

PO3B6-15 Open Political Ideas

24/25

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Michael Saward

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Open Political Ideas is devised to offer a Political Theory specialist or optional module to UG3 students taking PAIS and certain cognate degrees. The module is designed to enable students to choose and pursue a specific research project in the broad field of Political Ideas, and work collaboratively with fellow students on their respective projects. In comparison with more conventional UG3 specialist modules in PAIS – where, for example, having pre-set, discrete weekly topics and reading lists for the duration of a module is standard – Open Political Ideas is designed to:

- Give students more responsibility for the content and direction of their own learning, both as individuals and as members of a group;
- Promote active learning, where for example students set key aspects of the teaching and learning agenda rather than respond to a pre-set week-by-week agenda;
- Encourage a strong sense of collegiality and collaboration among students; and
- Disaggregate the assessment process so that each key step in developing their project, and therefore progress towards the module's learning outcomes, forms part of each student's overall assessment.

In practical terms, each student on the module will be required – in collaboration with the tutor and, to a degree, fellow students – to devise a research question in the broad field of political ideas. Students would not be permitted to write on a topic with substantial overlap with any other project,

essay, or dissertation topic from their previous or current studies. The phrase 'political ideas' expresses the thought that topics could include concepts, ideologies, thinkers/writers, cases, methods or claims. For example, a student could choose the topic 'Is populism opposed to democracy? A feminist critique' and explore the ideas of populism and democracy through a case study from the UK, the US or Brazil drawing on feminist perspectives on the public/private dichotomy and norms of masculinity in public political life. The module would be open to student choices of (e.g.) feminist, Marxist, post-structuralist, constructivist, liberal, grounded, postcolonial, comparative and other modes and methods of political ideas.

Module aims

1. To develop an advanced ability to frame and effectively pursue an independent research project
2. To foster the capacity devise and articulate critically constructive feedback on a range of political ideas topics
3. To develop the capacity to assess and incorporate feedback to refine written arguments
4. To foster and refine skills of articulating and presenting complex ideas
5. To refine the capacity to identify and deploy within a sustained argument evidence and perspectives from a variety of resources

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Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

In line with the rationale of the module, the 'syllabus' is developed in collaboration with each student as part of the teaching and learning process. However, it is anticipated that some resources will be useful to all students in thinking through potential topics and methodologies, such as:

Cappelen, Gendler and Hawthorne (eds) (2016), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical*

Methodology (Oxford University Press)

Gaus and Kukathas (eds) (2004), Handbook of Political Theory (Sage)

Morin, Olsson and Atikcan (eds) (2021), Research Methods in the Social Sciences (Oxford University Press)

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- By the end of the module students should be able to: 1. Design and execute an independent research project in political ideas and cognate fields
- 2. Identify, marshal and deploy and reference appropriate evidence and argument to support an independent research project
- 3. Appraise in a close and critical manner specific research sources
- 4. Communicate complex ideas and arguments clearly to an audience of peers
- 5. Appreciate, assess and as appropriate incorporate constructively critical feedback in a collegial group environment
- 6. Devise and communicate effectively constructively critical feedback in response to a variety of research presentations in a collegial group environment
- 7. Demonstrate a strong grounding in a specific research topic in political ideas

Indicative reading list

It is in the nature of the module that 'reading lists' will be generated by students in consultation with the tutor.

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Research element

Development of individual student research projects in political ideas.

Interdisciplinary

Student projects may display interdisciplinary characteristics, for example bringing together topics and methods from Politics, Philosophy, Sociology, Gender Studies, Design Studies, Performance Studies.

International

In a given presentation of the module, it is likely that a number of student projects will include

topics, readings and case studies with a distinctly international character. International topics and the deployment of international research resources will be encouraged.

Subject specific skills

By the end of the module students should be able to:

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4. Communicate complex ideas and arguments clearly to an audience of peers
5. Appreciate, assess and as appropriate incorporate constructively critical feedback in a collegial group environment
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Transferable skills

The module provides students with opportunities to develop and demonstrate the following key skills:

- the ability to apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and conduct independent projects
- the generic skills necessary for employment related to Politics and International Studies: lateral thinking; problem solving; detailed critical analysis and interpretation of a variety of primary and secondary sources; the ability to digest, retain and apply complex information and ideas; skills in research, independent study, group discussion, and in oral and written presentation; the ability to refine complex ideas and consider alternative perspectives
- the skills necessary for the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility: e.g., the ability to assess their own capacity for and progress in learning; the ability to organize their work and manage their time successfully; the ability to meet deadlines; the ability to reflect critically on the extent and limitations of how and what they have learned, discovered and understood
- the ability to deploy decision-making skills in complex and unpredictable situations
- ability to synthesis ideas drawn from different disciplinary areas in order to understand and address real world problems
- the ability to recognize and be sensitive to diversity of evidence, interpretation and perspective
- skills in the communication of information, ideas, problems and solutions orally and in writing to varied audiences
- the ability to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Tutorials	1 session of 1 hour (1%)
Online learning (scheduled sessions)	4 sessions of 1 hour 15 minutes (3%)
Online learning (independent)	4 sessions of 1 hour 15 minutes (3%)
Private study	39 hours 30 minutes (26%)
Assessment	79 hours 30 minutes (53%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Class preparation; research for topic choice; carrying out of research for presentations and essay; preparation of book review and presentation; preparation of assessed essay.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Negotiated	60%	35 hours	Yes (extension)
Essay			

The essays by individual students are the core of the module. For a 15 CAT module, there are limitations on essay length to be considered. While a 3,500 word essay may push the boundaries of the overall number of words required for written assessments for the module, a lower word count is unlikely to enable the student to elaborate sufficiently on their chosen topic and the work exploring it.

Reassessment component is the same

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Class presentation	20%	10 hours	No
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Essay plan and indicative bibliography	10%	10 hours	No
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Class preparation and participation	10%	24 hours 30 minutes	No
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- Year 4 of UPOA-M101 Undergraduate Politics (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 3 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 4 of UPOA-M165 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Italian
- Year 3 of UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
- Year 4 of UPHA-V7MX Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
- Year 4 of UPOA-M16B Undergraduate Politics and International Studies (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- Year 4 of UPOA-ML14 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French
- Year 4 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 4 of UPOA-M166 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
- Year 3 of UPOA-M16H Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies (3 year degree)

This module is Option list C for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of V7MQ Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite) with Intercalated Year
 - Year 4 of V7MM Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite) (with Intercalated year)

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics