1. Introduction to the History of Political Thought Papers:

For several decades now, Cambridge has been an international centre for teaching and research on the history of political thought, a subject which has formed a substantial component of the undergraduate degrees in both History and Politics. On the Politics side, there is a widespread view among those who teach the subject here that the study of political ideas in their historical contexts offers an invaluable training for thinking critically and flexibly about politics more generally.

Much of the teaching for this paper is organised by the History Faculty. It is responsible for the production of the reading lists, and will have arranged the lectures that will be delivered throughout the academic year. Sometimes Politics students feel intimidated by the lectures—they worry that they don’t know enough about the relevant ancient, mediaeval, and early modern history, for example, and they come to believe that the History students are better placed than they are to benefit from what’s being said. But if you have thoughts like this, it’s worth exploring the other side of the coin. It’s true that Historians may initially be more familiar with some aspects of the subject than Politics students. But Politics students (especially if they have taken the Part One paper) usually have considerably more experience at handling political argument at a decent level of sophistication by the time they come to study for this paper, and that gives them a very useful platform on which to build their engagement with the syllabus here—since taking political argument seriously is ultimately what this paper is about.
2. Introduction to the Period:

This paper spans the history of western political reflection from the city states of ancient Greece to seventeenth-century argument about natural freedom, international law, natural rights, and their implications for political existence. It offers the chance to investigate ancient conceptions of political organization, human nature, virtue, and slavery, in their own time and place as well as under the later impact of Christianity in the dramatic dialogue between the Church and the Roman Empire. The paper then explores the afterlife and seemingly inexhaustible powers of these ancient texts to stimulate and structure political thinking in later centuries. Aristotle’s works, Roman philosophy, and Roman law all re-surfaced and were put to work in the Latin West in medieval debates on the relationship between the Church and other powers, the constitutional structure of the Church, kingdoms and cities. It covers humanist responses to the classical past and to classical conceptions of virtue in the political thought of Machiavelli and others, the convergence during the Reformation of various traditions in the Calvinist case for armed resistance to an unjust ruler, and moves beyond Europe to examine the theological and legal analysis of the legitimacy of European conquests in the New World.

Like POL8, POL7 is divided into two parts. Section A is devoted to a close contextual reading of the most important texts by those thinkers universally acknowledged as indispensable for an understanding of western political thought: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, More, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke. Section B is organized around groups of texts which are historically or thematically linked. Some belong together because they were written as contributions to the same controversy, others were separated by several centuries but belong to the same tradition of commentary and reflection on ancient authorities. The paper has been organized to bring out not merely the contrasts but also the continuities and similarities between its component parts, in many of which the same conceptual languages, analytical tools and pivotal terms are at work. You are encouraged to cross the lines dividing these themes and so to appreciate the fascinating ways in which thinkers remained indebted to enduring yet fluid traditions of enquiry which they re-interpreted, subverted, and moulded into new forms under pressure of new problems.

3. How to study for this paper

Lectures: Because the material to be covered spans a wide chronological and thematic range, and also because many students will not have studied the history of political thought before, a comprehensive array of lectures is offered. This need not cause you alarm since you are not required or expected to attend them all—but it is worth appreciating that the traditions of political thought covered in POL7 are both cumulative and interlinked, so, even if a lecture is not directly on a topic you are studying, that does not mean it will not help you to understand it. (Do bear in mind, too, that exam questions are proposed by the lecturers.)

Lecturers are encouraged to place their outlines, bibliographies and other material on the paper’s Moodle site in advance of the lecture. Your ID will be added to the list of site users by the course organiser at the start of the academic year, based on information received from the administrative offices of History and POLIS. If you have been omitted, you should contact the course organiser.
Supervisions: For this paper, the norm is to have six paired supervisions for the paper spread over the Michaelmas and Lent terms. In these supervisions, you should cover six of the twenty-one named authors (section A) and historical topics (section B) that make up the syllabus, in preparation for answering three questions in the examination. In light of the way in which the exam paper is constructed, it is most common to study four authors and two historical topics. Students often comment that they need to do more reading to get on top of the historical topics, so please organise your time so you are able to cover enough material when you are preparing your essays. What you need to do, therefore, is to construct, in conjunction with your supervisor and your supervision partner, a suitable intellectual pathway through this paper. There is no single model of how to do this and different students will find different solutions. Before you start, you should make an initial choice of, say, authors and topics; these will preferably have thematic or historical connections between them.

4. Structure of the Paper

The paper is divided into two sections. Section A focuses on some of the most prominent political thinkers of the period, and you will study their major texts in depth. Section B offers a range of more thematic or historical topics, for which you will be expected to read across a range of primary texts, and reflect on the broader problems of historical and philosophical interpretation that confront historians of political thought and political theorists in studying this period. You will need to cover at least one topic from each section in the exam, but the precise balance you strike between the two sections is a matter for you to decide with your supervisor and supervision partner, although most students prefer to take a majority of their topics from Section A.

SECTION A

1. Plato
2. Aristotle
3. Augustine
4. Aquinas
5. More
6. Machiavelli
7. Hobbes
8. Locke

SECTION B

9. Greek democracy and its critics
10. Roman political thought from the republic to the principate

11. Early Christian political thought

12. Temporal and spiritual in medieval political thought

13. The medieval reception of classical political thought

14. Argument from Roman law in political thought, 12th -16th centuries

15. Renaissance humanist political thought

16. Obedience and resistance in Reformation political thought

17. Reason of state

18. Sovereignty

19. The origins of international law

20. The political and religious thought of the British revolutions

21. Toleration in the later 17th century

5. Some possible pathways through this paper (indicative/illustrative only)

The following page indicates some possible pathways through the paper. It is in no sense meant to be directive, simply illustrative. Many other combinations are possible, and you should discuss your options with your supervisor and supervision partner.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ancient Political Thought</th>
<th>Early Modern Political Thought</th>
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<tr>
<td>B9. Greek democracy and its critics</td>
<td>B20. The British revolutions</td>
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<td>A3. Augustine</td>
<td>A8. Locke</td>
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<td>B21. Toleration in the later C17th</td>
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And then either B13. The medieval reception of classical political thought, or A4. Aquinas, or A6. Machiavelli

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<th>Mediaeval Political Thought</th>
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<td>B11. Early Christian political thought</td>
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<td>A3. Augustine</td>
<td>A4. Aquinas</td>
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<td>A4. Aquinas</td>
<td>B12. Temporal and spiritual in medieval political thought</td>
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<td>B12. Temporal and spiritual in medieval political thought</td>
<td>B16. Obedience and resistance in Reformation political thought</td>
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<td>B13. The medieval reception of classical political thought</td>
<td>B21. Toleration in the later C17th</td>
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<td>A6. Machiavelli</td>
<td>B10. Roman political thought</td>
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<td>Reformation political thought</td>
<td>A3. Augustine</td>
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<td>B17. Reason of state</td>
<td>B14. Roman law, C12-16th</td>
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<td>A8. Locke</td>
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<tr>
<td>B18. Sovereignty</td>
<td>B10. Roman political thought</td>
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6. Lectures

For guidance as to which lectures will be most relevant to your course of studies, you are advised to get in touch with your supervisor as early as possible in Michaelmas term.

Lectures will take place in the History Faculty Building unless otherwise indicated. Please consult online lecture lists for the most up-to-date information.

**Introductory Session:** An introductory session for students taking POL7 and POL8 will be held on *********** [TBC 28.6.19]

**Michaelmas Term:**

DR M. RYAN, Romans and Christians (4 lectures, M 11, weeks 1-4)

DR M. RYAN, Spiritual and temporal powers in medieval political thought (4 lectures, M 11, weeks 5-8)

DR M. RYAN, Plato’s Republic (4 lectures, W 9, weeks 1-4). *Faculty of Law.*

PROF. R. BOURKE, Ancient critics of democracy, (4 lectures, W 11, weeks 1-4)  
PROF. R. BOURKE, Later seventeenth-century political thought (4 lectures, W 11, weeks 5-8)

**Lent Term:**

DR M. RYAN, Roman law in medieval and Renaissance political thought, (4 lectures, F 10, weeks 1-4)

DR M. RYAN, Calvinist political thought, (4 lectures, F 10, weeks 5-8)

DR R. SERJEANTSON, Machiavelli, More and Renaissance Humanism, (4 lectures, Tu. 9, weeks 1-4)

PROF. A. BRETT, Sovereignty, reason of state and the origins of international law, (6 lectures, W 9, weeks 1-6).  
PROF. A. BRETT, Medieval reception of classical thought, (2 lectures, W 9, weeks 7-8).

**Easter Term:**

PROF. A. BRETT, Hobbes and early seventeenth-century political thought, (4 lectures, Th. 11, weeks 1-4).

PROF. A. BRETT, Aristotle, (4 lectures, Tu. 10, weeks 1-4).
7. The Examination

POL7 is marked by examiners in POLIS; students taking the History versions of the paper will sit the same exams, but they will be marked by examiners from the History Faculty.

Past papers are most easily accessed via the History Faculty website:

https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/hist-tripos/info-all-years/examinations.

Follow the link to ‘Past examination papers’ [requires Raven]

where you will find them listed under Part I Paper 19 (the History designation for POL7).

POLIS examiners’ reports for the last few years will be found in the Appendix to this course guide (from page 52).

Candidates can expect that a question will be set on each of the prescribed authors in Section A and topics in Section B. But you should be aware that the guarantee of a question on each author and topic does not mean that examiners will set lowest common denominator, generic questions, open to a pre-prepared answer. They are much more likely to ask specific questions, approaching the author/topic from a particular perspective. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to prepare more than the minimum of required authors and topics.

The examination rubric is: Answer three questions, at least one from each section. (Overlap between answers must be avoided.)

SAMPLE EXAMINATION PAPER

Answer three questions, at least one from each section.

SECTION A

1. How successfully did Plato accommodate different conceptions of happiness in Republic?

2. Was Aristotle’s account of constitutions and constitutional change determined by his theory of justice?

3. What role did the concept of nature play in Augustine’s political thought?

4. ‘In the law of Christ, kings must be subject to priests’ [AQUINAS, De regimine principum, chapter III]. What implications does this have for Aquinas’ broader political theory?
5. Do you agree that it was More’s intention to portray the Utopians as living a perfectly virtuous and hence a truly Christian life?

6. Assess the role of the common good in Machiavelli’s political thought.

7. Does Hobbes suggest that there are limits to the duties which a subject may owe the sovereign?

8. ‘In his account of tyranny and its remedy, Locke regards the ruler and not the people as engaging in rebellion.’ Is this a fair view of Locke’s meaning?

SECTION B

9. What risks to the polis did Greek democracy represent in the eyes of its critics?

10. How did Roman thinkers react to the collapse of the republic?

11. On what grounds did different early Christian thinkers affirm and reject civic duty?

12. Why did it take opponents of papal power so long to formulate an articulate defence of their position?

13. What room did medieval authors leave for the classical citizen?

14. ‘Public law is that which relates to the general condition of the Roman Empire’ (Ulpian, Digest 1.1.1). Discuss.

15. Are the political differences between renaissance humanists reducible to advocacy of republican as opposed to advocacy of princely government?

16. What was the importance of natural law and natural reason in resistance theory towards the end of the sixteenth century?

17. What if anything distinguished reason of state from Machiavellianism?

18. What impact did individualism have on theories of sovereignty?

19. How respectful of the autonomy of states were early international law theorists?

20. How useful a category is ‘republicanism’ for understanding the political thought of the British Civil Wars?

21. Why were the leading advocates of toleration all Protestants?
8. Reading Lists

A1 PLATO

Set text:

Alternatively trans. F. Cornford (1941), or D. Lee (2nd edn, 1974), or A. Bloom (1968), or Grube and Reeve (1992). Translation by Waterfield (World’s Classics) is not recommended.

Secondary reading:

Abbreviation:

Suggested secondary reading:
*M. Lane, ‘Socrates and Plato: an introduction’, in CHGRPT, ch. 8
C.J Rowe, Plato (1984)
*M. Schofield, ‘Approaching the Republic’, in CHGRPT, ch. 10
*B. Williams, ‘The analogy of city and soul in Plato’s Republic’ in E.N. Lee, ed., Exegesis and Argument (1973) [in Classics Faculty Library]

Further secondary reading:
M. Lane, Plato’s Progeny: How Socrates and Plato Still Captivate the Modern Mind (2001)
A.W. Nightingale, Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy (2004), chs 3, 4
M.C. Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness (1986), ch. 5
C.D.C. Reeve, Philosopher Kings (1988)
M. Schofield, Plato (Oxford 2006)
J. Sikkenga, “Plato’s Examination of the Oligarchic Soul in Book VIII of the Republic”, History of

Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

‘Isn’t it appropriate for the rational element to rule, because it is wise and takes thought for the entire soul...?’ [PLATO, Republic, Book IV]. Discuss. (2018)

‘Plato’s Republic is centrally about the construction of philosophy, rather than the construction of the city or the soul.’ Discuss. (2017)

‘There are three primary types of people: philosophic, victory-loving, and money-loving’ [PLATO, Republic, Book IX]. Can Plato’s ideal city satisfy everyone? (2016)

What importance does the common good have in the argument of Plato’s Republic? (2015)

What is the significance of the ‘city of pigs’ for the argument of Plato’s Republic? (2014)
A2 ARISTOTLE

Set texts:


Secondary reading:

Abbreviations:


Suggested secondary reading:


*J. Lear, Aristotle: The Desire to Understand (1988)


M.C. Nussbaum, ‘Shame, separateness, and political unity: Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’, in Rorty

*J. Ober, Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule (1998), chs 1, 6


*C. Rowe, ‘Aristotelian constitutions’, in CHGRPT, pp. 366-89

M. Schofield, ‘Equality and hierarchy in Aristotle’s thought’, in his Saving the City (1999), ch. 6


Further secondary reading:


M.F. Burnyeat, ‘Aristotle on learning to be good’, in Rorty, ch. 5

J. Frank, A democracy of distinction (Chicago 2005)

T.H. Irwin, ‘Moral science and political theory in Aristotle’, History of Political Thought, 6 (1985), 150-68

D. Keyt, ‘Three basic theorems in Aristotle’s Politics’, in Keyt & Miller

W. Kullmann, ‘Man as a political animal in Aristotle’, in Keyt & Miller

M. Lane, Greek and Roman Political Ideas (Pelican 2014)


W.R. Newell, ‘Superlative virtue: the problem of monarchy in Aristotle’s Politics’, in Lord & O’Connor
J. Ober, ‘Aristotle’s politics and society: class, status, and order in the *Politics*,’ in Lord & O’Connor
R.F. Stalley, ‘Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s *Republic*,’ in Keyt & Miller

*Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):*

What importance does Aristotle attach to equality? (2018)

How did Aristotle analyse and solve the problem of political division? (2017)

‘A city [polis] is made up not only of a plurality, but also of men who are different in kind’ [ARISTOTLE, *The Politics*, Book II]. Comment. (2016)

Why, for Aristotle, was natural instinct insufficient to create successful political communities? (2015)

Was Aristotle justified in understanding monarchy as a constitution (*politeia*)? (2014)
A3 AUGUSTINE

Set text:


Secondary reading:

Suggested secondary reading:
* R.A. Markus, Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine (1970)


* J. Wetzel ed., Augustine’s ‘City of God’: A critical guide (Cambridge 2012)

Further secondary reading:
P.D. Bathory, Political Theory as Public Confession: the Social and Political Thought of St Augustine of Hippo (1981)
H.N. Baynes, The Political Ideas of St Augustine’s ‘De Civitate Dei’ (1962)
———, Augustine of Hippo (1967)
H. Chadwick, The Early Church (1967), ch. 15
———, Augustine (1986)
D. Earl, The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome (1967), ch. 6
J.N. Figgis, The Political Aspects of St Augustine’s ‘City of God’ (1921)
P. Garnsey, Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine, chs 13-14
———, ‘The influence of Saint Augustine on early medieval political theory’, Augustinian Studies, 12 (1981), 1-10
P. Ramsey, ‘The just war according to St Augustine’ in J.B. Elshtain, ed., Just War Theory (1992)
J. Rist, Augustine (1994)

Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

‘There is nothing so sociable by nature and anti-social by corruption as man.’ What makes political life possible for Augustine? (2018)
Why did Augustine think that fallen human beings were characterised by a ‘lust for domination’, and what were the consequences of this for human social and political life? (2017)

What are the implications for Augustine’s political theory of his conviction that ‘true justice is found only in that commonwealth whose founder and ruler is Christ’ [AUGUSTINE, The City of God, Book II]? (2016)

Could we call Augustine’s The City of God a manual of Christian citizenship? (2015)

‘Rome itself is like a second Babylon’ [AUGUSTINE, The City of God, Book XVIII]. Discuss. (2014)
Set text:


Secondary reading:

Abbreviation:


Suggested secondary reading:

J. Barnes, ‘The just war’, in CHLMP, ch. 41
*J.P. Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought* 300-1450 (1996), ch. 3
J. Coleman, *A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (2000), ch. 2
M. Keys, *Aquinas, Aristotle and the promise of the common good* (Cambridge 2008)
*D.E. Luscombe, ‘Natural morality and natural law’, in CHLMP, ch. 37
* — — —, ‘The state of nature and the origin of the state’, in CHLMP, ch. 40

Further secondary reading:

A. Black, *Political Thought in Europe 1250-1450* (1992), ch. 1
J. Dunbabin, ‘The reception and interpretation of Aristotle’s *Politics*’, in CHLMP, ch. 38
L.P. Fitzgerald, ‘St Thomas Aquinas and the two powers’, *Angelicum*, 56 (1979), 515-556
* — — —, *A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (1955)
Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

‘The secular power is subject to the spiritual power as the body is to the soul.’ Should we be surprised by Aquinas’ statement? (2018)

What were the ends of law in the political thought of Thomas Aquinas? (2017)

What was the role of nature in Thomas Aquinas’s political theory? (2016)

Was politics, for Aquinas, ultimately a matter of virtue rather than law? (2015)

What follows, for Aquinas, from the position that law is ‘a thing of reason’? (2014)
A5 MORE

Set text:


Secondary reading:

Suggested secondary reading:

Further secondary reading:
J.C. Davis, Utopia and the Ideal Society: A study of English utopian writing, 1516-1700 (1981), ch. 2
A. Fox, Thomas More: History and Providence (1982), ch. 2
A. Fox and J. Guy, eds, Reassessing the Henrician Age (1986), pt I
J. Guy, Thomas More (2000)
G.B. Wegemer, Young Thomas More and the Arts of Liberty (Cambridge 2011)
Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

What answers does More’s Utopia offer to the question of the best form of government? (2018)

What is the significance of More’s suggestion that Utopia might represent ‘The best state of the commonwealth’? (2017)

To what extent should we regard Thomas More’s Utopia as exposing the perils of hereditary monarchy? (2016)

Is it plausible to regard More’s Utopia as constituting an Italianate answer to the politics of northern Europe? (2015)

Does More’s Utopia resolve the dilemma of counsel raised in Book I of that work? (2014a)

Why was war so central to Machiavelli’s political thought? (2014b)
A6 MACHIAVELLI

Set texts:


Secondary reading:


Suggested secondary reading:

H. Baron, ‘Machiavelli the republican citizen and author of The Prince’, in Baron, In Search of Florentine Humanism (2 vols; 1988), vol. II
*F. Gilbert, Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Italy (1984 edn)
———, ‘The theme of gloria in Machiavelli’, Renaissance Quarterly, 30 (1977), 588-631
* ———, ‘Machiavelli’s Discorsi and the pre-humanist origin of republican ideas’, in Bock, ch. 6
*P. Stacey, Roman monarchy and the renaissance prince (Cambridge 2007)
*M. Viroli, ‘Machiavelli and the republican idea of politics’, in Bock, ch. 7
———, Machiavelli (1998)

Further secondary reading:


M. Hörnqvist, Machiavelli and Empire (2005), chs 2-4
H. Pitkin, Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli (1984)
N. Rubinstein, ‘Machiavelli and Florentine republican experience’, in Bock, ch. 1
D.J. Wilcox, The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the 15th Century (1969)
Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

What follows from Machiavelli’s contention that, ‘In every republic there are two different dispositions, that of the populace and that of the upper class’ [MACHIAVELLI, Discourses on Livy, Book I]? (2018)

Which did Machiavelli value more: glory or liberty? (2017)

How should we explain Machiavelli’s conviction that ‘government by the populace is better than government by princes’ [MACHIAVELLI, Discourses on Livy, Book I]? (2016)

‘All the states, all the dominions that have held sway over men, have been either republics or principalities’ [, The Prince, Ch. 1]. Does this dichotomy determine how Machiavelli thought about politics? (2015)

Why was war so central to Machiavelli’s political thought? (2014)
**A7 HOBBES**

**Set text:** *Leviathan* [1651], ed. R. Tuck, rev. edn (Cambridge, 1996)


**Secondary reading:**


**Suggested secondary reading:**


* D. Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge 1997), ch. 2


* _____, *Hobbes and republican liberty* (Cambridge 2008)


**Further secondary reading:**


M. Oakeshott, ‘Introduction to Leviathan’ [1946], in *Hobbes on Civil Association* (1975), ch. 1


Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):


Why was Hobbes in Leviathan so insistent upon the ‘proper signification’ of liberty? (2017)

‘This is more than Consent, or Concord; it is a real Unitie of them all, in one and the same Person’ [HOBSES, Leviathan, Ch. 17]. Why was Hobbes so insistent on this point? (2016)


What relationship did Hobbes see between self-preservation and sociability? (2014)

A8 LOCKE

Set texts:

or in Locke, Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration,
ed. Mark Goldie (Oxford World’s Classics, 2016)

Suggested additional primary reading:

Secondary reading:

Suggested secondary reading:
D. Armitage, ‘John Locke, Carolina and the Two treatises of government’,
Political Theory 32 (2004), 602-27
R. Ashcraft, ‘Revolutionary politics and Locke’s Two Treatises’, Political Theory, 8 (1980), 429-86
D. Baumgold, Contract theory in historical context: Essays on Grotius, Hobbes and Locke (Leiden
2010)
J. Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke (1969)
———, ‘The claim to freedom of conscience: freedom of speech, freedom of thought,
freedom of worship?’, in O.P. Grell et al., eds, From Persecution to Toleration (1991)
J. Scott, England’s Troubles (2000), ch. 16
J. Scott, ‘The law of war: Grotius, Sidney, Locke and the political theory of rebellion’,
History of Political Thought, 13 (1992), 565-85
J. Tully, A Discourse on Property (1980)
*———, An Approach to Political Theory: Locke in Contexts (1993), esp. ch. 1
J. Waldron, God, Locke, and Equality (2002)

Further secondary reading:
R. Ashcraft, John Locke’s Two Treatises of Government (1987)
J. Dunn, ‘What is living and what is dead in the political theory of John Locke?’, in Dunn,
Interpreting Political Responsibility (1990)
R. Grant, John Locke’s Liberalism (1987)
I. Harris, The Mind of John Locke (1994)
D.A. Lloyd Thomas, Locke on Government (1995)
K. Olivekrona, ‘Appropriation in the state of nature’, in J. Lively and A. Reeve, eds,
Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

To what extent does Locke’s argument in Two Treatises of Government depend on the concept of trust? (2018)

Why was Locke so favourable to prerogative and executive power? (2017)

‘The community may make compounded and mixed forms of government, as they think good’ [LOCKE, Second Treatise, § 132]. Do Locke’s foundational political principles tend toward any particular form of government? (2016)

Was Locke’s Second Treatise of Government more a defence of property than of liberty? (2015)

In the Second Treatise, what power does Locke give the legislative, and why? (2014)
B9. GREEK DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS

Primary reading:

Abbreviation: EGPT = M. Gagarin and P. Woodruff (eds), Early Greek Political Thought from Homer to the Sophists (Cambridge, 1995)

Suggested primary reading:

Herodotus, Histories, bk III. 80-3 [in EGPT]
Ps-Xenophon (the Old Oligarch), ‘Constitution of Athens’ [in EGPT]
Aristophanes, The Knights
Isocrates, ‘Panegyricus’ (vol. I); ‘Areopagiticus’, ‘Antidosis’ (vol. II); ‘Against Callimachus’ (vol. III), all in Isocrates, Loeb Classical Library (3 vols; 1961-1968)
Thucydides, History, bk II. 35-46, 60-64, bk III. 37-48 [in EGPT]
Euripides, Suppliant Maidens, II. 399-456 [in EGPT]
Plato, Protagoras, 320-8; Gorgias; Republic, bks VI, VIII
Aristotle, Politics, bks III-VI

Secondary reading:

Suggested secondary reading:
J. Dunn, Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future (2nd edn, 1993), ch. 1
M.H. Hansen, Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes (1991, 1999), esp. chs 1, 13
*M. Lane, Greek and Roman Political Ideas (Pelican 2014)
________, ‘Popular sovereignty as control of office-holders: Aristotle on Greek democracy’, in Bourke ed., Popular sovereignty (as for Hoekstra)
C. Meier, The Greek Discovery of Politics (1990)
J. Miller, 'Warning the Demos: Political Communication with a Democratic Audience in Demosthenes', History of Political Thought, 23 (2002), 401-17
R. Osborne, Athens and Athenian Democracy (2010)
A. Saxonhouse, Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens (2008)
G. de Ste Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World (1981; rev. 1983), ch. 7 & appdx IV

Further secondary reading:
________, Why Plato Wrote (2010)
M.I. Finley, Democracy Ancient and Modern (2nd edn, 1985)

*Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):*

What, if anything, united critics of Athenian democracy? (2018)

‘Critics of Athenian democracy owed the fundamentals of their arguments to the very political system that they opposed.’ Discuss. (2017)

To what extent did the differences between democrats and anti-democrats in ancient Athens turn on differing conceptions of political knowledge? (2016)

Did proponents and critics of democracy in ancient Athens agree on the end but disagree on the means of politics? (2015)

How far was the nature and control of public speech the central issue for both democrats and anti-democrats in ancient Athens? (2014)
Suggested primary reading

Cicero, On the commonwealth and On the laws, in De re publica, trans. J. Zetzel (Cambridge, 1995)
or The Republic; and The Laws, trans. N. Rudd (Oxford, 1998)
Sallust, The war with Catiline and The war with Jugurtha, Loeb Classical Library (1921)

Secondary reading

Abbreviations:
CHGRPT: C. Rowe and M. Schofield (eds), The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought (Cambridge, 2000)

Suggested secondary reading:
J. Connolly, The life of Roman republicanism (Princeton 2014)

Further secondary reading:
———, ‘Cicero’, in CHGRPT, pp. 477-516
D. Hoyos ed., A companion to Roman imperialism (Brill 2013), chh. by Stevenson and Adler
———, Saving the City: Philosopher-Kings and Other Classical Paradigms (London, 1999), ch. 10.
Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

‘The principal preoccupation of Roman political thought became the control of passions by reason.’ Discuss. (2018)

To what extent did the advent of the Principate alter Roman thinking about political virtue? (2017)

Was Roman political thought intrinsically imperialist? (2016)

How did Roman political thinkers understand and solve the problem of social division? (2015)

In what ways was Roman political thought ‘Roman’? (2014)
**B11. EARLY CHRISTIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT**

**Suggested primary reading:**

The Epistle of St Paul to the Romans, ch. 13, New Testament

Tertullian, *Apology* (Loeb, 1984)


**Secondary reading**

**Abbreviation:**


**Suggested secondary reading:**


———, 'The Latin Fathers', CHMPT, pp. 92-122.


**Further secondary reading:**


N. McLynn, Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital (Berkeley, London, 1994)

And see above, A3, under Augustine.

*Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):*

What significance did classical virtue have for early Christian political theorists? (2018)

How did early Christian writers respond to Roman conceptions of citizenship? (2017)

Were the political theories of early Christian thinkers defined by their differing visions of the Church? (2016)

‘Not so much a wholesale rejection as a re-writing of classical political theory.’ Do you agree with this evaluation of early Christian political thought? (2015)

What became of the notion of commonwealth (*res publica*) in early Christian thought? (2014)
B12. TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL IN MEDIEVAL POLITICAL THOUGHT

Suggested primary reading

Bernard of Clairvaux, Five Books on Consideration, trans. J.D. Anderson and E.T. Keenan (Cistercian Fathers Series 37) (Kalamazoo, 1976)
Innocent IV, selections from commentary on Novit and Quod super his, in Tierney, Crisis, pp. 153-6.
Hostiensis, selections from commentary on Per venerabilem and Solitae, in Tierney, Crisis, pp. 156-7.
Giles of Rome, On Ecclesiastical Power, trans. R.W. Dyson (Woodbridge, 1986), bk I, 4-6; bk II, 4, 7-12; bk III, 3, 9, 12.

Secondary reading

Abbreviation:

Suggested secondary reading:
J.P. Canning, Ideas of power in the late middle ages 1296-1417 (Cambridge 2011)
G.S. Garnett, Marsilius of Padua and ‘the Truth of History’ (Oxford, 2006)
B. Tierney, Foundations of the Conciliar Theory (Cambridge, 1955)

Further secondary reading:
B. Tierney, Crisis, 127-31; 150-53.


Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

Account for the differing significance attributed to sin by political polemicists around 1300. (2018)

To what extent was the disagreement between pro- and anti-papal writers in the Middle Ages a disagreement about jurisdictional claims? (2017)

‘The disagreements over papal and secular power in the decades around 1300 were essentially disagreements about the consequences of the Fall.’ Do you agree? (2016)

How important were medieval arguments concerning government within the church to conceptualising the relationship between temporal and spiritual government? (2015)

What was the importance of historical argument in medieval controversies over the relationship between spiritual and temporal powers? (2014)
Suggested primary reading

Peter of Auvergne, ‘Commentary and Questions on Book III of Aristotle’s Politics (selections)’, in *Cambridge Translations*, as above

Secondary reading

Abbreviations:

Suggested secondary reading:
J. Dunbabin, ‘The reception and interpretation of Aristotle’s Politics’, in CHLMP, ch. 38

L. Peterman, ‘Dante’s Monarchy and Aristotle’s political thought’, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 10 (1973), 1-40
V. Syros, ‘The sovereignty of the multitude in the works of Marsilius of Padua, Peter of Auvergne and some other Aristotelian commentators’, in *The world of Marsilius of Padua*, as above

Further secondary reading:
J. Aertsen and A. Speer eds., *Was ist Philosophie im Mittalter? / What is Philosophy in the Middle Ages?* (Berlin 1998 = Miscellanea Mediaevalia 26)
_____, The worldview and thought of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca) (Brepols 2013)
C. Flüeler, L. Lanza and M. Toste eds., Peter of Auvergne: University master of the 13th century
(Berlin 2015)
D. Luscombe, ‘Commentaries on the Politics’, in Weijers and Holt

See also the extensive bibliography online at http://www.paleography.unifr.ch/petrus_de_alvernia/
(click on Bibliographia)

*Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):*

What impact did classical notions of human nature have on medieval political thought? (2018)

To what extent did the recovery of classical conceptions of nature allow medieval thinkers to
develop a political philosophy that was independent of theology? (2017)

How did medieval political thinkers respond to ancient concepts of citizenship and citizen rule? (2016)

How did the encounter with classical political thought impact upon the way medieval authors
thought about the government of princes? (2015)

In what ways and to what effect did medieval authors appeal to the concept of nature in their
political philosophy? (2014)
**B14. ARGUMENT FROM ROMAN LAW IN POLITICAL THOUGHT, 12TH-16TH CENTURIES**

**Primary reading**

**Suggested primary reading (not on Camtools):**


Justinian’s Institutes, trans. P. Birks and G. McLeod (London, 1987), 1.1, 1.2


Available online at [http://www.constitution.org/sps.html](http://www.constitution.org/sps.html)

**Suggested primary reading (on Moodle)*:**

Azo: Selections from *Summa codicis* and *Lectura codicis*, on Code 3.13 and 8.52.2 respectively.

Azo: Glosses to Digest, 1.1.5; 1.1.9; 1.3.31-32; 1.4.1; 3.4.

Accursius: Standard Gloss to Code 3.13 and 8.52(53) 2; Digest 1.1.5; 1.1.9; 1.3.31; 1.3.32; 1.4.1; 3.4.

Marinus de Caramanico: Select passages from the *Proemium* to his commentary on the Constitutions of the Kingdom of Sicily.

Cinus of Pistoia: Introduction to a legal opinion on the laws of Florence.

Johannes Faber: Select passages from commentary to C. 1.1.1.

Bartolus of Sassoferatto: Selections from commentary on D. 1.1.9.


Oldradus de Ponte: Select passages from *Consilium* 69 and 83.

Baldus de Ubaldis: Select passages from his legal opinion *Rex Romanorum* and his commentary on D. 1.1.9.

Petrus Helyas: Select passages from his legal opinion on the war between France and England.

Jean de Terre Vermeille (Jean de Terre Rouge): Select passages from his treatise *On those who rebel against their kings*.

Guillaume Budé: Selections from his commentary on D. 1.3.31 and his *Livre de l’institution du prince*.

Jacques Cujas: Selections from his *Observationes* on C. 6.23.3 and 6.32.3.

* These readings may change from time to time. A selection drawn from the texts above will be made available on Moodle and in lecture handouts. It is essential to attend Dr Ryan’s lectures if studying for this topic.

**Secondary reading**

**Abbreviations:**


TRHS: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

**Suggested secondary reading:**


* — — — , *Ideas of power in the late middle ages 1296-1417* (Cambridge 2011), Ch. 5.

**Further secondary reading:**


———, The Political Thought of Baldus de Ubaldis (Cambridge, 1987; reissued 2002)


Daniel Lee, Popular Sovereignty in Early Modern Constitutional Thought (Oxford, 2016)

P. Stein, Roman Law in European History (1999), esp. chs 3-4.


**Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):**

What role does the concept of the people play in the political thought of the medieval lawyers? (2018)

How did fourteenth-century Roman law jurists deploy the concept of the corporation in their analysis of political phenomena? (2017)

To whom did medieval experts in Roman law accord the power to legislate and why? (2016)

Was private law more important than public law in the political thought of the Roman lawyers? (2015)

What did medieval lawyers understand by the term ‘people’ (populus)? (2014)
B15 RENAISSANCE HUMANISM AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

Abbreviations:
Kraye: J. Kraye, ed. Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts
(2 vols; 1997), vol. II: Political Philosophy

Suggested primary reading:
Bartolomeo Sacchi (Il Platina), ‘On the Prince’ [1471], in Kraye, ch. 6
Bartolomeo Scala, ‘Dialogue on Laws and Legal Judgements’ [1483], in Kraye, ch. 12
Giovanni Pontano, ‘On the Prince’, in Kraye, ch. 5
Francesco Guicciardini, ‘How the Popular Government Should be Reformed’ [1512], in Kraye, ch. 13

Secondary reading:
Suggested secondary reading:
J.M. Blythe, ""Civic humanism" and medieval political thought", in Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and reflections (2000), pp. 30-74
*P. Kristeller, 'Humanism', in CHRP, ch. 5
M. Viroli, From Politics to Reason of State (1992)

Further secondary reading:
H. Baron, The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance (2nd edn, 1966), esp. the ‘Epilogue’
J. Kraye, ‘Moral Philosophy’, in CHRP, ch. 11
J. McConica, Erasmus (1991)
to renaissance philosophy (Cambridge 2007)
J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (1975; reissue with new postscript 2003), pt II
J.E. Seigel, Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism (1968)
Q. Skinner, ‘Political philosophy’, in CHRP, ch. 12, rev. as ‘Republican virtues in an age of princes’
———, Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes (1996), ch. 2
R.G. Witt, 'In the Footsteps of the Ancients': The origins of humanism from Lovato to Bruni
(2000),
esp. ch. 11

Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

Do the disagreements between humanists over the relative advantages of princely and republican
governments reveal any fundamental differences of principle? (2018)

How important was history to Renaissance humanist political thought? (2018)

Why did Renaissance humanist writers on politics think that virtue was so important, and how did
d they think it could be attained? (2016)

How distinctive was the contribution that Renaissance humanists made to the political theory of
the fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries? (2015)

How did the style of Renaissance political thought affect its substance? (2014)
B16 OBEDIENCE AND RESISTANCE IN REFORMATION POLITICAL THOUGHT

Suggested primary reading:

Luther and Calvin, On Secular Authority, ed. H. Höpfl (Cambridge, 1991)
George Buchanan, A Dialogue on the Law of Kingship among the Scots
    [written c. 1569, printed 1579], trans. R. Mason and M.S. Smith (Aldershot, 2004)
François Hotman, Francogallia [1573], trans. R.E. Giesey and J.H.M. Salmon (Cambridge, 1972)
Theodore Beza, The Right of Magistrates [1574], in J.H. Franklin, ed., Constitutionalism

Secondary reading:

Abbreviation:

Suggested secondary reading:
*R.E. Giesey, ‘The Monarchomach triumvirs: Hotman, Beza and Mornay’, Bibliothèque
d’humanisme et renaissance, 32 (1970)
H. Höpfl, The Christian Polity of John Calvin (1982), chs 7, 8
*R.M. Kingdon, ‘Calvinism and resistance theory’, in Burns and Goldie, ch. 7
P. Matheson, ‘Humanism and reform movements’, in A. Goodman and A. MacKay, eds,
The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe (1990), ch. 2
A.E. McGrath, Reformation Thought: An Introduction (1988), chs 5, 8
F. Oakley, ‘Christian obedience and authority’, in Burns and Goldie, ch. 6
    and Bodin and the Monarchomachs’, both in Salmon, Renaissance and Revolt (1987)
*Q. Skinner, Foundations of Modern Political Thought (2 vols; 1978), vol II: The Age of
    Reformation

Further secondary reading:
W. Balke, Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals (1981), chs 2, 10
J. H. Burns, ‘The political thought of George Buchanan’, Scottish Historical Review, 30 (1951), 60-8
W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, The Political Thought of Martin Luther (1984)
F.E. Cranz, An Essay on the Development of Luther’s Thought (1959)
R. von Friedeburg, Self-Defence and Religious Strife in Early Modern Europe: England and
    Germany, 1530-1680 (2002)
*_______, ‘So meerly humane’: theories of resistance in early modern Europe’, in A Brett and J.
    Tully eds., Rethinking the foundations of modern political thought (Cambridge 2006)
D.R. Kelley, Francois Hotman: A Revolutionary’s Ordeal (1973)
R.M. Kingdon, ‘John Calvin’s contribution to representative government’, in P. Mack and M.C.
S. Kusukawa, The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon (1995),
    ch. 5
_____*, The Reformation of Rights* (2007)

*Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):*

Account for the prominence of junior magistrates in Calvinist political theory. (2018)

What agency did Lutheran and Calvinist resistance theories give to the collective people? (2017)

Assess the importance and effectiveness of historical argument in Calvinist resistance tracts. (2016)

What was the role of law in sixteenth-century Protestant thinking on obedience and resistance? (2015)

To what extent did theological arguments shape Lutheran and Calvinist theories of resistance? (2014)
Suggested primary reading:


Francis Bacon, ‘Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates’, ‘Of Empire’, ‘Of Simulation and Dissimulation’, in *Essays* (numerous editions)


Henri, duc de Rohan, *Treatise of the Interests of the Princes and States of Christendom*, trans. H. Hunt (1640) [on EEBO]


Secondary reading:

Suggested secondary reading:


M. Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570-1640* (1995), chs 3-4


M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State* (1992), chs 4-6

Further secondary reading:


W.F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (1973)

H. Höpfl, Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c.1540-1630 (2004), chs 5-8
F. Meinecke, The Doctrine of Raison d’État and its Place in Modern History (1957), chs 2-7
G. Oestreich, Neostoicism and the Early Modern State (1982), pt 1
K.C. Schellhase, Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought (1976), chs 5-7

Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

How was the thinking of reason of state theorists influenced by their understanding of the purposes of the state? (2018)

What place was there for virtue in ‘reason of state’? (2017)

‘The achievement of reason of state was to isolate power as a distinctive component of political success.’ Do you agree? (2016)

Did the notion of ‘reason of state’ transform prior understandings of political community? (2015)

Was reason of state more a new understanding of the object of government than of government itself? (2014)
Suggested primary reading

John Cowell, The Interpreter (London, 1610), s.v. ‘King (Rex)’ [on EEBO]
Francisco Suárez, On Laws and God the Law-giver, Bk III, Chh. 1-4, in Francisco Suárez, Selections from Three Works (Oxford 1944), vol. II (translation)
Hugo Grotius, The rights of war and peace, trans. F.W. Kelsey (3 vols; Oxford, 1913) or ed. R. Tuck (Indianapolis 2005), Bk I chh. 3-4

Secondary reading:

Abbreviation:

Suggested secondary reading:
D. Baumgold, Contract theory in historical context: Essays on Grotius, Hobbes and Locke (2010), ch. 2 and 4
A.S. Brett, Changes of state (2011), Ch. 5
J.H. Franklin, ‘Sovereignty and the mixed constitution: Bodin and his critics’, in CHPT, ch. 10
J.H.M. Salmon, ‘Catholic resistance theory, Ultramontanism and the royalist response’, in CHPT Ch. 8
_______, Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context (1992), Ch. 4-5
R. Tuck, Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651 (1992), Ch. 5
_______, The sleeping sovereign (Cambridge 2016)

Further secondary reading:
G. Burgess, Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution (1996), Part I
H. Höpfl, Jesuit political thought (2004), chh. 9, 10, 13, 14
———, ‘Absolutism and royalism’, in CHPT

For further reading on Hobbes see under A7

Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

How did early modern theorists of sovereignty seek to assure unity? (2018)

Why were early modern theorists of sovereignty so concerned to characterise as incoherent any notion of ‘mixed’ government? (2017)

Did theorists of sovereignty sacrifice all forms of political deliberation to the imperative of a ruling will? (2016)

What were early modern theories of sovereignty designed to refute? (2015)

Did early modern authors agree on the nature of sovereign power even while they disagreed on its origin and location? (2014)
Suggested primary reading


Francisco Suárez, On Laws and God the Law-giver, Bk II ch. 17-20; Bk III ch. 2; De Caritate Disputation XIII, ‘On war’, sections 1, 2, 4 and 5, in Francisco Suárez, Selections from Three Works (Oxford 1944), vol. II (translation). N.B. this edition has been reissued with a new introduction, ed. by T. Pink, (Indianapolis 2015); it is available online in the Online Library of Liberty: https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/selections-from-three-works

Alberico Gentili, De iure belli libri tres (Oxford: Clarendon 1933), vol. II (translation), Bk I chh. 1-6, 12-16


Secondary reading

Suggested secondary reading:


G. Cavallar, The rights of strangers. Theories of international hospitality, the global community and political justice since Vitoria (2002), chh. 2 and 3


*B. Kingsbury and B. Straumann eds., The Roman foundations of the law of nations (2010), esp. ch. 7, 9, 15, 16


B. Tierney, The idea of natural rights (1997), Chh. 11-13

_____., ‘Vitoria and Suarez on ius gentium, natural law, and custom,’ in A Perreau-Saussine and J. Murphy eds., The nature of customary law (2007)

* R. Tuck, The rights of war and peace (1999), Introduction and chh. 1-3

Further secondary reading:

A. Anghie, Imperialism, sovereignty and the making of international law (2005), ch. 1

O. Asbach and P. Schröder eds., War, the state and international law in the seventeenth century (2010), esp. chh. 5 and 9

William Bain ed., Medieval Foundations of International Relations (Routledge, 2016)

L. Benton, A search for sovereignty. Law and geography in European Empires 1400-1900 (2010), esp. chh. 1, 3, 6

E. Keene, Beyond the anarchical society. Grotius, colonialism and order in world politics (2002)
M. Koskenniemi, ‘Empire and international law: The real Spanish contribution’, University of Toronto Law Journal 61 (2011)
______, Lords of all the world (1995), ch. 2

Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

How important was natural reason for early modern theorists of international law? (2018)

What resources could early modern jurists and theologians draw upon to construct a conception of law between nations? (2017)

‘The early modern law of nations was effectively the law of war.’ Do you agree? (2016)

What was at stake in the early modern debate over whether the law of nations (ius gentium) was positive or natural law? (2015)

‘The legal face of empire.’ Is this a fair characterisation of early modern thought on law between nations? (2014)
B20. POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE BRITISH REVOLUTIONS

Suggested primary reading:

* The civil war (all sources on eebo: no modern edition)
  Henry Parker, *Observations upon some of His Majesties late Answers and Expresses* (1642)
  Henry Parker, *Jus populi* (1644)
  Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, rex: The Law and the Prince* (1644); questions I-IX, XXI-XXV, XXVIII-XXIX.

* The Levellers
  The English Levellers, ed. A. Sharp (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 33-72, 92-157, 168-78

* The Commonwealth

Secondary reading:

Suggested secondary reading:


Further secondary reading:

M. Dzelzainis, ‘Milton’s classical republicanism, in Armitage, Himy and Skinner eds., as above


Michael Mendle, ed., The Putney Debates of 1647 (2001), esp. chs. by Mendle and Crawford


Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

What space did English republican authors leave for monarchy? (2018)

Why were the English Parliamentarians so reluctant to accept that their case implied a right to depose tyrannical kings? (2017a)

Assess the relative roles in Leveller thought of natural law and common law ancient constitutionalism. (2017b)

‘Power is originally inherent in the people’ [HENRY PARKER, Observations upon some of his Majesties late Answers and Expresses]. How far did defenders of the Parliamentarian cause face up to the implications of this claim? (2016)

Examine the role of the concept of ‘mixed polity’ in the political thought of the British Revolutions. (2015)

How central a value was liberty in the political thought of the British Revolutions? (2014)
Suggested Primary Reading:

Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* [1670], trans. R.H.M. Elwes (Dover, 1951), esp. ch. xix


Samuel Parker, *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie*, 3rd edn (London, 1671), esp. chs. 1, 3, 6. Full text on EEBO.


Secondary reading:

Suggested secondary reading:


Further secondary reading:

J. Israel, 'The intellectual debate about toleration in the Dutch Republic', in *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch republic*, ed. J.I. Israel et al. (Leiden, 1997), pp. 3–36
J. Marshall, John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture (Cambridge, 2006)
R. Vernon, The Career of Toleration: John Locke, Jonas Proast, and After (Montreal, 1997)

Suggested supervision questions (from old Tripos papers):

Why did early modern advocates of toleration set limits on it? (2018)

‘Most tolerationists were more committed to the principle of the duty to communicate the truth than to the right to liberty of conscience.’ Discuss. (2017)

How did late seventeenth-century theorists of toleration analyse the power of clergies? (2016)

Whom did the later seventeenth-century tolerationists not tolerate, and why? (2015)

Was toleration, in the hands of its early modern exponents, a form of individualism? (2014)
Appendix: Examiners’ Reports

POL7 is marked by examiners in POLIS; students taking the History versions of the paper will sit the same exams, but they will be marked by examiners from the History Faculty.

Past papers are most easily accessed via the History Faculty website:

https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/hist-tripos/info-all-years/examinations

Follow the link to ‘Past examination papers’ [requires Raven]

where you will find them listed under Part I Paper 19 (the History designation for POL7).

N.B. Between 2016-2019 the exam papers listed Machiavelli as question 5, and More as question 6. This will be corrected in future exam papers.

2017-18

Examiner: Dr Christopher Brooke

Forty-two candidates sat the paper, slightly up on last year’s thirty-eight. Six received an overall First-class mark, there were thirty-three Upper Seconds, and three Lower Seconds. The median mark was 65, and the mean 65.33.

The Plato question is perennially popular, attracting twenty answers this year, after which they lined up as follows: Machiavelli (14), Locke (12), Renaissance humanism (12), More (9), Hobbes (8), Aristotle (7), Athenian democracy (7), Augustine (6), sovereignty (6), mediaeval reception of classical thought (5), Romans (4), British revolutions (4), resistance theory (3), international law (3), toleration (3), early Christians (2), Aquinas (1), and raison d’état (1), with two of the mediaeval questions, on spiritual and temporal power and on Roman law, attracting no candidates.

The most general difficulty was an insufficiently close engagement with the relevant set texts. Examiners on this paper are used, for example, to essays on Augustine reading as if textbooks were among the main sources, rather than City of God, and to Aristotle answers offering too much general summary of his system before getting stuck in to the particular question that has been asked. But this year a version of this problem bedevilled the answers on Hobbes’s Leviathan, too, with answers that weren’t sufficiently able to support their arguments by showing close familiarity with the more puzzling or challenging relevant bits of his text. Other candidates threw away marks with insufficiently productive approaches to the questions (so discussing the mediaeval reception of classical thought in general, rather than specifically with reference to the question of human nature; and the question about what the Athenian critics of democracy shared attracted answers that focused either on what they didn’t share, or on some very bland thoughts indeed, e.g. that they didn’t like tyrants).
There are some welcome developments. Earlier iterations of this paper have seen candidates excessively dependent on the views of Bernard Williams concerning Plato, and of Quentin Skinner concerning, especially, Machiavelli and More. This tendency was not nearly so prominent this year, with Ferrari, Schofield, Ober, and, especially, Nehamas lining up as alternative interpreters of Plato with whom candidates engaged more or less productively. (There was one mention of Skinner that delighted the Examiners, however, in an essay which discussed his views as if he were actually a participant in the great constitutional debates of 1640!) And—pleasingly—there was next to no sign of essays on particular topics that read as if great chunks of lecture notes were being paraphrased or summarised this time around, with the candidates taking a diversity of approaches, strongly suggesting that they are really thinking for themselves as they construct their answers.

2016-17

Examiner: Dr Christopher Brooke

Thirty-eight candidates sat the paper. Twelve received an overall First-class mark, there were twenty-one Upper Seconds, and five Lower Seconds. Of the Firsts, eight received a First-class mark from both markers. There was one Upper Second script which received a First-class mark from one marker, and there were five scripts where the two marks straddled the Upper-Lower Second-class boundary. Only one question attracted no answers—on mediaeval Papalism. Other mediaeval topics attracted only small numbers: two on Aquinas, two on the early Christians, one on the mediaeval reception of classical thought, and one on Roman law in the Middle Ages. Also unpopular were resistance theory, early modern international law, and the English Civil War, which each attracted one answer. Roman political thought attracted two, and toleration three. But the other questions were more popular: Plato (12), Aristotle (6), Augustine (5), More (17), Machiavelli (13), Hobbes (9), Locke (5), critics of Athenian democracy (6), Renaissance humanism (7—fewer than usual), raison d’état (13—more popular than usual), and sovereignty (7).

Answers that directly engaged with the set texts were preferred to those which read more like distant textbook overviews. Answers that patiently explored and engaged with the question that had been asked were preferred to those that began by taking steps to wrestle the material onto more familiar terrain. Very few essays indeed read as if they were simply summarising lecture material. Some of the questions were quite challenging, and candidates were quite challenged—which is a useful reminder that students will generally do well to prepare more rather than fewer topics when they revise, in order to maximise the chances of finding three questions they can comfortably answer. The markers were struck by the way in which, with one exception, candidates skirted around the issue of gender, and women were left out of the answers, despite the fact that some of the questions (not least that on Aristotle) afforded the opportunity to bring them into consideration. Some comments on some of the questions follow.

POL7 candidates typically like to run their discussions of Plato’s Republic through the lens provided by Bernard Williams’ argument about the city-soul analogy, and the challenge posed by this question was that it made it quite hard for them to do that. Stronger essays raised the question of what ‘the
construction of philosophy’ might be about early on, and stayed with the theme, rather than being diverted into more familiar pastures. Good answers on Aristotle got to the problem of division straightaway, rather than spending too long building up to it, and made sure to discuss questions of stability as well as questions of justice. Augustine answers were stronger to the extent that candidates wrestled with parts of the text of *The City of God* rather than offering more detached summaries of his theology or of what they took to be his political thought. The Machiavelli essays deployed a useful variety of examples from Agathocles and Pope Julius II to the republics of Venice and Rome, though some answers could have been a bit clearer about whether they were more in the business of defending or criticising Quentin Skinner’s interpretations. The strongest essays on More showed good knowledge of the text of Books I and II of *Utopia*, were able to think about them side by side, and showed awareness of some of the problems surrounding the overall interpretation of the book’s argument. Answers on Hobbes frequently needed to be more sharply concentrated on the precise question that the Examiners had asked, rather than simply offering a general account of what Hobbes has to say about liberty in *Leviathan*. Locke essays sometimes spent too much time outlining his critique of executive power, when the question was explicitly asking about what he had to say on its behalf.

In Section B, the essays on anti-democratic political thought in Athens pursued a variety of argumentative strategies, most of which worked quite well. The answers on humanism sometimes struggled to move beyond the deployment of historical examples in Renaissance texts to reflect on how history was being used more broadly. The question on reason of state was a popular one, with stronger answers working in themes from Catholic political thought, or Montaigne, or Foucault, in addition to the familiar faces of Lipsius and Botero. The essays on sovereignty needed to stick closer to the ‘why’ question that had been asked, rather than explain either how they thought mixed government was incoherent, or why they sought to fashion accounts of indivisible sovereignty.

All in all, those who marked POL7 were impressed. This was not an easy paper, the general standard of the answers was commendably high—and they were all pleasingly legible—and the best scripts were really excellent indeed.

2015-16

Examiner: Dr Sylvana Tomaselli

42 candidates sat this paper. In Section A, the most popular question this year was on Plato (with 23 answers), followed by that on Machiavelli (17), More (15), Aristotle (10), Hobbes (10), Locke (4) and Augustine (1), with no answers on Aquinas. In Section B, the most popular question was on Renaissance humanism (14), followed by that on the debates in ancient Athens on the difference between democrats and anti-democrats (9), theorists of sovereignty (6), early modern international law (5), Roman political thought (4), Calvinist resistance theory (4), toleration (3), the English Civil War (2), reason of state (1), and papal and secular power (1), with no attempts at the questions on
the early Christians, medieval citizenship, or Roman law. Several of the candidates chose to answer two questions in that Section.

A few points emerge that reiterate reports of previous years. The first is that while some candidates clearly mastered a wide array of subjects, some were more narrowly focused on the Ancients, and while these included excellent and clearly distinct answers, some came close to repeating the same material. The second is that some scripts seemed oblivious of the fact that they needed to be legible. The third is that, in some cases, there was a lack of critical engagement with the question and/or inattentiveness as to its precise nature. This was evident, for instance, in some of the answers to the question on More (‘To what extent should we regard Thomas More’s Utopia as exposing the perils of hereditary monarchy?’) in which monarchy and aristocracy were amalgamated into one, their hereditary aspect left unexamined, every social ill deemed, by More, to be attributable to hereditary monarchy, and the government of Utopia itself left bereft of scrutiny.

Those who had read the set texts with attention to detail, showed awareness of the conceptual issues and the issues within the scholarship, and engaged with these issues and the manner in which the authors dealt with them, as ever, did best. The few, who had read only one of the set texts (e.g. The Prince), or who had a very superficial understanding of a set text (e.g. Leviathan), or who did not explore the full implications of the questions, rehashing their weekly essays or regurgitating their lecture notes, did least well.

As has been said many a time in examiners reports, what is needed is clear evidence of textual knowledge, showing a concern with the key concepts behind the question, but allied to an argument about how the evidence relates to the question. This requires knowledge of the texts in the first place, but that should be taken to mean an understanding of what they seek to achieve and how they do so, not mere restatement of what it was that the author wrote. This may very well require some knowledge of the intellectual and historical contexts in which the authors under consideration wrote, and that knowledge needs to be woven into the answer where appropriate, as opposed to mechanically repeated regardless of the question or the answer given to it.

Overall, the answers to the bulk of the questions were nevertheless solid, and some were very impressive indeed.

2014-15
Examiners: Miss Sylvana Tomaselli and Dr Ruth Scurr

46 candidates sat this paper, 7 obtained Firsts and the rest II.1s with one or two exceptions. The most popular answers were on Machiavelli (17), Locke (14), Plato and Aristotle (13 each), Hobbes (8), More (5), Augustine and Aquinas (5 each) in §A. For §B, the most popular answers were on Greek Democracy and its Critics and Renaissance humanist political thought (13 each) followed by Toleration in the later 17th century (11), Sovereignty (8), Reason of State (6), Early Christian political
thought (3), and Temporal and spiritual in medieval political thought (1). The marks ranged up to 80 for some scripts, and the over-all standard was high this year. It may well be that candidates took heed of the 2014 Examiners’ Report (which should be recommended reading for all taking Political Thought Papers). It made two major points:

[1] Those who read widely, but are able to utilize their erudition in a well-structured and fluent answer to the question as opposed to just displaying their knowledge and erudition in the round, as ever, did best. [2] Those few who clearly had not done enough work, in far too many cases rehashing even Part I paper level answers on Hobbes, did least well.

This year very few fell into the trap of rehearsing the material acquired in Part I. Most tackled authors not covered in the First year. Candidates also benefited from the fact that the questions did not appear deceptively easy and indeed were thought-provoking. They rose to the occasion and seemed to enjoy the challenge.

Indeed, they appeared to have taken in two further points made in last year’s report and thus made good and clear use of the texts, showed wider reading around the subjects and argued a case convincing as opposed to sitting on the fence. The questions on Aristotle, More, Locke, Renaissance Humanism, Sovereignty and Reason of State received particularly sophisticated and impressive answers.

One or two candidates mismanaged their time and their final essay costs them a higher class. More than one candidate came close to breaking, or fell foul of, the ‘Avoid overlap between your answers’ rule

This said, it was a very good year for the History of Political Thought Pre-1700 Paper.