

TRANSITION WORK



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS 2020

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Section 1: UK & US Politics

- Task 1: Research and define the following key terms
- Task 2: Research the 2019 General Election results (UK)
- Task 3: Read through the attached article and answer the questions. (US)
- Task 4: Constitution research (UK and US)

Section 2: Political Ideologies

- Task 1: Research and define key words
- Task 2: What are Political Ideologies? - Reading
- Task 3: What ideology might you be? - Questionnaire
- Task 4: So, what does that ideology value? - Reflection

Politics is going to be a new subject for you. Some of you may have a bit of an understanding but we will teach this whole course knowing there will be almost zero knowledge.

However, you have now picked to do Politics and we could not be happier. It is awesome!

So, your first job is to go through all the transition work and get a good background understanding to help your progress through the course.

You will also want to be getting used to keeping up to date with current political events. Watch the news, read the papers, use the BBC or the Guardian or other reputable news sources and get stuck into the world of politics (even if you do not understand it all yet).

If you have any questions, then just get in touch with either of us. Good luck!

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How do I take good notes?

The biggest mistake A-Level students make is that they write far too much in their notes. If you are taking notes from a textbook you should not be re-writing everything. You will have a copy of the textbook when you revise. So why write it out again?

Notes should fulfil the following criteria:

- Summarises information down to the most important points
- Identifies and highlights the most important facts, dates, people, statistics & words
- Shows your thinking with explanations, analysis of specific facts and evaluation of ideas and interpretations.

Note taking methods

Force yourself to try a new method out. These are all systems that are proven to be much more effective than just a page of 'notes'.

A few examples are included below.

Cornell Notetaking Method

Cue Column	Notes Column
2.5 Inches	6 Inches
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main Ideas• Questions that connect points• Diagrams• Study prompts <p>When? After class During review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main lecture notes here• Use concise sentences• Use shorthand symbols• Use abbreviations• Use lists• Put space between points <p>When? During class</p>
Summary Column <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For top level, main ideas• Use as a quick reference area	<p>When? After class During review</p>
	2"

Alternative Cornell structure

TITLE		Date
Keywords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main notes◦ ideally, using abbreviations	
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key thoughts	
SUMMARY		

The Outline Method

- This is a main topic
 - This is a sub topic
 - This is a thought or supporting fact

NOTES ON THE SLIDE PAGE FROM SOCIAL ENQUIRY: WEEK 2 20/11/16

What is a sociological imagination?

- Links private experiences and wider social issues
- Term coined by C. Wright Mills who said:
 - "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (1983:9).
 - "[People] cannot cope with their personal troubles in such a way as to control the structural transformations that usually lie behind them" (1983:10)

Sociological Imagination.

 - C.W. Mills
 - c. 1950s

What is a sociological imagination?

- Mills says we must ask certain questions such as:
 - What is the structure of a particular society as a whole? (How do its components relate to and differ from other societies; what are the meanings of its features)
 - Where does this society stand in human history? (What changes, what stays the same)
 - What different types of people characterise this society? (How are people constructed; who is powerful and powerless)

The Sociological Imagination
Personal troubles linked to Public Issues.

 → Ethnicity. How does the population affect society?

What is a sociological imagination?

Mills says we must look at the distinction between

- **personal troubles** (self & personal awareness, individuals have a biography, local)
- and
- **public issues** (larger structure of society; relates to organisational matters; institutions; national or global)

eg marriage equality
 - personal
 I gay couple

 - public
 marriage institution
 Left vs right in political ideology.

Personal troubles }
 plus
 Public Issues } — Sociological Imagination.

Annotated PowerPoints

In Politics lessons we will print out the PowerPoint each lesson.

This means we can focus on the analysis and discussions instead of copying info down.

Section 1: UK & US Politics

Task 1: Research and define the following key terms

- Legislature
- Executive
- Judiciary
- Constitution
- Devolution
- Participation
- Electorate
- Turnout
- First past the post
- Parliamentary sovereignty

Task 2: Research the 2019 General Election results (UK)

The December 2019 General Election

Things you need to know for the **test in the First Lesson:**

Background: The 2019 General Election result	
Winning party?	
Prime minister appointed?	
Size of majority (number of seats more than all the other parties combined)	
Incumbent Prime Minister at the dissolution of Parliament 6 th November 2019:	
Party:	
Size of majority:	
The Parties in the 2019 General Election	
Labour	
Leader:	
Number of seats at the dissolution of Parliament on 6 th November 2019:	
Liberal Democrats	
Leaders:	
Number of seats at the dissolution of Parliament on 6 th November 2019:	
Number of seats at the dissolution of Parliament on 6 th November 2019:	
Minor and nationalist parties	
SNP:	
Plaid Cymru:	
UKIP:	
Green:	
DUP:	
Sinn Fein	
Election	
Number of votes cast:	
Percentage:	

Conservative	
Seats:	
Change since 2017:	
Percentage of votes:	
Votes per seat:	
Labour	
Seats:	
Change since 2017:	
Percentage of votes:	
Votes per seat:	
Liberal Democrat	
Seats:	
Change since 2017:	
Percentage of votes:	
Votes per seat:	
UKIP	
Seats:	
Change since 2017:	
Percentage of votes:	
Votes per seat:	
Green	
Seats:	
Change since 2017:	
Percentage of votes:	
Votes per seat:	
SNP	
Seats:	
Change since 2017:	
Percentage of votes:	
Votes per seat:	
Outcome	
Who formed a government:	
Prime Minister:	
Party:	
Other parties:	
Who won the Guildford constituency:	
Which party did they belong to:	
Percentage of votes:	

Task 3: Read through the following article and answer the questions. (US)



Trump Has Lost the Plot

May 12 2020

A couple of years ago, *BuzzFeed* asked a former White House official to explain the logic behind some bizarre Trump action. The official responded with one of the master quotes of the Trump era.

President Trump, the official said, is not playing “the sort of three-dimensional chess people ascribe to decisions like this. More often than not he’s just eating the pieces.”

Over Mother's Day and then through Monday—and who knows, perhaps continuing today—Trump has fired off hundreds of rounds of weapons-grade lunacy on Twitter. When Trump does this kind of thing, many are ready with an explanation: *He's rallying his base; he's distracting his critics; he's challenging the existence of reality itself.*

But these explanations miss the point. Trump horribly and uniquely bungled the coronavirus crisis. The human result is mass death and Great Depression—scale unemployment. The political result is that while leaders in Britain and almost everywhere else in the democratic world have been boosted by a surge in public support and approval, Trump has not. The governors who have clashed with Trump have seen their poll numbers rise; New York Governor Andrew Cuomo may now be the most popular politician in the country. Governors who support Trump, like Florida's Ron DeSantis and Georgia's Brian Kemp, have seen their numbers tumble.

Trump trails Joe Biden in national polls by at least five points, as he has done all year. Trump is even lagging behind in swing-state polls. He is down by three points in Florida, five in North Carolina, and seven in Pennsylvania and Michigan. An internal Republican National Committee poll of the 16 least-decided states shows Trump behind in virtually all of them—so much so that he seems likely to drag the Republican Senate majority down with him, *The Washington Post* reported.

Trump's psychology is defined by his terror of rejection. The most stinging insult in his vast vocabulary of disdain is *loser*. And yet every poll, every powerful Biden TV ad, forces Trump to contemplate that he is headed toward a historic humiliation. He'll stand with Jimmy Carter and Herbert Hoover, the incumbents rejected because they failed to manage economic crises.

Trump failed to prevent the crisis. Out of envy and spite, he dismantled the pandemic-warning apparatus his predecessors had bequeathed him.

Trump failed to manage the crisis. At every turn, he gave priority to the short-term management of the stock market instead.

Trump failed to message the crisis. He not only lacks empathy; he despises empathy.

Angry, scared, and aggrieved by the lack of praise for his efforts, Trump turns for safety to television, where his two-dimensional friends explain how everything is everybody else's fault. They tell him that he is right and all his critics are wrong. They promise that miracle drugs will—poof!—make all his troubles vanish without effort. Sean and Tucker and Laura and Jeanine and the *Fox & Friends* romper room tell him stories that hold the terror at bay.

But those stories have drawn Trump into a twisting ghetto of craziness that is impenetrable to outsiders.

The "Obamagate" that Trump tweets about—like the comic-book universes on which it seems to be modelled—is a tangle of backstories. The main characters do things for reasons that make no objective sense, things that can be decoded only by obsessive superfans on long Reddit threads.

Biden's proliferating internet ads hit two themes over and over: the pandemic and jobs, jobs and the pandemic. Those themes are easy to understand. They carry the power of truth. Above all, they are about the viewer: *You are sick or scared, you have lost your job or your business—all because Trump failed to do his job.*

Trump's messages, by contrast, are all about him. *You are sick or scared, you have lost your job or your business—but let's remember who the real victim is. Me. Me and Michael Flynn. But mostly me.*

The more Trump talks about his crackpot theories, the more he reveals why he plunged the country into such a catastrophe. He never cared about anybody else. He ignored unwelcome realities, because only fantasy flattered his ego as it required to be flattered.

You can try to assemble the Trump-Fox victimhood stories into something resembling a coherent whole. Tim Miller of *The Bulwark* has made valiant efforts to do so. You can test those stories against reality and expose them as delusional and delusive, as I have tried to do.

But the most important thing to notice about the Trump-Fox blizzard of mania is how remote it is from anything that real-world voters care about. In 2015, Trump apprehended that most Republicans were talking about things that Republican voters did not then care about: deficits, taxes, productivity, and trade. In 2015, Trump apprehended that nobody was talking about things that Republican voters did care about: immigration, drugs, the declining status of less educated white men.

That Trump is gone. Today's Trump has lost the plot. He's talking about things most voters could not even understand, let alone care about. *Yes, Flynn lied to the FBI. But you have to see, the FBI's interview was not properly predicated ...*

Meanwhile, the country is on track to lose more people to the coronavirus than the Union lost in battle in the Civil War. Meanwhile, 33 million Americans have filed unemployment claims.

In her White House memoir, former President George W. Bush's communications director Karen Hughes tells a useful anecdote. Walking on the beach, she looked up from to see a small plane flying an advertising banner: MARILYN IVE Poured MY ♥ OUT NOTHIN LEFT LUV WES. Hughes contemplated the banner and thought, "I could have given him some message advice: the banner is clearly some sort of appeal to Marilyn, but the words are about Wes—what he has done, how he feels. He should have made the message about her."

Trump is all about Trump. That's always been true. For three years, though, Trump was protected from himself by the prosperity he inherited from others. Trump has squandered that prosperity, as he previously squandered the fortune bequeathed by his father. The consequences are here. The fairy tales Trump tells on Twitter will not conceal those consequences from the voters Trump needs.

They weren't listening before. Now they are. And what they hear is not: *Obama was mean to me*. What they hear is: *I cannot do this job*.

Article questions:

1. What are the articles main criticisms President Trump?
2. What impression does the article give of President Trumps handling of the coronavirus crisis?
3. According to the article, why might President Trump struggle in the next presidential election?

Task 4: Constitution research (UK and US)

What is a constitution?

In politics, the constitution is the set of rules governing how laws are made and executed.

A countries constitution will normally include rules about:

- the powers of different branches of government (legislature, executive and judiciary)
- the rights of citizens
- the relationship between the branches of government
- the relationship between government and citizens

Constitutions act as a basic or fundamental set of laws.

Differences between constitutions

Constitutions come in all different shapes and sizes (different characteristics) and they are all beautiful in their own unique way.

The different classifications of constitutions are:

- **Codified/ uncodified**
- **Entrenched/ flexible**
- **Unitary/ federal**
- Monarchical/ republican
- Parliamentary/ presidential
- Separate powers/ fused powers

These characteristics are explained further on.

Use the additional information below and your own research to complete the table below:

	Codified or Uncodified?	Entrenched or Flexible?	Unitary or Federal?	Monarchy or Republic?	Parliamentary or Presidential?	Separate or Fused?
The US					Presidential	
The UK	Uncodified					

Constitution research task – additional information:

Codified -Contained in a single, legal document -Most countries in the world have one -Usually seen as a supreme or fundamental law which cannot be easily changed	Uncodified -Contained in numerous documents, and some parts may even be <i>unwritten</i> -Seen as organic, evolving over time -On top of this, there are many other conventions, precedents and customs which make up this type of constitution
Entrenched -Constitution cannot be amended easily -Process is different to way normal laws are passed	Flexible -Constitution is not seen to be special -Not given any status above normal laws passed by the legislature
Unitary -Power is ultimately held by one central body	Federal -Power is divided between a central (federal) government and regional governments (states or provinces)
Monarchical -There is a monarch who is a non-political Head of State	Republican -A country that doesn't have a monarch, certainly not one having any formal role
Parliamentary -The Executive is usually chosen by the Legislature	Presidential -The Executive is usually chosen directly by people

Separate powers	Fused powers
-Where the powers and operation of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary are clearly defined, and individuals can only serve in one branch	-Where the Legislature and Executive are intermingled, with members of the Executive being appointed from within the Legislature and members of the Judiciary being in both

Section 2: Political Ideologies

Task 1 - Key words

Look up and define the following key words. *(Try to make sure you find a definition that would fit with them being used in politics)*

- Liberty
- Individualism
- Pragmatic
- Principle
- Doctrines
- Welfare
- Capitalism

Task 2 – What are Political Ideologies?

Read 'Ideas and Ideologies – An introduction'. (located below)

- In your own words – What do you think the study of Political Ideologies is?
- Add to your definitions list with any other words you have looked up

Task 3 – What ideology might you be?

Complete the questionnaire on your political thoughts (you may remember this from the taster session).

We will use it to have a discussion in one of our first lessons.

You may also want to get other people in your house to have a go. But be warned, some people may get annoyed if you tell them they are an ideology they did not expect. Could lead to an interesting discussion or a massive argument so the risk is yours to take.

Task 4 – So what does that ideology value?

Now you have completed the questionnaire you can try to summarise what you think certain ideologies values are.

Pick **two** of the five. For each one:

- How would you define their view of people?
 - Are they positive or negative about them? Do they trust them? Are some people better than others?
- What do you think they value the most?
 - Equality? The economy and money? Order and security?
- Can you think of any countries now or from history that they sound like?
- What do you think it would be like living in a country with that ideology?
- Summarise that ideology in **one sentence**.

Bring these to the first lessons and we will discuss and then they will be taken in to be marked.

Ideas and ideologies

We are used to discussing specific political policies but these refer largely to short-term, pragmatic decisions made by politicians, parties and pressure groups. Policies are developed to deal with particular problems which arise from time to time. Ideas and ideologies, meanwhile, look at longer-term issues and consider fundamental solutions to such questions. Furthermore, they are based on strongly held principles rather than pragmatic responses to short-term issues. Two examples can help here.

Let us consider the levels of taxation in a society. A policy to reduce income tax may be a short-term method of pumping more money into the economy, increasing spending and boosting economic growth. It cannot be undertaken permanently but it solves a problem in the meantime. Meanwhile, a party or group of politicians might believe that tax levels are generally too high, are a threat to people's economic liberty and individualism, and are a disincentive to work and enterprise, so they should be kept to as low a level as possible in the long term. A low-tax society is therefore a political idea.

Political ideologies are a stronger phenomenon altogether. Ideologies are sets of related political ideas which come together to create a vision of some kind of idealised society. Ideologies are based on strongly held, permanent principles and interlocking doctrines. In our example, the idea of a low-tax society connects with related doctrines such as opposition to high levels of welfare which, like high taxes, may be a disincentive to hard work, and free, unregulated markets which foster business enterprise. Put these three aims together — low taxation, low welfare and free markets — and we have an ideology, usually known as neo-liberalism.

We can now apply the same analysis to another set of ideas. These concern dealing with poverty and inequality:

- Raising the minimum wage is a short-term policy to reduce poverty.
- Reducing the gap in living standards between the rich and poor in the long term is a political idea.
- Creating a more generally equal society with equal rights, empowerment for the working classes, intervention by the state to avoid the 'excesses' of capitalism and public ownership of major industries to spread the fruits of their production more evenly are interlocking ideas, forming an ideology, which we know as socialism.

Put another way, policies come and go, while political ideas and ideologies have more permanence.

This book deals with political ideas and political ideologies but not with policies. There are three 'core' ideologies and five 'optional' ideologies. Apart from the fact that students must study all three core ideologies to be able to tackle the examination questions but have to study only one of the options, there is another distinction to be borne in mind:

- The core ideologies — liberalism, conservatism and socialism — have dominated western

civilisation for more than 200 years. Political discourse and conflict therefore have largely been based on these three. However, they are largely based on western civilisation. Today we must look further afield in our study of political ideas, taking a world view and also considering those ideas that shape the relationships between minorities and the perspectives of alienated sections of society.

- The optional ideologies — nationalism, feminism, anarchism, ecologism and multiculturalism — have generally shorter histories than the core ideologies but often take their inspiration from different forms of consciousness of the world, ranging from eastern mysticism to gender awareness to modern scientism. Some aspects of the optional ideas have also challenged the traditional ideas associated with liberalism, conservatism and socialism and as such can also be described as post-modern.

Four themes

These are guides as to how we can analyse and compare political ideas and the beliefs of the many key thinkers presented in this book. You do not have to apply them but you are advised to do so where you can. As a starting point they should be considered in the following ways:

- **Human nature.** This concerns beliefs about the fundamental nature of mankind's relationship with other people and with the world. In the political ideas presented here we will see that various thinkers have described human nature in enormously varied ways, from egocentric to social, from fundamentally good to fundamentally competitive, from gender obsessed to androgynous (having no gender identity), or from dominant over the natural world (anthropomorphic) to claiming to be only an equal part of nature.
- **State.** Nearly all people live under the jurisdiction of one state or another. Political ideas and ideologies therefore have adopted principles about the nature of the state, what part (if any) it should play in society, how it should be controlled and whether it is a force for good or evil.
- **Society.** All societies have a particular structure which has either evolved naturally or been imposed by the state and those who govern the state. Most ideologies therefore have developed some kind of vision of what their ideal society would look like. Sometimes this is very specific, as is the case with socialism, some multiculturalists and certain types of collectivist anarchism; sometimes it is more vague, as is the case with conservatism.
- **Economy.** Not all political ideas and ideologies contain a strong economic perspective, but some do and this should be reflected in analysis where it applies. Again, socialism is a clear example, while neo-liberals, as described above, base most of the ideas on economics and economic principles. Even some socialist feminists have been able to link most of their analysis to economic relations between the sexes. Many ecologists also see capitalism as the main culprit in the degradation of the natural environment and so propose to control or even abolish it.

Key thinkers

There are usually five key thinkers specified for each of the political ideologies in the specification. This book describes their main work, beliefs and importance in the development of political ideas. They are not exhaustive and you should also have knowledge of other key thinkers, but you are certainly advised to refer to them in your examination answers. Directly quoting them is not necessary, though you should do so if you can and if it helps to illustrate your analysis.

Every ideology comprises different themes and variations. Often the different thinkers in the text illustrate these variations most effectively. Thus the distinction between, for example, the liberals John Stuart Mill and John Rawls tells us a great deal about how liberalism evolved between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Similarly, Marx's fundamental version of socialism tells us much of how dramatically the ideology has been transformed by more recent left-wing thinkers such as Anthony Crosland and Anthony Giddens.

Political vocabulary

As we have said, you should use accurate and appropriate political vocabulary wherever possible. Fortunately, both this book and the examination specification contain key terms with their meanings. You should take time to understand these and practise using them wherever you can. They can also save you time in your writing as they have specific meanings, which will reduce the need for lengthy explanations.

You are strongly advised to learn those aspects of vocabulary with which you are not already familiar and to ensure that you are able to use them in the correct context.

Which Ideology am I questionnaire?

Please tick the box for the response that best fits how you think. If you genuinely think your answer is a mixture of two then feel free to tick 2 answers.

If you are not sure on certain words, then look them up. Not knowing and doing research is an important part of any learning and studying.

1. Human Nature: This is what we are like naturally as a species. So, do you think that Human Nature is...

A	That we are innately self-interested and self-reliant, but also reasoned and improvable through education.	
B	That we seek security and the familiar. People are not really rational, and everyone can be morally corrupt at times.	
C	That we are very social creatures and only truly exist through nurturing a cooperative spirit in us.	
D	That we are very intelligent and morally good so that we will seek a fair way to live together socially and fairly.	
E	That we are driven by passion and desire to belong based on our nation or race. Some people are also better suited to rule and some to serve.	

2. Equality: What do you think about the idea of equality?

A	We are born equal and no one has a 'natural right' over an other. However, we must be careful not to restrict people's freedom in achieving equality.	
B	We are naturally hierarchical and true equality is unachievable.	
C	Is a fundamental value and is the only way to keep society working and justly.	
D	About everyone being completely autonomous and collective ownership of wealth	
E	Humankind is about inequality, between leaders and followers and nations and races of the world. Though equality exists within a social group.	

3. Individual Freedom: Do you think the freedom of the individual is...

A	An important part of our lives as it allows us to flourish as people.	
B	Important but we all have responsibilities and duties to society.	
C	Achieved through working together as a society.	
D	An absolute must. We should be completely free in life.	
E	Nonsense. We must all work for the nation	

4. The State: What role do you think government should have?

A	As a natural go-between amongst competing interests and individuals and provides some guarantee of social order.	
B	Necessary to provide order and protect society from chaos, so must be strong.	
C	Is about the common good and should be for and of the people, not about rule over others.	
D	Unnecessary. It only oppresses the individual.	
E	The supreme ideal of life and one that serves to support and guide the race or nation.	

5. Democracy: Do you think having democracy and the right to vote is...

A	Crucial as a way to individually give your consent to those in power.	
B	Important, but we must protect against the will of the many and preserve our traditions.	
C	Not necessary as we all show our consent by being the government in our contributions to society.	
D	Wrong if you are voting for an MP. We should all vote on every decision that matters.	
E	Unnecessary. We just need strong leaders.	

6. Authority: Do you think people with power over others...

A	Comes from the people and must be consented to, rational and limited in power.	
B	Are a necessity. Those who are naturally wise, experienced or in a strong social position should guide society and get respect and loyalty.	
C	Should be seen suspiciously as it can oppress people and protect an elite.	
D	Are unnecessary. Authority only leads to oppression and it is impossible to put checks in place to control this.	
E	Comes from a manifestation of personal leadership or charisma. Those gifted leaders' authority should be absolute and unquestioned.	

7. Society: Do you think human society...

A	Is just a collection of individuals who want what's best for themselves, so they work together to achieve it.	
B	Is a living organism and we are held together by tradition, authority and a shared morality.	
C	Can only exist when it is classless, otherwise it will become unequal.	
D	Should be unregulated and we will naturally create social harmony because we value cooperation.	
E	About shared values and beliefs, rooted in a common national identity.	

8. Gender: What do you think the idea of gender?

A	That it is only important privately or on a personal level. In public and political life, it is irrelevant.	
B	There are gender divisions and organically this creates a hierarchy and division of labour that is natural and inevitable.	
C	Is politically insignificant and is just a sign of deeper inequalities of life.	
D	Completely irrelevant.	
E	A fundamental division in humankind. Men dominate leadership and women are more suited to supportive and subordinate roles.	

Results

Add up your letters.

If you mostly answered [Insert letter] then you most closely agree with the principles of...

A = Liberalism

B = Conservatism

C = Socialism

D = Anarchism

E = Fascism

If you are a mixture then that is very common so just make a note of it.