

# POLITICS I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. 'The quantitative turn in political science has revolutionized the discipline.' Discuss.
2. What role, if any, does masculinity play in peacebuilding operations?
3. Is it ever morally permissible not to pay taxes?
4. Historical institutionalism argues that institutions break down as a result of external shocks. Are there internal causes of institutional collapse?
5. Can one be a Hobbesian democrat?
6. Has the Russian Federation witnessed a democratic backsliding since 1991?
7. Does Locke's defence of private property in Ch. V of the *Second Treatise* apply to intellectual property rights?
8. Over the past decades, religious militancy has increasingly taken an Islamic character. Why?
9. What factors explain the emergence of minority governments in Europe?
10. What explains the dynastic features of India's political system?
11. Is there a non-Marxist account of class?
12. Are citizens under a moral duty to vote?

## **POLITICS II**

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Are shifts between left- and right- extremism a minority phenomenon?
2. China's economic espionage: aggression or self-defence?
3. Is government by algorithms anti-democratic?
4. Is the United Nations' Security Council fit for purpose?
5. 'Social movement theory has become obsolete.' Discuss.
6. What explains the revival of the left in Latin American politics between 2018 and 2021? Discuss by reference to at least two Latin American countries.
7. Is there such a thing as 'public opinion'? If not, so what?
8. Is ideology epiphenomenal to stability in Sub-Saharan Africa? Discuss by reference to at least two countries.
9. Scholars have long scrutinized the causes of political revolutions yet have typically failed to predict them accurately. Why?
10. Should animals be granted full citizenship rights?
11. Are economic sanctions a morally justified alternative to war?
12. Is a just world one in which race is no longer politically salient?

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1. Were the COVID lockdowns a legitimate use of state power?
2. What is the role of the middle class in affecting the balance between democracy and tyranny?
3. Why not uncivil disobedience?
4. Considerable empirical research points to a positive relationship between economic development and democratization, yet China stands out as an exception. Is this an idiosyncratic exception or a sign that empirical research is inadequate?
5. Does dystopian thinking hurt or help today's anti-climate change politics?
6. Is it true that democratic peace theory lacks clear causal mechanisms? If so, why would that matter?
7. Should the state pay wages for care work?
8. Democratic backsliding: reality or hype?
9. Has Enlightenment humanism lost its appeal?
10. Under what conditions could empathy increase political polarization?
11. 'The history of modernity is not so much about the progress of reason as it is about the history of reason's unreason' (ACHILLE MBEMBE, 2018 interview). Discuss.
12. 'There is no Marx without Lenin.' Discuss.
13. How do political institutions shape political behaviour? When is this not the case?

## POLITICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is a welfare state harder to implement under a free trade regime?
2. Must democrats always deliberate?
3. 'Class in itself' or 'Class for itself?' Discuss.
4. 'Political freedom is useless without economic self-determination.' Discuss in relation to **EITHER** (a) a postcolonial conjuncture **OR** (b) the politics of Brexit and the European Union.
5. Does the observed decline in military coups portend an equivalent decline in the incidence of authoritarian regimes?
6. What are the causes of low interpersonal trust in a society?
7. Are children dominated?
8. What role, if any, does whiteness play in stabilizing an unjust status quo?
9. Is the Downsian understanding of politics compatible with populist politics?
10. Does the sex/gender distinction hurt or help feminists?
11. Has the demand for a better future always underwritten conceptions of politics?
12. What do we not know about the power of money in politics?
13. Is there a right to adequate housing?
14. Does deterrence work?

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1. 'Of the people, by the people, for the people.' Discuss.
2. Why have global governance efforts so often ended in gridlock?
3. Is there a duty not to secede?
4. Why has socialism historically been weak in the United States?
5. Is populism an ideology?
6. What is a legitimate exercise of executive discretion?
7. Is gender relevant to the study of conflict?
8. What are the conditions for a successful transition to democracy?
9. 'There is no such thing as left-wing nationalism.' Discuss.
10. Is electoral politics a marketplace?
11. Can technology be a political agent?
12. On what grounds, if any, should human remains be returned to their community of origin?
13. Are natural resources a curse?

## POLITICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is there a right to privacy?
2. Can a social movement be effective *and* true to itself?
3. What can political scientists learn from **EITHER** experimental methods **OR** ethnographic methods?
4. Are welfare states doomed?
5. Can the interests of future generations be adequately represented in the political system?
6. 'Quantification shapes how we think about public policy—often for the worse' (ETHAN BUENO DE MESQUITA). Do you agree?
7. Can other countries imitate the success of the Asian tigers?
8. Is illiberal democracy an oxymoron?
9. Should we worry about the Belt and Road initiative?
10. Is race political?
11. Does nuclear deterrence still work today?
12. What explains civil wars?
13. What, if anything, is distinctive about environmental politics?

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1. Do Proportional Representation electoral systems produce more representative governments or just permutations in government formation?
2. 'This narrow world, strewn with prohibitions, can only be called in question by absolute violence' (FRANTZ FANON). Is violence the only way to meet societal oppression?
3. Should the state make people work in exchange for income or other forms of public assistance?
4. What does contemporary political theory have to learn from the global South?
5. In the light of recent changes to the Chinese Constitution, is global politics experiencing a turn towards authoritarianism?
6. 'The European Union is the most successful historical example of a peaceful union of formerly warring countries.' Discuss.
7. 'To introduce into the philosophy of war a principle of moderation would be an absurdity' (CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ). What, if any, is the role of moderation in war?
8. Does the rise of religious fundamentalism reveal a fatal flaw in Max Weber's theory of disenchantment?
9. 'The alt-right are merely the latest standard-bearers of fragile masculinity.' Discuss.
10. 'We are, as bodies, vulnerable to others and to institutions, and this vulnerability constitutes one aspect of the social modality through which bodies persist' (JUDITH BUTLER). Can a 'politics of vulnerability' address contemporary issues of social justice?
11. Have we seen the end of the 'end of ideology' ideology?
12. Is there a role for 'state of nature' theories in contemporary political thought?

## POLITICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. What explains 'how democracies fail' (LEVITSKY AND ZIBLATT)?
2. Do emotions rather than material calculation explain voting choices?
3. Does Stokely Carmichael's 1966 proposition that 'integration is a subterfuge for the maintenance of white supremacy' still hold in the United States?
4. In a world of mass displacement, migration, and civil war, do states have a right to regulate immigration?
5. Does Mary Wollstonecraft overestimate the capacity for education to improve the lot of women in society?
6. 'Political science provides answers, but political theory asks the questions.' Discuss.
7. Does a nation's foreign policy go beyond mere self-interest?
8. 'Americans and Europeans kept telling themselves their tales of inevitability for a quarter-century after the end of communism, and so raised a millennial generation without history' (TIMOTHY SNYDER). What does this tell us about accounts of progress?
9. What are the bases of prime ministerial power?
10. 'The only people who care enough about us to work consistently for our liberation are us' (COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE). Does this view erase the role of 'allies' in liberation movements?
11. 'Anti-capitalist in theory, capitalist in practice.' Is this a fair assessment of identity politics?
12. What is the place of public opinion in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's political thought?



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1. 'I think the people in this country have had enough of experts from organizations with acronyms saying that they know what is best and getting it consistently wrong' (MICHAEL GOVE). What should be the role of experts in public life?
2. Has feminism lost its radical impetus?
3. Does twentieth-century social contract theory improve on its early modern and modern predecessors?
4. Is a super-majority requirement anti-democratic?
5. **EITHER** Discuss the relationship between religion and politics in **ANY TWO** South Asian countries. **OR**  
What role should religious values play in informing public policy?
6. Does the US Democratic Party stand for any ideology?
7. Is a nuclear second-strike ever permissible?
8. Is the state entitled to punish wrongdoers?
9. Should historical materialism be revived?
10. Should the criteria for permanent membership of the UN Security Council be revised?
11. 'The fairest way to redress economic inequality is not a universal basic income but a maximum wage.' Do you agree?
12. To what extent, if any, is contemporary world politics still shaped by the 1917 Russian Revolution?

## POLITICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. 'A revolution is not a trail of roses. A revolution is a fight to the death between the future and the past' (FIDEL CASTRO). Should political theory always side with the future over the past?
2. 'You put them first, and they put you last, 'cause you're a chump, a political chump' (MALCOLM X). Can oppressed social groups trust political parties to bring about their emancipation?
3. Why not anarchism?
4. 'A neoliberal is someone who believes that markets are astonishingly good at creating wealth, but not always good at distributing wealth' (SAM BOWMAN). If this is true, who bears responsibility for wealth distribution?
5. 'Social democracy has failed. Only socialism offers a future for the left.' Do you agree?
6. Is the European project a reckoning with history, or a utopian vision?
7. 'We know better what we measure, and what measurement means, when we calculate the dynamic mass of a galaxy than when we quantify by polling a state of opinion' (RÉGIS DEBRAY). If this is true, are all attempts to measure public opinion doomed to fail?
8. Discuss the importance of colonialism for post-independence state-building in **ANY TWO** African countries.
9. 'Fukuyama won the battle, but Huntington is winning the war.' Do you agree?
10. Can conflict in the South China Sea be prevented?
11. 'Love means in general terms the consciousness of my unity with another, so that I am not in selfish isolation but win my self-consciousness only as the renunciation of my independence and through knowing myself as the unity of myself with another and of the other with me' (G.W.F. HEGEL). What is the case for a 'politics of love'?
12. Do the governments of former white settler colonies (e.g. Australia, Canada, New Zealand) owe reparations to the descendants of their indigenous inhabitants?

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1. 'The only way we transform this country is through a political revolution.' (BERNIE SANDERS) Discuss.
2. 'It is far better to be feared than loved if you cannot be both.' (NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI) Should emotions play a role in political argument?
3. 'At the core of conservatism lies an irreconcilable tension between nationalism and free-market economics.' Do you agree?
4. 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.' (MARTIN LUTHER KING) Is social progress inevitable?
5. Are presidential systems inherently susceptible to authoritarianism?
6. 'A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.' (JOSEF STALIN) If this is true, could the world ever become a nation?
7. Is European party politics experiencing a 'return to Weimar'?
8. Does the rise of the so-called Islamic State show that the sectarian divisions in the Middle East are ultimately irreconcilable?
9. With real wages stagnant or falling, should redistribution focus less on employment income, and more on wealth?
10. 'Equalization payments between regions are supposed to hold federal states together. Instead, they only make them more likely to break apart.' Do you agree?
11. 'Britain's past is European, but its future is global.' Discuss.
12. Is there a solution to the security dilemma?

## POLITICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Has the Cold War ended?
2. Is the US state a weak state?
3. Has the politics of economic conditionality been a success or a failure in Sub-Saharan Africa?
4. 'Truth and reconciliation commissions have been a crucial instrument of democratization in Latin America.' Discuss.
5. Does a currency union require a political union?
6. 'We will have so much winning if I get elected, that you may get bored with winning.' (DONALD TRUMP) Is there more to politics than winning?
7. 'Covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all.' (THOMAS HOBBS) Discuss.
8. Socrates refused his friends' offer to help him flee Athens and thereby escape from his death sentence, on the grounds that he was under an obligation to submit to the authority of his fellow citizens. Was he right?
9. Should prostitution be lawful?
10. Is the family a site of justice?
11. Does judicial activism fatally undermine representative democracy?
12. 'White women and black men have it both ways. They can act as oppressor or be oppressed.' (BELL HOOKS) Is intersectionality an unachievable ideal?