes may have had different causes. In general, most candidates chose a balanced approach to this question.

5. *Did Mao's death in 1976 end the Cold War for the People's Republic of China?*

A fairly popular question in the second section of the paper (8 answers). Candidates did generally quite well (3 first class answers), combining discussion of some of the key events with analyses of doctrine and leadership. There was no general consensus in the answers, and candidates took very different approaches in explaining the PRC's foreign policy during the Cold War. As in other cases, the very best answers showed knowledge of the key historiography.

6. *Was Japan an American 'colony' during the Cold War?*

Only 1 answer.

7. *Was European détente more successful than superpower détente?*

The most popular question in the second section (8 answers). This is most likely due to the fact that the question allowed candidates to discuss détente, both in general and with specific regard to Europe. Candidates did very well: 5 obtained a first-class mark and 4 a very high 2.i. Answers showed good knowledge of the historiography on superpower vs European détente as well as a good grasp of the rise and fall of the détente era in general.

8. *Was Europe a periphery during the Cold War?*

Only 2 answers.

9. *Why did decolonization produce so much conflict in Africa and Asia?*

Similar to previous years, relatively few candidates attempted the question on this topic (5 answers), but those who did achieved good results (1 first-class answer and 4 very high 2.is). The best answers combined discussion of decolonisation and its roots with analyses of ideas and ideologies that originated in Africa and Asia.

10. *'The Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956 was fundamentally different from the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968'. Discuss.*

Only 1 answer.

11. *'The Vietnam War had many losers but no winners.' Discuss.*

Only 2 answers.

12. *To what extent did the Cold War worsen the Arab-Israeli conflict between 1945 and 1991?*

Six candidates attempted this question, with most marks in the mid-2.i range and one first-class essay. As in previous years, the best answers gave a nuanced view of the Cold War in the Middle East, showing knowledge of both local development and global trends. Historiography remains a key aspect of this topic.

## 2020 Examiners' Report on 214 International Relations

This core paper remains one of the most popular Politics papers in the Final Honours school for both PPE and History and Politics. It was taken in total by 160 candidates, of whom 135 were from PPE and 25 from History and Politics. As would be expected for such a popular paper, the spread of marks was fairly broad, reflecting the overall distribution for politics core papers. The mean mark for the paper was 66%. No candidates achieved worse than a Lower Second Class mark for the paper, and the distribution of agreed final marks across Classes was as follows: Lower Second (50-59), 15 candidates (9%); Upper Second (60-69), 108 candidates (67.5%); First Class (70+), 37 candidates (23%).

*1. 'Hierarchy, rather than anarchy, is the defining feature of the contemporary international order.' Discuss.*

41 answers. This question was fairly popular, but was not in general answered particularly well: 19% of the initial marks for essays on this question were at Lower Second Class level or below. The best answers covered a range of different theoretical approaches to conceptualising the structure of the international system, and defended their answer with reference to empirical aspects of contemporary international order. Weaker answers often neglected the concept of hierarchy and concentrated on more basic theoretical accounts of anarchy.

*2. 'The non-material aspects of power in international politics are more important than the material, but also harder to analyse meaningfully.' Discuss.*

107 answers. This was comfortably the most popular question on the paper, attempted by two-thirds of the candidates. Although, as one would expect, this led to quite a wide range of marks, in general it was answered reasonably well (almost a quarter of the initial marks were at First Class level, and only 14% below an Upper Second). This may be because the question of material vs. non-material aspects of power was familiar to some students, but it is worth noting that candidates this time seemed to do a good job of avoiding the trap of simply reviewing one or two typologies of power from the literature (e.g. Barnett and Duvall's four-fold analysis, the Lukesian 'three faces', or Nye's hard/soft distinction). The issue of what it meant to 'analyse meaningfully' was an important distinguisher between the stronger and weaker candidates, and the willingness to explore potential problems with materialistic conceptions of power also helped to mark that difference.

*3. Has globalisation made the strong stronger, and the weak weaker?*

38 answers. This was generally a well-answered question with very few seriously bad answers. The best answers adopted intelligent ways of framing what strong and weak mean here, but others were let down by problems in defining globalisation, or lacked a solid grasp of empirics. Most answers silently assumed states to be the unit of analysis.

*4. What conclusions for IR theory can we draw from the evolution of international trade since 1990?*

8 answers. This attracted very few answers: candidates may have been scared off by the breadth of question, but this may also signal a lack of familiarity with changing patterns of trade, and their theoretical analysis or implications.

*5. In what ways has the United Nations shaped the theory and practice of international security since 1990?*

75 answers. This was the second most popular question, and the distribution of marks was quite evenly balanced, with almost 20% of initial marks in the First Class range, and the same in the Lower Second. Good answers were able to cover both the normative aspects of the question (e.g. the UN's role in shaping the development of ideas about human or global security, and responsibility to protect) as well as relating this to the UN's more practical role in the context of peacekeeping missions and other ways of promoting international peace and security. Weaker answers tended either to neglect one of these dimensions to the question, or considered them in terms of too narrow a time-frame, given the question's scope from 1990 to the present (either getting stuck in the period immediately after the end of the Cold War, or focussing too much on the present without looking back through the period as a whole).

*6. 'The rise of aggressive forms of nationalism since 1990 highlights the bankruptcy of liberal ideas of self-determination.' Discuss.*

16 answers. This was not particularly well answered, with only 13% of initial marks in the First Class range. Candidates tended to move too swiftly to equate 'aggressive forms of nationalism' with patterns of ethno-nationalist conflict, and so did not spend enough time considering other problems associated with nationalism, for example the protection of minorities or discord between Great Powers, and their relation to liberal theories of self-determination and international order.

*7. Has NATO found a coherent doctrinal and practical vocation since the end of the Cold War?*

12 answers. This only had a few answers, but they were generally very strong indeed. The best covered both doctrinal and practical aspects of NATO's role, and thought very intelligently about what coherence means in this context.

*8. 'Despite its flaws, democratic peace theory tells us more about the causes of war than any alternative account.' Discuss.*

69 answers. This was a popular question, and generally quite well answered -- only 12% of initial marks here were below Upper Second Class -- but for the most part answers were very solid rather than brilliant. The key problem in many was that so much time was spent exploring the inner workings of democratic peace theory that not enough was left to compare it with alternative accounts of the causes of war. That could make for a very broad question indeed, and the best essays found strong ways of identifying alternative

explanations for war, justifying their choice, and then comparing them with democratic peace theory.

*9. What role does international law play in promoting greater global co-operation?*

18 answers. Not a lot of answers, again possibly because (like question three) candidates were discouraged by the relatively open-ended nature of the question. Marks were fairly evenly distributed. The question could possibly be pursued along more rationalist lines, or more constructivist/English school lines; or, of course, both. Some of the stronger answers here were based on very sophisticated rationalist analysis of the legal dimensions of international cooperation.

*10. Does Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' reveal more about Western stereotypes of the Global South than about the causes of cultural conflict?*

70 answers. The third most popular question on the paper, and one that attracted some excellent answers: 30% of initial marks were in the First Class range, the highest proportion for any question on the paper. The best answers were able to give a cogent and nuanced account of Huntington's thesis, and then deployed impressive ranges of further literatures on conflict (for example, postcolonialism, or work on political violence). Possibly the high marks for this question reflect the synergies with the paper on International Security and Conflict which explains the breadth of the literature covered.

*11. Have the idea and the practice of international justice made any progress since 1990?*

9 answers. This attracted very few answers, and once again it may be that the breadth of the question and the difficulties in covering both ideas and practice discouraged candidates. There seemed to be a tendency to equate the idea of international justice with cosmopolitanism.

*12. Can we make any robust generalisations about the patterns of violent conflict since the end of the Cold War?*

17 answers. Despite the same synergies with the International Security and Conflict paper as question ten, this attracted relatively few answers, and the initial marks were fairly evenly distributed. The best answers here showed a good knowledge of the literature on conflict, including on political violence, and took an intelligent line on the question of how to make robust generalisations through good empirical analysis of contemporary patterns, and often by asking what was distinctive about the conflict in the post-Cold War world compared with other periods.

## **215 Political Thought: Plato to Rousseau (TT 2020 – Teresa M. Bejan)**

31 Candidates (28 PPE; 3 HPol)

### **Overall assessment**

The number of candidates sitting this paper was up significantly over previous years; the range of quality expanded accordingly. There were some stunning 1<sup>st</sup>-class papers, as well as some disappointing lower seconds. Every question had at least one answer.

In general, excellent answers addressed all parts of the question in a well-organized and coherent whole. First-class essays exhibited the trifecta of 1) independent judgment based on close textual argument; 2) the integration of historical context; and 3) familiarity with arguments in the secondary literature. They avoided overly broad generalizations, rote repetition of lecture material, and extensive summaries or descriptions of the core texts. They argued on the basis of specific features of the text and/or context and considered counter- or supporting arguments found in the scholarly literature. Some made impressively original arguments of their own.

Weaker essays failed to address the question asked, relied on overly simplistic summary and often incorrect assertions about the text/context, or else simply rehearsed without expanding upon material from the lectures. They lacked specific textual evidence or took advantage of the open-book conditions to 'quote-dump' or insert pre-written material in the hopes that something might stick, instead of introducing quotations judiciously in support of their particular argument. In one case, a word search of an electronic text went clearly awry, with the candidate citing the editorial introduction as the text itself. In others, candidates attached interpretive significance to false historical 'facts'.

As in past years, answers tended to cluster around certain questions (Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes) while avoiding others (Hume, Montesquieu). Students should be encouraged to respond to a wider range of questions and avoid the obvious in order to stand out.

### **Individual Questions**

1. After banishing the poets from Kallipolis, Socrates introduces the idea of a 'true falsehood'. Why are such 'noble lies' necessary in the constitution of a just city? Answer with reference to specific examples from *The Republic*.

As ever, this was the most popular question, answered by 2/3rds of candidates. It was, however, a tricky question due to its false suggestion that "noble lies" are a form of "true falsehood". Very few candidates picked up on this. Those who addressed the distinct meanings of 'true falsehoods' and 'noble lies' and then assessed the relationship between the two directly tended to do very well, but it was also possible to write a first class answer without calling attention to the false presupposition. The very best answers situated Plato's arguments contextually in the poetic culture of the Athenian polis. Some fruitfully appealed to examples other than that of the Myth of the Metals. Weak answers offered derivative and summary accounts of the role of the Myth of the Metals as a source of political unity. Candidates choosing to write on Plato should be encouraged to look

past the usual suspects and consider other Socratic dialogues and more difficult parts of the Republic to set themselves apart.

2. Notoriously, in the *Politics*, Aristotle gives advice to tyrants on how to 'preserve' their tyranny. Evaluate the advice and Aristotle's reasons for giving it.

This was a less popular question than it should have been: only 4 candidates tackled it. The answers were strong, making constructive comparisons with Aristotle's arguments elsewhere in the *Politics* (and the method of teleology), or in one case, with Machiavelli. Candidates fruitfully appealed to context in the meaning of 'tyranny' and Aristotle's own experiences with tyrants.

3. Why does Aquinas think that an unjust law is 'no law at all', and what are the political consequences of his view?

Aquinas was much more popular than in previous years: 5 students attempted this one. The quality was generally high, with candidates introducing context effectively to situate Aquinas's views relative to those of Augustine or of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Catholic Church more generally. One answer mistakenly focused on *De Regno* as opposed to the *Summa*, while another introduced a host of other medieval authors without making their relevance to the argument clear.

4. In his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy*, Machiavelli states that 'he who establishes a free state and does not kill "the sons of Brutus", will not last long.' Discuss, with reference both to the *Discourses* and *The Prince*.

Another popular question, attempted by more than half of candidates. There were a few excellent answers that effectively addressed the question asked, about the politics of 'free states' or republics, the need for *virtu*, and the peculiar threat posed by the *grandi*. However, many candidates suffered through ignorance of context, both of early modern republicanism and of classical Rome. Several candidates misidentified the Brutus in question, which led them astray. Most candidates used the question as an opportunity to argue simply for the continuity in advice between the *Discorsi* and the *Prince*, which failed to address the specific question asked.

5. 'There was never anything so dearly bought, as these Western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues' (HOBBS). Why does Hobbes believe this, and is he right to do so?

12 students attempted this question. The best answers appealed to Hobbes's political and intellectual context, including the culture of the Universities, and the threat of republican views on liberty in the context of the Civil War, specifically. The weakest relied on generalizations about Hobbes's theory of sovereignty and/or 'classical' political philosophy, primarily Plato and Aristotle. Again, without a grip on the historical context, it was easy to go awry here.

6. What, if anything, distinguishes early modern theories of 'utopia' from ancient considerations of the 'best regime'?



Sadly, too few to comment.

7. 'If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?' (ASTELL). How, if at all, does this criticism affect Locke's political theory in *The Two Treatises of Government*?

6 answers. The very best demonstrated secure knowledge both of Locke's arguments and Astell's. The weakest relied on generalizations or assumptions about Locke's views on the 'subjugation of women' without offering textual evidence or considering counter-evidence.

8. 'I have only wanted to make it understood that not all political vices are moral vices and that not all moral vices are political vices' (MONTESQUIEU). Is this a fair characterisation of the argument of *The Spirit of the Laws*?

Too few to comment.

9. Describe and evaluate Hume's objections to the idea of an 'original contract'.

Too few to comment.

10. What is 'civil religion' and why is it necessary in the society of *The Social Contract*, according to Rousseau?

11 answers this year. Some very strong, contextually grounded arguments about Rousseau's views on religion, including one impressively original argument about his reliance on the politics of 'revelation.' Some constructive comparisons with Machiavelli and Hobbes on civil religion. The weaker answers relied solely on context without discussing the Civil Religion chapter of the *Social Contract* in detail, or relied on generalizations about the civil religion tradition without highlighting the peculiarities of Rousseau's arguments.

11. Is there such a thing as 'human nature'? What are the political consequences of your view? Answer with reference to at least TWO authors you have studied for this paper.

9 answers. A revealing question insofar as many candidates struggled to offer or articulate an independent argument, instead simply offering summaries of various bits of Hobbes and Rousseau. The best answer linked different views on human nature to the vastly different understandings of politics in ancient and modern political philosophy.

12. 'There are no perennial problems in [political] philosophy, from which we can hope to learn directly through studying the classic texts ... we must learn to do our own thinking for ourselves' (QUENTIN SKINNER). Discuss with reference to at least TWO authors you have studied for this paper.

Sadly, too few to comment.

## 216: Political Thought: Bentham to Weber

This was a very strong year for Bentham to Weber. Of 16 scripts (slightly higher than in previous years) no paper received lower than a 2:1 mark and there were some exceptionally high first-class answers. The very best papers achieved a well-balanced trifecta of primary, secondary and contextual knowledge while offering clear and cogent arguments in response to the question. Many candidates seem to have thrown themselves into the project of understanding the politics of these 19th century texts and some answers even engaged with authors from beyond the official reading list. While this was by no means necessary for a top mark, it was certainly a pleasure for examiners to read. Candidates are reminded that while it is excellent to motivate arguments and evidence claims with passages of text, passages of text are no substitute for exegesis itself.

### 1. What, for Saint Simon, should a social science achieve?

The best answers to this question drew on a wide range of named texts from Saint Simon. Candidates rightly noticed that this question could be answered in a range of ways and the best responses carved a clear and well-justified path without trying to do or say everything.

### 2. What do Bentham's comments on punishment reveal about his political theory?

This question was not that popular but the good answers engaged with (and often criticised) claims made by secondary authors about the implications of Bentham's comments on punishment for how we read his political theory.

### 3. What does Hegel think we learn from history?

Weaker answers to this question did not address how we might distinguish between the different notions of history one can find in Hegel's work. As with many of the questions this year, the best answers took what seems a simple question and crafted their own quite sophisticated and layered responses.

### 4. How, for Marx, do the bourgeoisie hold their power and why will they lose it?

Another superficially simple question that in the hands of the best candidates was problematised and analysed from the perspective of the competing answers it was possible to give on the basis of Marx's various claims.

### 5. Is the lesson of *Democracy in America* that Tocqueville's readers should be pessimists about democracy?

This question elicited some of the best and most nuanced answers. Some candidates brought an extraordinary range of textual and contextual detail to their answers.

### 6. Does Mill's political thought constitute an imperial ideology?

Weaker answers to this question failed to interrogate what it might mean to characterise a theory as an 'imperial ideology'. The strongest answers dealt with this issue, but relatively swiftly, before moving on to consider a wide range of Mill's texts. Candidates did not think about what it might mean for a theory to *function* ideologically as opposed to being intentionally 'ideological', but this did not preclude some high first-class answers to this question.

**7. What about his social and political world did Weber criticise and for what, in the face of these criticisms, did he advocate?**

Candidates who did well on this question had thought about how to organise Weber's different writings and had come up with a framework for thinking about Weber's changing responses to his social and political context.

**8. Why did Durkheim care about suicide?**

The best answers to this question used it to think about what Durkheim was trying to achieve with his sociological theory and to the development of some of his major categories of analysis.

**9. Was God replaced by Science in the nineteenth century? Answer with reference to at least TWO authors.**

**10. Whatever the differences in their political commitments, nineteenth century thinkers all assumed progress was inevitable. Is this true? Answer with reference to at least TWO authors.**

**11. 'Nineteenth century thinkers were interested in the individual in order to control him'. Discuss with reference to at least TWO authors.**

**12. Did 19th century thinkers do anything to disrupt the view that a woman's place is in the home? Answer with reference to at least TWO authors.**

There were too few responses to each of the comparative questions to offer individual assessments, though I'll make one exception: no one who answered question 11 picked up on the use in the question of a gendered pronoun. While this was not primarily a question about gender in the 19th century, and it was possible to get a high mark without noticing the question's assumption that when 19th century thinkers thought about 'individuals' they were in fact thinking about men, it was nonetheless striking that no candidate commented on this.

Some general points: the weakest answers chose to use these questions as an occasion for the author's own sometimes quite disparate speculations on the theme of the question. Candidates are reminded that these questions are meant to be an occasion to meditate on any of the 19th and 20th century authors that they have read for the course in as detailed and as nuanced a way as is possible. Some of the very best answers showed knowledge of a wide range of texts, some of which were not on the reading list. Other excellent answers offered a close reading of just two of the set authors. There are many ways to do well on these questions, but the best answers showed a close attention to detail and a clear command of the texts that they chose to discuss.

## 217 MARX AND MARXISM EXAMINERS REPORT 2020

The distributions of answers was as follows:

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Answers	0	8	3	3	5	5	0	2	3	2	0	2

11 scripts (2 MHP and 9 PPE)

1. Is it plausible to characterise the influence of Hegel and Hegelianism on Marx's thought as always slight and always damaging?

Too few answers to comment.

2. 'Marx's theory of history outlines only the genesis of capitalism in western Europe; it was never intended as a 'historico-philosophical' model of the course that all peoples must follow, regardless of their specific historical circumstances.' Discuss.

Many students had a good knowledge of the later Marx's reflections on the possibilities of socialism in Russia, and were able to deploy that knowledge effectively in answering this question. Some answers were perhaps too quick to assume that Marx's '1859 Preface' embodies a crudely universal version of 'stages theory'.

3. Is Marx's account of exploitation accurately characterised as economic, descriptive (not normative), and dependent on an outdated and implausible labour theory of value?

This question requires some good formal skills as well as substantive knowledge to answer well. It contains a lot of constituent elements, and identifying and answering them all needs a clear structure and good signposting.

4. 'Marx never provides a systematic theoretical account of the state in capitalist society; all we have are pieces of contemporary journalism deeply embedded in the political events that they describe.' Discuss.

The quotation appears to assume that there is a tension between a theoretical account being 'systematic' and its being 'deeply embedded' in particular historical events. Some candidates plausibly challenged that assumption. Better answers also demonstrated some knowledge of the relevant political events (1848 revolutions, the rise of Napoleon III, the Paris Commune, and so on.)

5. Does Marx provide any good reasons for thinking that workers in a future communist society would not suffer from alienation?

Many candidates provided good accounts of Marx's understanding of alienation, but not all of them demonstrated much critical engagement with his views. Marx's confidence that alienation in work would not be a feature of an industrial society provided only that it took a communist form, looks contestable.

6. To what extent is Marx's vision of the future vulnerable to his own objections to the 'utopian socialists'?

Candidates typically had a good knowledge of the broader topic here, but some struggled a little with this particular question. It was encouraging to see some independent knowledge of the utopian socialists, rather than candidates' wholly relying on Marx and Engels' own account of that tradition.

7. Does Marx mainly use the concept of class to explain the incidence and forms of collective action?

Too few answers to comment.

8. Does Marx provide any good reasons for thinking that a society could function without ideology?

One way into this question might be to think about (i) the kind of social function that Marx thinks of ideology as having; (ii) whether, and to what extent, he thought of communist society as either requiring that function, or of it being met in other ways; and (iii) whether his reasoning here is sound.

9. How persuasive is Bernstein's critique of Marxism?

It is important to notice that the question refers to *Marxism*, and to consider the extent to which Bernstein may have thought of himself as offering an 'internal' critique of some kind. More generally, it would be good to see candidates demonstrating greater familiarity with primary texts in these questions on later Marxists.

10. What is the correct organisational structure and political function of the revolutionary party? Answer with reference to the writings of EITHER Luxemburg OR Lenin.

One challenge here was to avoid rehearsing a *comparative* essay from tutorial work. This particular question required that candidates had enough material to offer a separate treatment of one or other of these authors. More generally, it would be good to see candidates demonstrating greater familiarity with primary texts in these questions on later Marxists.

11. 'The critique of the Bolshevik revolution in their writings was always limited and flawed.' Discuss with reference to EITHER Luxemburg OR Trotsky.

Too few answers to comment.

12. Does Gramsci offer a new vision of Marxism, bringing it more in line with liberal and humanist traditions?

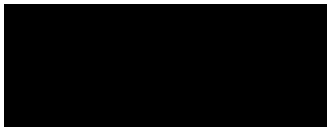
In recent years, answers to Gramsci have tended to demonstrate insufficient first-hand familiarity with the primary texts. In addition, with this particular question one challenge was to characterise 'liberal' and 'humanist' traditions in ways which were both plausible and helped candidates say something relevant about Gramsci.

## **218 Sociological Theory**

### **Examiners' Report**

10 candidates (including 1 from History and politics)

Ten candidates took this paper. Given the new exam format, it was reassuring to see that the quality of scripts was, if anything, higher this year. The marks ranged from good (second class, upper division) to excellent (first class). The best answers demonstrated extensive reading and original insights. One surprising error made by a few scripts was to dismiss a theory on the grounds that it would invalidate someone's identity. Q6 (gender) and Q10 (social norms) were the most popular, with seven answers each. Four candidates answered Q7 (social networks and collective action). Q1 (inequality) and Q3 (protection) each attracted three answers. There were two answers to Q5 (rationality). Q2 (governmentality), Q4 (motivations), Q8 (trust), and Q12 (game theory) each received a solitary answer.



### ***Examiners' comments – 220 Political Sociology***

Overall, the standard was very similar to other years, although there was greater citation of sources and somewhat longer answers. Also similar to some previous years was the tendency of PPE students to get slightly higher marks than HP students. This was largely because the former focused more on social science arguments and made better reference to the empirical evidence. Overall, the average standard of the scripts was quite high with good knowledge of the literature shown by most candidates. The worst answers, as always, were assemblies of anecdotes about current affairs which did not adequately discuss the academic literature.

1) Generally competently answered, but few students really adequately defined, or even described, socialisation. Better answers focused more on the mechanisms behind class voting, and the full run of self-interest and socialisation, and then linked this to change over time.

2) There were too few answers to provide general comments about this question.

3) Better answers focused on what a social cleavage requires and the extent to which gender fulfilled those requirements while clearly explaining how gender could simply be a proxy for other cleavages like class and religion. Weaker answers discussed legislative representation at length which was largely irrelevant to answering this question.

4) Answers to this question were generally poor. Many answers neither tried to explain why people protest (and what kinds of people therefore protest), nor whether protest affects policy outcomes. There was a large amount of anecdote masquerading as evidence.

5) Many middle of the road answers. Better answers featured a full discussion of the factors which might affect culture and spent a lot of time discussing how political institutions might affect culture.

6) Many good answers to this question. The best answers were thorough in their treatment of the different factors (education, religion, economic development and partisan/ elite cues), but also took the time to disaggregate social liberalism into its constituent parts.

7) The worst answers conflated 'the press' with any information source that was not the internet and made no assessment of how influential the media was over time, or in general. Better answers focused on the possible mechanisms of press influence and then assessed how changes, such as declining physical newspaper readership, might affect those mechanisms. The best answers also identified different types of voters who are affected differently by the press and how the numbers of each type might have changed over time.

8) Many good, and some excellent, answers to this question. The few weaker answers did not adequately address the question of whether elites had a common network nor the relationship between economic and political elites.

9) Few answers. Better answers showed understanding of how the costs and private benefits of turnout vary across countries. Weaker answers made simplistic points about how the probability of being pivotal varies across countries.

10) There were too few answers to provide general comments about this question.

11) A popular question. Most answers were quite good, but few were excellent. Better answers discussed radicalism in a way which included 'populism', as well as issue extremity, and showed a good understanding of the cultural/economic threat arguments and how they might relate to radical right voters' ideological stances.

12) The best answers here took a global view of secularization, and its causes, while carefully distinguishing between denominational and religiosity cleavages. Most answers correctly acknowledged the important difference between the strength of a cleavage in terms of how many people are on each side and the strength of a cleavage in terms of the difference between the two sides.



### **223 The government and politics of Japan exam report**

Two papers were very competently answered, and close to distinction, while the third paper was less persuasive, and given a high 2.2 mark. Of the twelve questions set, seven were attempted between the three candidates, demonstrating a pleasing engagement with the breadth of topics.

## **Exam report, 224 Social Policy (Paper A12740)**

27 candidates (25 PPE, 2 DMHP)

Note that totals and comments below do not include analysis of answers by the six human sciences students taking the exam, as a separate report is submitted for human sciences.

There were slightly more scripts than previous years. The scripts were generally of a high standard this year, with many answers with 1<sup>st</sup> class qualities. All questions were answered by at least one student. The more popular questions, similarly to previous years comprised one from the first section of the course (which introduces students to key social policy/welfare state concepts and issues), concerning 'worlds of welfare', or typologies (15 answers), and the ones from the second section (on more specific social policy areas in the UK) (13 answers, about child poverty and 13 answers about choice initiatives in education). The question on 'the mixed economy of welfare state' and its development in UK was answered by slightly fewer (11 students). Fewer, but more than four students answered questions on social policy analysis, pension policy and health policy.

The most popular questions were:

- 7. How typical is the UK today of a liberal welfare regime?
- 9. What can be done to tackle child poverty in the UK?
- 12. How convincing are the arguments against increasing parental choice of schools?
- 8. Does recent experience in the UK strengthen or weaken arguments in favour of a mixed economy of the welfare state?

This year many answers were high quality, putting forward coherent arguments which used evidence in support and demonstrated a thoughtful approach to the question. A large number of students were also able to engage well with the scholarly literature, demonstrating awareness of both theoretical and empirical issues.

Given that all students submitted typed scripts, there were no problems of legibility of scripts this year. As in previous years, some students had clearly spent too long on the first or first two questions, leaving insufficient time for a thorough answer to the last one. There was some lack of understanding of the meaning of certain questions. But most scripts provided clear evidence of social policy knowledge, analytical ability, the capacity to organise arguments into a coherent answer and willingness to answer the question posed. Still, somewhat paradoxically, the most popular questions turned out to be a challenge for some as they seemed to be not aware of what was the empirical base of Esping-Andersen's regimes and it caused some confusion in setting up a comparative case between theory and UK social policy today. Furthermore, there seemed to be some confusion and inconsistency in referencing across scripts where some used too many citations, some not at all and some had technical deficiencies in referencing (mentioned only author without year and similar). This might be partly explained by the change in format.

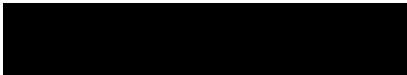
The number of takers for each question was as follows:

Q	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
No	3	1	2	5	6	5	15	11	13	3	4	13

## **Comparative Demographic Systems**

This paper was taken by 6 candidates (5 PPE and 1 HP) in 2019-20. As with previous years with CDS, performance on part A of the paper, which focuses on the computation of demographic measures and their interpretation, was strong. Responses to the interpretive questions were sometimes weaker than the questions on computation, which in some cases brought the mark down in some sub-parts of Part A.

For essay-based questions in Part B of the paper, the question on the second demographic transition proved to be very popular. Although most answers were reasonably good at presenting general arguments and describing the SDT, use of specific empirical examples to substantiate weaknesses of the SDT as a theory, or discussion of what one should expect from a theory of family change were missing in a number of responses. The stronger answers to the essay questions in Part B showed a better integration of specific empirical examples or studies to support arguments, as well as critical reflection of the required data and methods to answer a particular question. Overall, students with the strongest performances on the exam exhibited a mastery of both materials of Part A and Part B, thereby showing a good understanding of demographic measurement/computation as well as relevant literature to answer the essay questions.



## **PPE 227 Internal Examiners' Report (Trinity Term 2020)**

This year saw 19 candidates sit the Politics in China (14 PPE, 5 HPOL), a somewhat smaller number than anticipated given the consistently larger cohorts on the course these past few years, but potentially related to the extraordinary circumstances under which Trinity Term and the examinations process took place this year. In terms of overall marks, the results largely fell within the department's expected range of distribution (10% lower second and 21% first, with the remainder falling within the upper second band), though were somewhat lower than last year's. Within the upper second band, overall there were fewer High 2.1s and Mid 2.1s than has been the norm, with the majority this year falling within the Low 2.1 range.

Broadly speaking, candidates generally selected trios of questions which engaged with a range of topics and themes within the course and overall there was a good spread of responses across the exam paper with at least one answer for every question (Q1, 4 responses; Q2, 6 responses; Q3, 8 responses; Q4, 3 responses; Q5, 2 responses; Q6, 9 responses; Q7, 1 response; Q8, 1 response; Q9, 4 responses; Q10, 3 responses; Q11, 5 responses; Q12, 11 responses). Notable in the above, the most popular was question 12, on potential for Sino-American conflict, which was answered by 58% candidates. Most responses to this question were of a good standard and a couple of exemplary responses, with the majority addressing its theoretical dimensions at least to some extent. Also notable among the answers was the extent to which many brought in and often relied heavily on works not on the 227 reading list, which may have been at least partly due to this question aligning with content also covered in 214.

The next most popular questions, to Q6 (47% of candidates) and Q3 (42%), each saw a range in quality in terms of answers. The majority of responses provided good coverage of issues raised in the questions and a good number also took the next step in placing Minzner's larger arguments into dialogue with other perspectives (especially Nathan). One thing notably absent from even the strongest of those answers, though, was contextualisation of the authoritarian resilience vs authoritarian revival debate in terms of the very different conditions at the time in which each of these arguments was put forward. As for Q3, focusing on economic reforms in relation to urban and rural populations, responses generally demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the overall conditions and major changes over time, but were much more variable in terms of how successfully this fed into analysis of relevant areas of debate.

## 228: Politics of the EU – Examiners Report 2020

10 students sat this paper in June 2020, 3 HP and 7 PPE students. Two exams reached an overall mark above 70 (highest mark 73), seven exams were above 60 (upper second), and one exam was marked with 59 (lower second). The mean was 66,1 in 2020 (compared to 67,4 in 2019). In contrast to last year HP students (average 67) did better this year on average than PPE students (average 66). This result is comparable and just slightly lower compared to the 2019 exam, when 4 of 8 exams reached a grade above 70, and 2 exams were above 60, with a mean of 67,4.

The distribution of answers was as follows:

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
number of answers	4		7	1	5	2					5	6

Students had to answer 3 out of 12 essay questions, and the distribution of chosen questions ensured that students had to draw on diverse set of topics that had been covered throughout the course. In a similar trend to last year when students tended to choose the more political and conceptual questions, students this year picked the more complex issue questions over the questions that are more heavily focused on institutional design.

Question 3 (democratic deficit to due member states loss of control – 7 x answered) was the most popular, followed by question 12 (effect of Euroscepticism – 6 x answered), 5 (differentiated integration -5 x answered) and 11 (explanatory power of neofunctionalism for EU development since Maastricht – 5 x answered). No students choose question 2 (polity of EU), question 7 (Commission), question 8 (Council/European council), question 9 (enlargement and neighbourhood policy), question 10 (interest constellation in the Council), which have a more institutional focus.

This emphasis is surprising in the way that the answer to the chosen questions require students to not only present institutional knowledge but also normatively interpret the political set-up of the EU. On the other hand, those questions represent current political and academic debates. It shows that students relate to those discussions (e.g. future of EU; Euroscepticism) and consider those topics interesting and relevant. This said, this trend was also already observable in last year's exam.

The exam graded below 60 lacked comprehensive and critical considerations. Exams above 60 were able to present their argument in a coherent and correct fashion, but were more limited in scope and lacked wider political considerations and critical reflection. Exams above 65 had to showcase the ability of independent analysis, even if with missing aspects or few shortcomings. One exam (final mark 69) was very well done and showcased the ability of an independent argument but just missed still the holistic critical approach that would be expected from a first. The two essays marked 70 and above needed to go beyond what had been covered in the lectures, go beyond textbook chapters and had to display a critical engagement with the wider academic scholarship. They showcased excellent factual knowledge about a wider variety of different aspects, a sound line of analytical argumentation, with a convincing critical reflection.

## 229 Advanced Paper in Theories of Justice

The quality of work produced for this exam was again high: candidates generally showed very good knowledge of contemporary literature. There were no particularly weak scripts, although some candidates did stick very close to material covered in lectures in their answers, which inevitably rendered the work produced less impressive than that of candidates who were able to demonstrate wider reading. The syllabus that will be examined next year has been expanded to include two new topics, on UBI and justice in healthcare: this will increase the range of topics on which questions can be set, and should reduce the clustering around certain topics (particularly historic injustice) that was noticeable this year.

Comments for individual questions are provided when there were multiple respondents.

1. Is any form of protectionism compatible with justice in international trade? (1 answer)

2. Can we determine a fair allocation of the costs of climate change in isolation from a wider account of distributive justice? (9 answers)

Some thoughtful responses on isolationism and integrationism, despite a tendency for some answers to simply rehearse familiar APP / PPP / BPP arguments, without thinking hard enough about how wider questions of distributive justice feed into these accounts.

3. Does the case for reparations depend upon the claim that people living in the present have been harmed by past wrongdoing? (22 answers)

The most popular question. Better answers were able to show which arguments relating to historic injustice depended on claims about harm specifically. Less strong answers tacked quite closely to the lecture handout, and sometimes failed to focus specifically on the question.

4. Is the 'beneficiary pays principle' best understood as an instance of luck egalitarianism? (14 answers)

Some good knowledge of relevant literature here, though answers were sometimes more assured in their handling of the BPP than of luck egalitarianism itself.

5. Should we care less about the wellbeing of people who will live in the future than we do about those who live in the present? (6 answers)

Some good knowledge of the literature on intergenerational justice, though some essays could have done more to relate their answers precisely to the question, which was not phrased in terms of rights or claims of justice.

6. 'No child should be enrolled in a religion until they are old enough to make the choice for themselves.' Discuss. (12 answers)

Generally strong answers, though some struggled to explain what it meant to be enrolled in a religion.

7. To what extent should the upbringing of children be determined by the goal of equality of opportunity? (1 answer)

8. How would a society focussed on treating people with disabilities as equals differ from our current society? (6 answers)

There was some excellent writing produced in response to this question. Less strong answers largely rehearsed definitional questions about disability in terms of the social and medical model, rather than thinking about actual changes of attitude or of policy.

9. Can a single definition of disability meaningfully encompass both physical, and cognitive and psychological, disabilities? (11 answers)

While there was good general knowledge of the disability literature on display here, some essays failed to do enough to think about the specific variables (physical, and cognitive and psychological disabilities) outlined in the question.

10. Under what circumstances could a state justifiably restrict its own citizens' freedom of movement? (10 answers)

This was a challenging question, in that it asked candidates to use the literature on migration to think about the duties of states towards their own citizens rather than those from elsewhere. Better answers were able to do this while also reflecting on the implications of the positions developed for broader debates relating to migration, less strong answers struggled to articulate why internal restrictions on movement might be thought to be problematic.

11. Do any considerations of justice apply to the dealings between democracies and dictatorships? (0 answers)

12. Does contemporary theoretical work on questions of justice take sufficient account of the concerns of political activists? (1 answer)



## **297 Comparative Political Economy**

22 PPE students wrote the CPE 297 Special Subject: Comparative Political Economy exam. Overall the exams were of high quality, and the typed scripts and use of notes allowed more in-depth answers than in previous years. As in previous years, the questions on globalization, inequality, equity-efficiency and varieties of capitalism were particularly popular. Most exams showed a strong knowledge of the course material and a relatively sophisticated and clear engagement with the question. The best answers showed a deep understanding and engagement with both the empirical material and the theoretical questions – moving beyond to examine the assumptions of literature. More engagement with methodological issues at the conceptual level – how does one evaluate whether equity and efficiency are in tension, what does it mean for a typology to be valuable and so on, would strengthen the papers. The equity-efficiency and varieties of capitalism questions showed the widest range in quality.

## *International Security and Conflict Report*

### *Public Exam, Hilary Term 2020*

We had 52 students taking the public exam for the *International Security and Conflict* paper, the average mark for the paper was a 68,7 (lowest 58, highest 77). This is a “Special Subject in Politics” paper but it is becoming extremely popular and students who pick this paper are very committed and the quality of their answers is very high.

All questions were answered, however there is an important vastation between question. See next table.

ISCquestion	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Q7	20	12.82	12.82
Q4	19	12.18	25.00
Q5	17	10.90	35.90
Q6	16	10.26	46.15
Q2	15	9.62	55.77
Q12	14	8.97	64.74
Q9	14	8.97	73.72
Q8	13	8.33	82.05
Q11	11	7.05	89.10
Q1	9	5.77	94.87
Q10	7	4.49	99.36
Q3	1	0.64	100.00
Total	156	100.00	

Q7 on “genocide and atrocities” was the most answered, and Q4 on “civil wars” had almost the same level of respondents. Q5 on “nuclear weapons”, Q6 on “terrorism” and Q2 on “interstate war”.

On average the questions that had higher marks were Q9 (“sexual violence in civil wars “), Q2 (“on inter-state war) and Q10 on (“organize crime and violence”). However, it should be noticed that the variation of marks - most above 2.1 - is quite low between questions. Hence, most of the answers were very good regardless what question was answered.

The exam questions follow. I highlight some key-points that characterized strong/excellent answers. Of course the necessary, but not sufficient, conditions to elaborate a strong answer were defining core concepts and using the relevant compulsory reading.

1. *Has 'human security' proved to be a useful concept?*

Excellent answers provided definitions of “human security” and defined other concepts of security we reviewed during the lecture and tutorials, but provided also a nuanced version of human security. They also critically evaluate what it was meant for “useful concept” and some of the best ones compared, using empirical cases, what could be the gains or losses using only “human security” lenses.

2. *What is the strongest challenge to rational choice explanations of inter-state war?*

The starting point was defining rationality but also bringing in a “rationalist explanation of war” (Fearon). Then engaging with misperception (Jervis), overconfidence (Johnson) and role of ideologies and emotions (e.g. Hall).

3. *Under what conditions are regional efforts to promote security successful?*

Strong answer compared different regional efforts and showed organizational features for successful security promotion but also the role of global powers in those regions. The use of Buzan and Waever was very helpful.

4. *Which theory offers the best explanation for the outbreak of civil wars?*

Best answers moved beyond the “greed and grievance” debate, included also the role of emotions and ideologies. They also critically discussed what was meant for “best explanation” and compared different explanations using specific civil wars and/or summarising the findings from the literature.

5. *Is the possibility of a 'nuclear peace' the best argument against limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons?*

Strong answer challenge the “nuclear peace” argument, also discussing the impossibility of counterfactual but also the relative risk of escalation and mistakes due to nuclear proliferation.

6. *Why do some states invest so many resources in counter-terrorism?*

Best answers, first showed the low risk of terrorists attacks, but then discussed the issues of political costs, electoral cycles and instrumental use of leadership also over securitizing the issue.

7. *What is the role of leaders in mass atrocities and genocides?*

Very good answer compared micro, meso and macro explanations. Scott Straus was a core author to use here but also elaborating the discussion between “instrumental” versus “normative” leaderships.

8. *What are the direct and indirect mechanisms through which refugees can trigger domestic conflict, and which is more important?*

Excellent answers organised the essay between direct and indirect using the core readings but using also very recent readings from journals such as *International Organization* and *World Politics*. Then, discussed the concept of “more important”, they evaluated and compared cases using empirics from, for example, UNHCR and case studies.

9. *Why do some rebel groups use sexual violence in civil war?*

First provide features and features of groups that tend to use more sexual violence. Second elaborated mechanisms about recruitment, group’s cohesion and socialization. They used work of Libby Wood and Cohen.

10. What are the similarities and differences between rebels in civil wars and groups belonging to organised crime?

Most of the best answers started from Kalyvas’ piece and then elaborated using case studies, for instance based on Idler’s work in Latina America, but also related to ISIS.

11. *How has cyberwarfare challenged deterrence theory in international politics?*

First discussion of deterrence theory in “classic IR”, then from the work of Kello elaboration of challenges and issues of deterrence theory related to cyberwarfare. Use of Nye and Gartzke also to counterbalance the “size of the revolution”.

12. *Are peacekeeping operations just a solution for resolving commitment problems and asymmetric information among belligerents?*

Students first highlight how peace operations could resolve commitments problems and informative issues (e.g. Hultman et al.), but then moved beyond it and used for instance Lise Howard’s persuasion argument and the role of local peacekeepers (e.g. Autesserre; Campbell).