



## **Module Specification**

### **Critical Thinking and Political Theory**

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## Part 1: Information

**Module title:** Critical Thinking and Political Theory

**Module code:** UZQK8M-30-1

**Level:** Level 4

**For implementation from:** 2025-26

**UWE credit rating:** 30

**ECTS credit rating:** 15

**College:** College of Health, Science & Society

**School:** CHSS School of Social Sciences

**Partner institutions:** None

**Field:** Politics

**Module type:** Module

**Pre-requisites:** None

**Excluded combinations:** None

**Co-requisites:** None

**Continuing professional development:** No

**Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements:** None

## Part 2: Description

**Overview:** This module introduces students to traditional and critical approaches in political theory and political philosophy, which are used to explore and understand contemporary political phenomena.

**Features:** Not applicable

**Educational aims:** The aim of this module is to develop students' critical thinking skills, enabling them to analyse, evaluate, and construct arguments with precision

and clarity. By fostering intellectual curiosity and a healthy scepticism, the module equips students to critically assess assumptions, evidence, and reasoning in both theoretical and real-world contexts.

**Outline syllabus:** The module introduces students to foundational concepts in political theory and international relations, such as power, justice, liberty, equality, democracy, conservatism, socialism, liberalism, fascism, post-fascism, totalitarianism, reactionary politics and populism while exploring the works and ideas of key political thinkers from diverse historical and cultural backgrounds.

The module also seeks to enhance students' argumentation and debate skills, emphasising the importance of constructing clear, persuasive arguments while engaging respectfully with differing viewpoints. Additionally, the module encourages ethical and reflective thinking, promoting awareness of the moral dimensions of political decisions and inspiring self-reflection on personal values and beliefs. By fostering both independent and collaborative learning, this module prepares students for informed civic engagement, leadership roles, and a deeper interdisciplinary understanding of political systems and their societal impacts.

### **Part 3: Teaching and learning methods**

**Teaching and learning methods:** Students will be expected to attend weekly lectorials, where the content of required readings will be discussed at length with the supervision of an expert and in a safe, non-competitive environment that fosters inclusivity and compassion. Lectorials are conversational environments and students will be expected to provide their informed input and address practical, real-world problems in class.

**Module Learning outcomes:** On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

**MO1** Communicate arguments relevant to module content in a clear and concise manner

**MO2** Collaborate with a peer towards the production and delivery of a coherent presentation

**MO3** Assess basic arguments by testing for clarity, consistency and flaws

**MO4** Understand and express a range of traditional and critical political theories

**Hours to be allocated:** 300

**Contact hours:**

Independent study/self-guided study = 234 hours

Face-to-face learning = 66 hours

**Reading list:** The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzqk8m-30-1.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzqk8m-30-1.html>

## Part 4: Assessment

**Assessment strategy:** Task 1 – 10 minute recorded presentation, in pairs (50% weighting)

The first part of the assessment is a paired presentation with each student receiving an individual mark. Students will prepare a presentation focused on a topic covered in the module. The presentation gives students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of one of the topics studied, hone their collaboration skills and begin to build presentation skills. Each student should speak for roughly 50% of the total presentation time, but this should be in the form of a back and forth discussion rather than two standalone 5 minute slots.

Formative assessment opportunities are provided in the lead up to the presentation, with group work (in pairs) and feedback on progress provided.

Task 2 – 2000 word written assignment (50% weighting)

The second assessment task is a written assignment where students answer up to two questions in an essay format. The word limit is slightly longer here than other year 1 modules as to engage critically with something, and to demonstrate this, requires more time/space than with other tasks. Set questions will encourage students to demonstrate an understanding of how political theories can be used to understand complex real-world situations that the module covers. Through this task, students will not only demonstrate their understanding of assigned readings, but will also apply critical thinking skills to relevant real-world topics.

**Assessment tasks:****Presentation (First Sit)**

Description: 10-minute paired (pre-recorded) presentation. Each student delivering 5 minutes each and receiving an individual mark.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: Yes

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

**Written Assignment (First Sit)**

Description: 2000 word written assignment

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO3, MO4

**Presentation (Resit)**

Description: 10-minute paired (pre-recorded) presentation. Each student delivering 5 minutes each and receiving an individual mark.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: Yes

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

**Written Assignment (Resit)**

Description: 2000 word written assignment

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO3, MO4

**Part 5: Contributes towards**

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Politics And International Relations {Foundation} [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Politics And International Relations [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Politics And International Relations [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Politics And International Relations [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Politics And International Relations {Foundation} [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Politics And International Relations [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Politics And International Relations [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Politics And International Relations {Foundation} [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Politics And International Relations {Foundation} [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23