



HUMAN, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE TRIPOS

POL PAPERS

PART II EXAMINERS' REPORTS

2018-2019

REPORT FROM THE SENIOR EXAMINER

This was my first year as Senior Examiner for Part II of the Politics Exam Board, having taken over from Dr Christopher Brooke who very ably stewarded the examinations last year. Things ran very smoothly on the whole, with processes having benefited from the institutional learning that occurred after challenges faced in previous years.

The External Examiners remained consistent with last year, with both Dr Julia Stapleton (Political Thought, Durham) and Professor Nic Cheeseman (Political Science, Birmingham) reprising their roles. Both Julia and Nic provided excellent service to the department. They dealt calmly and efficiently with a varied range of exam scripts, long essays, and dissertations, that I presented to them both in advance of their arrival and during their stay in Cambridge. Fortunately, they benefited from a better night's sleep due to the rearrangement of their accommodation in order to keep them a comfortable distance from the riotous May Ball celebrations unfolding across the city. In terms of administrative support, Patrycja Koziol did a fantastic job once again, coordinating effectively with me and enabling smooth progress in the time-compressed build-up to the Final Examiners' Meeting. Effective administrative support is extremely important for the efficient coordination of the Exam Board. I was also very generously supported by both Dr Christopher Brooke (Senior Examiner 2017-18) and Dr Glen Rangwala (Senior Examiner 2016-17). Their support was invaluable for coordinating all of the complex and often precise components involved in administering the examinations.

In the months before the Final Examiners' Meeting the biggest issue to deal with involved the coordination and adjudication of applications for Alternative Modes of Assessment. These appear to constitute an increasing volume of the overall work of the Senior Examiner, with the number of cases rising. The very extensive chains of emails, issued by multiple different individuals and offices from within the University and relevant Colleges, can prove challenging to keep track of. In one case it took quite some time, after quite some uncertainty, to establish when exactly the process of adjudicating the Alternative Mode of Assessment had concluded, what the precise measures to be implemented were, and how it was to be done. The process is also often needlessly compressed due to College Directors of Studies leaving it too late to initiate what is unavoidably quite a long, complicated, and drawn-out process that involves a

physical case conference among the concerned parties in addition to a large and continuous volume of email traffic. Additionally, the need to devise alternative essay questions and formats, as a consequence of decisions relating to Alternative Modes of Assessment, places a significant burden for those examining the affected papers. These are things to be attentive to in the future.

During the examinations period itself, the only significant issue related to the Pol 8 exam. Around five minutes into the exam a mistake was discovered on the paper. Question 21, which should have dealt with the topic of 'Nationalism and the State', had been replaced with a question on the topic of 'Empire and Civilization in nineteenth-century political thought', properly the subject of question 22. As question 22 was printed correctly, this meant that there were two questions on the Empire topic, and none on the Nationalism topic. Question 21 was then corrected, and students were told to cross out any answers they had begun for the incorrect question. Students were given ten additional minutes to complete the exam. This was a very unfortunate turn of events. The History Faculty failed to identify the error in their paper setting meeting and as POLIS has no oversight of this process, we were not able to identify the problem until the day of the exam. We should in future, as suggested by the Externals, insist upon some degree of oversight for all papers that have a significant bearing on the results of HSPS Part II candidates. In response to the problem, I coordinated with Dr Tom Hopkins (Pol 8 examiner) and Dr Lucia Rubinelli (Pol 8 Assessor) to ensure a uniformity and consistency of approach to the issue. It was decided, in consultation with the External Examiners, that special attention should be paid to any Pol 8 candidates whose grade for the paper might have had an impact on classing, or where the grade for Pol 8 deviated substantially from average attainment across the combined papers. As a result, the Externals scrutinised a number of Pol 8 scripts, but it was found that there was no evidence of significant impact upon performance and that no ameliorative action was required. Where official Representations were made regarding Pol 8, I consulted with Dr Hopkins and Dr Rubinelli, alongside the External Examiners, to appraise the merits of individual cases and collate the required contextual information. It was deemed that no adjustments were required.

Regarding the week leading up to the Final Examiners' Meeting, things ran smoothly other than some last-minute adjustments to the classing data. These adjustments were required because a) the wrong data had been entered for Pol 6, and b) there was one candidate who had conducted long essay (Pol 5) work over two years due to specific circumstances pertaining to their studies. This data was overlooked and had to be adjusted during the Final Examiners' Meeting. The presentation of Pol 6 results should be standardised in line with wider POLIS practice for next year, to avoid the problems encountered this year. For long essay work, the Senior Examiner and administrators will have to be attentive to the potential for staggered submission of work across multiple years.

A further issue pertains to Pol 5, the long essay paper. This is a major opportunity for students to receive substantive feedback on a long piece of independent study in advance of the dissertation in the final year. The feedback provided by some examiners was wholly inadequate and this is an area that we should improve upon next year.

Overall, the results this year were as follows. For Part IIA Politics and International Relations, 84 candidates were classed. There were 21 Firsts (25%); 52 Upper Seconds (62%), six Lower

Seconds (7%); and 5 Thirds (6%). For Part IIA Politics and Sociology, 29 candidates were classed. There were 10 Firsts; 18 Upper Seconds; and 1 Third. For Part IIB Politics and International Relations, 88 candidates were classed. There were 25 Firsts (28%) (one of which was a Starred First); 61 Upper Seconds (69%); and 2 Lower Seconds (2%). For Part IIB Politics and Sociology, 16 candidates were classed. There were 5 Firsts (31%); and 11 Upper Seconds (69%).

In terms of the gendered dimensions of the results, the points of interest are as follows. Overall at Part II, 27.6% of female students received firsts this year, while 24.1% of our male students received firsts, so there is a disparity of First-Class attainment that favours female candidates. In Part IIA, out of the 21 students who received firsts, 13 were women, in a student body that was majority male (46m, 42f). In Part IIB, more women (13) received firsts than men (12), but the student body was primarily female (52f, 37m). The majority of poorly performing (Lower Second and Third Class) candidates at Part IIA were male. The largest gender difference for a single paper occurred in the Dissertation, where there was an average gap of 2.9 marks in favour of male attainment over female. My thanks to Dr Glen Rangwala for analysing the data.

To conclude, students performed well across Part II of HSPS and the rising percentage of First-Class results is particularly encouraging. I would like to wish Dr Chris Brooke all the best for his resumption of Senior Examiner duties next year.

Dr Jeremy Green

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**Examiner: Prof. Julia Stapleton
University of Durham**

This was my second year as external examiner in the political theory papers of the Department. Once again I was impressed by the challenging nature of the assessments and the commitment to unseen examinations as the leading mode of assessment. The requirement of most papers that students answer three questions ensures the acquisition of a broad knowledge base, while papers that require fewer answers demand a high level of detailed analysis.

The submissions I saw provide evidence of the quality and richness of the teaching across the Department and of its strong research ethos. The long essays and dissertations that the external examiners ranked for prizes were outstanding in every respect. Much other work we reviewed was also notable, not least for its imaginative depth in framing and analysing a topic. The Department clearly draws out the best in its students and sets standards which are at least as high as those of comparable institutions.

The process of assessment is exemplary. The system of dual marking by an examiner and assessor works well, and the justification for the marks awarded for each essay/script was invariably acute. The two external examiners were consulted on submissions for which there were split marks and encouraged to exercise their judgement in determining a final mark. The system of inviting the external examiners to be present in the Department the

day before the meeting of the exam board to adjudicate on papers of borderline candidates was again effective. We were able to make decisions with all the relevant paperwork to hand.

The exam board itself was conducted fairly, with close attention to the mark-sheets throughout. The proceedings were halted several times to check that anomalous marks were fair and correct. The views of external examiners were sought on policy issues discussed before the classification of degrees. The Department is committed to ensuring that marking standards are comparable across the different papers and that there is parity of achievement across gender and other divides.

I would particularly like to commend the detailed review that had taken place of the effects of the disruption at the start of the exam for Pol8 on all those sitting the paper. Particularly careful consideration was given to students who had attempted the erroneous question on the paper before the mistake was identified, and to those who answered the correct version. I reviewed Pol8 scripts of all borderline candidates.

If I have any reservations about the marking, it is that it could extend higher into the first class range. Outstanding work clearly suggest marks in the 80s rather than mid- to upper 70s. The dissertations and long essays we considered for prizes were striking for their originality and depth of insight, on which there was general agreement. It was difficult to know what more was expected to achieve a mark in the remaining points of the scale.

The work of Dr Jeremy Green, Senior Examiner, and Patrycja Koziol, chief clerk, in ensuring the efficiency and accuracy of exams process is commendable.

Examiner: Prof. Nicholas Cheeseman
University of Birmingham

This was my second year as external examiner for the Cambridge Part II Politics Exam Board. As in my first year, it was an enjoyable experience, and the concentrated nature of the process makes for a more efficient and, ultimately, a more rewarding process.

Overall, things also ran particularly smoothly this year, with no major hiccups. In this regard, it seemed that there had been a real effort to simplify processes and remove any possible complications. This meant that it was easier for the examiners to understand exactly what they needed to do, and to complete the work in the time available, for which we were very grateful. Great credit for this should go to Jeremy Green, Senior Examiner, and Patrycja Koziol, Chief Clerk, who were thoughtful, supportive and good company throughout.

The quality of the scripts and dissertations was especially good this year. In particular, the very best longer pieces of work (i.e. long essays and dissertations) were of exceptionally high – in some cases publishable – quality. Reading these to determine the allocation of prizes was a real privilege. Taken together, this work demonstrated the high quality of both students and teaching, and the opportunity for individuals to develop into first class researchers during their time at Cambridge.

One feature of the work that I read this year that struck me as worthy of particular praise was the engaged nature of the scholarship. Across different papers, students appeared to understand the connection between their studies and contemporary struggles for political rights, equality and democracy around the world. Without losing sight of the need for academic rigor and depth, this generated scripts and dissertations that had an urgency and relevance that was exciting to read – and which suggested a department that is engaged with, and responding to, the most important issues of our time.

On the whole, the rigour of the assessment process was impressive. That said, in a small number of cases there was a difference between the level of detail in the comments recorded by markers. It would help the examiners a great deal if all markers could record an indication of why they have come to a particular verdict that references the marking criteria as well as the script.

The standards applied by markers were consistent and appropriate. Given the impressive quality of some of the very best work being produced, however, it would be reasonable to use the full range of the mark scheme and award marks in the high 70s and even 80s. Doing this is merited by the strength of the material, and will help to ensure that one or two average marks do not drag extremely good candidates back to the first class borderline.

Given the above comments, I do not have many recommendations for improvement. The course and the examining process are already in very good shape. One change that might be worth making for the future is to calculate and circulate average marks by gender once the final set of marks have been agreed at the final meeting. I have no reason to suspect that there is a problem in this regard, but establishing this practice would enable markers and externals to check for any discrepancy, and to discuss any issues that may arise.

I look forward to returning next year.

INTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

POL3: International Organisation

Examiner: Prof. Jason Sharman

Exactly 100 students took the Pol.3 exam requiring 2 answers to be written in response to 13 questions, resulting in 44 Firsts, 36 2:1, 11 2:2 and 9 Fails. The mean for the Pol.3 exam was almost exactly same as the overall POLIS mean of 65%, though the standard deviation was larger than usual (c.9), reflecting the higher proportion of Firsts and Failing marks. This spread may well have reflected the different design of the exam. Having two rather than three questions in the three hour seemed to give those students well on top of the material more scope to demonstrate knowledge and come up with original, thoughtful answers. Conversely, the extra time seemed to have shown up those who had not kept up with the readings nor adequately prepared for the exam.

Responses to questions were unevenly distributed, some proving to be particularly popular while others were much less favoured. Just because questions were done often does not

mean that they were necessarily done well, for example one commonly-addressed question on the three main theoretical traditions often saw responses lapse into summaries without making a strong argument.

Those students who did well laid out a clear thesis statement and argument directly in response to the question in the introduction, as well as indicating the structure of the essay. Where there was more than one element to the question they indicated their response to each element up front. These successful answers demonstrated mastery of the readings in terms of concepts and theory. Depending on how empirical or theoretical the question was, they also drew on a range of relevant evidence primarily from the readings and lectures, but perhaps also from current affairs and their knowledge from other courses to support and substantiate their argument. Rather than just summarising, they were careful to compare, contrast and assess readings, having a definite and original authorial voice in the conclusions reached. They usually acknowledged counter-arguments, caveats or scope conditions without defaulting to a simple >on the one hand, on the other= fence-sitting approach. Different sections of the essay followed logically from each other in line with the plan presented in the introduction. The conclusion did a concise job of summarising the argument and main points, perhaps adding in some final thoughts or scope conditions.

Mid-range answers presented a reasonable thesis statement, but this was often too brief or somewhat vague, usually without a developed plan or roadmap of the argument to come. The arguments tended to be more simple, e.g. a blanket endorsement of one position, and were more likely to default to summaries for substantial portions of the answer. These answers generally were accurate in presenting the main features of the readings. There was little sense of structure to the answer, i.e. of how individual parts of the answer related to each other, or how they served to advance the argument overall. Similarly, there was little or no sense of originality in comparing, contrasting or critiquing material from within or beyond the paper.

The most problematic answers either had no discernable thesis statement or had a statement that was generally unrelated to the rest of the answer. These answers lacked any sense of structure in either the introduction or the body, with much of the content being a succession of summaries of disparate readings from the paper, presented in such a way that it was difficult to see a link with either other elements of the body of the essay, or any overall argument. Sometimes these summaries were also wrong and indicated that the student did not really understand the argument they were trying to present. Some problematic answers either accidentally or wilfully did not answer the question, instead presenting an answer to a question that had not been asked, or lapsing into editorialising on unrelated topics.

POL4: Comparative Politics
Examiner: Dr Iza Hussin

The POL4 exam was sat by 155 students this year. The breakdown of answers per question were as follows:

Section A

1. 35; 2. 12; 3. 16; 4. 19; 5. 11; 6. 7; 7. 32; 8. 16; 9. 7

Section B

10. 32

11. 63

Section C

12A. 2

12B. 19

13. 36

Section D

14. 29

15. 25

Section E

16. 17

17. 24

Section F

18. 31

19. 30

Students performed very strongly on the exam this year. 32 students attained a 1st class classification, 115 students achieved a 2:1. 6 students attained a 2:2 classification. 1 student attained a 3, and 1 student attained a failing grade, in both these cases partly due to one or more answers unattempted.

As in previous years, the better answers answered the questions explicitly, with empirical and analytic material drawn from the course to support the arguments. They were consistently comparative, drawing inferences by reflecting on similarities and divergence across cases.

Stronger answers combined empirical detail with conceptual precision and the ability to develop a consistent argument over the course of the answer. While some students produced weaker answers by falling into a mechanistic exposition of existing perspectives within the literature, selecting cases without explaining their rationale, those who had a stronger performance were able to combine their knowledge of key literature and concepts with a systematic argument and critical reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of existing arguments.

Outstanding answers combined a thorough application of the comparative method to detailed cases with a critical and theoretically rich engagement with existing perspectives in the literature, at times pushing back against key assumptions in the questions and the literature itself, and solid empirical evidence to support arguments.

POL5: Conceptual Issues in Politics and International Relations

Examiner: Professor Brendan Simms

This year, 73 students took this paper on Conceptual Issues in Politics and International Relations, which gives candidates the chance to explore topics in greater depth and with more sophistication than is possible in supervisions. The best answers did just that, and there were some really excellent essays, which combined a novel approach with detailed cases studies to sustain a nuanced argument. Most showed an ability to process large amounts of secondary literature, but many were also a little too beholden to what had been written before and too hesitant to strike out on their own, which is more possible on this paper than some others. Regrettably, there was quite a lot of editorialising on topics like identity politics, Trump, Brexit, austerity and so on, where it would have been better to stand back from the usual talking points and engaged more closely with the burgeoning scholarly literature on these topics.

POL6: Statistics and Methods in Politics and International Relations

Examiner: Dr Pieter van Houten

There were 18 students taking the POL6 paper this year (14 HSPS Part IIA, 1 HSPS Part IIB, and 3 History & Politics IIA). This was the first year that the paper had two elements of assessment: a report of maximally 5000 words on a data analysis project, and a two-hour exam. Each element contributed 50% to the overall mark.

The results were generally good. For the coursework element (the report on the data analysis project), 6 candidates received a First class mark, 9 candidates a 2.1 mark and 3 candidates a 2.2 mark. For the exam, 7 candidates received a First class mark, 8 candidates a 2.1 mark, and 3 candidates a 2.2 mark. Overall, this led to 5 candidates receiving a First class for the paper (three of whom received First class marks for both the coursework and the exam), 10 candidates a 2.1 mark for the paper, and 3 candidates a 2.2 mark for the paper (only one of whom received 2.2 marks for both the coursework and the exam).

For the coursework, candidates had to choose a topic from a provided list. Six candidates chose to do a project on public attitudes to globalisation, five candidates undertook a project on Sustainable Development Goals, four candidates focused on patterns of conflict, two candidates looked at perceptions of corruption, and one candidate investigated voting behaviour in British elections. The examiners were generally impressed with the quality of the analyses and reports. Most of the reports showed an ability to design a specific quantitative analysis and to present and discuss the results of the analysis in an interesting way. The very best reports presented a good question, plausible hypotheses, clearly displayed results of the analysis and a useful discussion of these results. The projects that received the highest marks were not necessarily the ones with the most elaborate and complicated statistical models, as it was more important that the report presented a coherent and convincing account of the reason for and the interpretations of the results of the analysis. However, reports which presented the results themselves in a particularly compelling way were rewarded for this.

The reports which received the lowest marks (which were in the 2.2 range) were based on rather limited statistical analyses (for example, mostly only descriptive statistics or regression analyses conducted in a way that could not really answer the posed research question) and/or some errors in the set-up of the statistical models. In addition, these reports were not presented in a very clear way, especially with respect to the discussion of the results of the analysis. The reports which received marks in the 2.1 range generally avoided these problems, but displayed various minor weaknesses. These included (one or more of) the following: some of the statistical results and/or hypotheses were not presented in a sufficiently clear way, too much emphasis on certain aspects that were ultimately less relevant for the conclusions of the analysis (such as lengthy discussions of descriptive statistics or the definition of variables), a discussion of the results which was more 'mechanical' (giving the statistical interpretations of each variables) than 'substantive' (focusing primarily on the variables relevant for the posed question and on the broader interpretation of the results). Some of the reports also lacked some overall coherence (where the different aspects and sections were not sufficiently connected to each other).

However, it should be reiterated that the overall quality of the reports was impressive, considering that for most students this paper is their first exposure to quantitative analysis.

The exam consisted this year of one mandatory question, which was divided into 11 sub-questions. The examiners were pleased with the quality of the exam scripts. Particularly pleasing was that, in contrast to previous years, there were no scripts that received extremely low marks. All candidates showed that they understood the basics of the statistical methods taught in the paper. It appears that the addition of the coursework element has reduced the risk that candidates are seriously underprepared for this paper's exam.

The characteristics of the stronger and weaker scripts were similar to those in previous years. The better scripts showed a correct understanding of the statistical concepts and techniques used and provided good and extensive substantive interpretations of the indicated statistical results. The weaker scripts included various mistakes on the interpretation of the statistical results, misunderstandings of key concepts, and/or failed to provide any answers to some of the sub-questions. A noteworthy aspect was the variation in the length of answers between scripts. Some scripts provided rather short answers, even to the questions that asked about the interpretation of the results (where the expectation is that a good answer discusses both statistical and substantive interpretations) or the formulation of hypotheses (which should include possible rationales or justifications for them for the answer to the get maximal marks).

POL7: The History of Political Thought to c.1700

Examiner: Dr Christopher Brooke

Forty-seven scripts were generated for this paper (up from 42 in 2018 and 38 in 2017), and blind double-marked in the usual way. The standard of the answers was pleasingly high: thirteen students received a first-class mark overall, there were thirty upper seconds, and four lower seconds.

The more popular questions were on Plato (19 answers), Machiavelli (18), More (15), Aristotle (14—more popular than usual), Athenian democracy (10), *raison d'état* (9), and Renaissance humanism (7—less popular than usual). All questions attracted at least one answer—though Aquinas, the mediaeval reception of classical thought, and the English Civil War attracted only one answer. The mediaeval topics were not wholly neglected: there were four answers on Augustine, four on the early Christians, three on papal power, and two on Roman law. We had fewer answers than we normally receive on Hobbes and Locke.

In general, there were no glaring problems. Last year's Examiner's Report, for example, chastised POL7 candidates for their "insufficiently close engagement with the relevant set texts" and for being "excessively dependent on the views of Bernard Williams concerning Plato, and of Quentin Skinner concerning, especially, Machiavelli and More", but there was little sign of these difficulties this year. Very few essays indeed read like rehashed supervision essays or regurgitated lecture notes. Indeed, the wide range of different arguments that were

attempted with respect to the various authors, texts, and topics strongly suggested that students were thinking for themselves, drawing productively on a broad range of reading and reflection—and this made the Examiners very happy to see.

Turning to particular questions in Section A: writing on Plato was very popular, as ever, with the stronger essays avoiding the Scylla of too much exposition of Socrates' argument, getting in the way of answering the question posed, on the one hand, and the Charybdis of having so much to say about particular commentators that a central line of argument was obscured, on the other. Weaker essays on Aristotle got bogged down in his typology of regimes, and had less to say about the concept of *politeia* itself. A strong essay on Augustine needed to discuss (i) love, (ii) as it operates within his political theory, (iii) with specific reference to the text of *City of God*, with too many candidates only managing two out of three. There was a nice variety of answers to the Machiavelli question (concerning war, glory, fortuna, religion, the army, dictatorship, tumults, the mixed constitution, liberty, *virtù*, and so on), with stronger essays moving beyond "because that's what humanists did" to focus on a single line of argument ("what best explains..."), discussing particular examples from the set texts, and avoiding getting sidetracked by the attempt to resolve interpretative disagreements in the secondary scholarship. As is usual, the strongest essays on Utopia were very strong indeed, with good answers often seeing that the word "virtuous" isn't entirely straightforward, and could be pointing in a number of different directions. Too many candidates who answered on Hobbes just didn't know enough about what he had to say about correct speech in *Leviathan* to write a good essay. Essays on Locke were either weak (candidates with only an introductory knowledge of his political theory, who tried to make things about "liberalism") or strong (candidates who had thought quite a bit about God in Locke's theory, and had things to say), with not much by way of any middle ground.

In Section B, answers to the question on Athenian democracy sometimes spent too long discussing rhetoric or knowledge when there was still quite a bit to say about equality. The stronger essays on Renaissance humanism saw that there were different conceptions of liberty in the various texts, and discussed what some of these were. Some answers on *raison d'état* were strong, with good knowledge especially of Botero on display, but they were strongest when they addressed the precise theme picked out by the question (the relationship between prudence and virtue), rather than just saying a few things about prudence, and a few things about virtue. Essays on international law often expressed criticism of early modern European imperialism, but were stronger to the extent that they were able to explore this theme through the theoretical texts under consideration.

POL8: The History of Political Thought from 1700-1890

Examiner: Dr Tom Hopkins

Eighty candidates sat the paper by examination this year; one candidate was assessed following special assessment procedures. The examination was, very regrettably, significantly disrupted when a misprint was discovered five minutes into the exam. Question 21, which should properly cover the Nationalism topic, had been replaced by last year's question on Empire and Civilization. The exam was stopped after approximately five minutes; the correct question was identified by the examiner from History, who was the paper setter. Candidates were informed of the correction and those who had begun to answer the misprinted question

21 were requested to strike out their answers. The exam resumed with ten minutes added to the clock to make up for lost time. These changes were communicated by the examination supervisors to other examination centres, although it appears that, in at least one instance, this message was not received. Clearly, this raises questions about paper-setting procedures. As with POL7 and POL10, the exam paper for POL8 is set by the Faculty of History and subject to their scrutiny. The examiner for POL8 did not have sight of the exam paper before the morning it was sat. I strongly recommend that this change in future, and that exam papers for POL7, POL8 and POL10 be made available in advance to their respective examiners in POLIS as a safeguard against any repeat of this kind of error.

In light of this disruption, special care was taken to ensure that no candidate was unduly disadvantaged. Examiners identified all cases where there were particular grounds for thinking that a candidate might have been disadvantaged by the error and its correction. These were given additional scrutiny by the external examiners, as were cases where there seemed to be a significant discrepancy between a candidate's marks for POL8 and those for other papers.

In the event, overall the standard of answers was high. Eighteen candidates received an overall First-class mark; fifty-eight received an Upper Second; three received Lower Seconds; and one candidate received a Third. The median mark was 66; the mean was 65.8. There were 138 answers on Section A topics; 102 answers on Section B topics. Answers were heavily clustered around five topics. The most popular topic was Rousseau (36 answers), followed by Wollstonecraft (31 answers), Gender (24), Burke and Empire and Civilization (both 21). Trailing some way behind was Luxury and Commercial Society (13), Hume and the French Revolution (both on 12), the American Revolution (11), Nationalism (9), and Kant and Mill (both on 8). Bringing up the rear were Montesquieu, Marx, and Socialism before 1848 (all on 5), Constant and Social Science (both on 4), Tocqueville and Natural Law (both on 3), Bentham and Hegel (both on 2) and Smith (most unusually, receiving only a single answer). Culture and Aesthetic Politics in Germany was the only topic not to receive an answer. There were notably strong answers on Hegel and on the Gender topic, although the latter topic also attracted many rather generic answers to the question; there were a number of good answers on Hume, Wollstonecraft and Nationalism, and those candidates who attempted the questions on Smith, Bentham, Constant, Natural Law, and Social Science tended to perform well. Strikingly, many candidates struggled with the questions on Rousseau and Empire and Civilization, with a number of candidates receiving one or more marks in the 40-49 or 50-59 range for these questions.

Much as in previous years, the best answers had a number of virtues in common. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, they offered direct answers to the questions posed rather than generic discussions of the topics concerned. Secondly, they were based on close reading of the relevant set texts and did not rely upon summary accounts such as might be gleaned from lectures, supervisions or basic textbooks. Thirdly, they offered cohesive arguments that used each successive paragraph to build an overarching case, rather than laying out arguments in a disjointed or haphazard fashion. Additionally, the best answers were able to make judicious use of secondary literature to advance their case, whether by invoking it in support of the argument, or by challenging its conclusions with reference to the primary texts.

For section A, as noted, Rousseau proved most problematic. Weaker candidates showed a lack of familiarity with the discussion of the lawgiver in Book II Chapter 7 of the Social Contract. Several confused this figure with either the sovereign or the government; others neglected the emphasis of the question on the source of the lawgiver's authority or misidentified it. Others still offered an overview of the argument of the Social Contract, but neglected to focus on the problem at hand. Stronger answers took the quotation as the starting point for a discussion of the lawgiver's role and their appeal to divine authority. Problems with other topics were less widespread. Hume was generally answered well, though most candidates were significantly more familiar with the Treatise than with the Essays. Montesquieu was answered best by those candidates able to discuss the distinction between nobility and aristocracy with confidence, and to relate them to different forms of government. Answers on Burke were somewhat unadventurous, with many candidates falling back on generic discussion of his 'consistency'. Better answers aimed to address the relationship between theory and practice more directly. Wollstonecraft attracted a number of strong answers that made interesting use of the Short Residence. Weaker answers neglected one or other of the two Vindications. Kant was generally well answered, and candidates proved adept at relating his moral, legal and political philosophies. The emphasis on free trade in the Mill question presented a challenge to those candidates who had neglected the relevant passages in On Liberty or who had passed over the Principles of Political Economy. Answers on Marx were mixed. Though all candidates showed some understanding of a range of his texts, weaker candidates struggled to make a coherent argument. Few showed any very deep appreciation of Marx's historical or philosophical thought. Other questions attracted fewer answers, though these tended to be of high quality. The answers on Smith and Hegel demonstrated a good grasp of the primary texts and in some cases notable intellectual ambition in their arguments. Bentham and Constant attracted some convincing arguments based on a solid understanding of the primary texts. The answers on Tocqueville were a little weaker, and it was noticeable that some candidates were less than confident in discussing the Ancien Régime and the Revolution.

For Section B, Gender was the most popular topic. The best candidates excelled, with answers that demonstrated both wide reading in the primary and secondary literature, but also a clear focus on the ways in which the historicization of the 'woman question' shaped debate on the subject. Weaker candidates fell into two camps: those who did not focus sufficiently on the 'history' aspect of the question; and those who struggled to pull the threads of their answer together into a coherent argument. For Empire and Civilization, a focus on political economy again proved challenging. Some candidates struggled to address this dimension of the topic on anything more than a superficial level; others neglected one or another of the terms specified in the question: 'British liberal critiques of empire'. Optimistic attempts to recruit Marx to the ranks of British liberals did not impress. The best arguments drew on secondary and primary sources to examine the role of debates on free trade, attacks on the 'old colonial system' and slavery, on international competition, and on the role of empire in fostering or perpetuating domestic inequality. Some answers also made plausible cases for distinguishing between favourable and critical arguments about empire in thinkers such as J.S. Mill. Of the other topics, the Luxury topic was popular this year, and received a number of very well-informed answers, though some candidates struggled to retain the focus on 'corruption'. The French Revolution question was not answered especially well, with a number of candidates demonstrating a very superficial knowledge of Sieyès' thought, in particular. The American

Revolution fared a little better, especially where candidates demonstrated first-hand knowledge of the Constitution itself, as well as of the arguments made for and against its adoption. The Nationalism topic attracted some very strong answers, which both drew on a wide range of primary texts, but also, crucially, gave thoughtful consideration to the concept of 'civilization'. The candidate who answered the question solely with reference to texts drawn from the Empire topic fared less well. Answers on Socialism and Social Science were generally solid, though some candidates slipped into giving flat overviews of key thinkers. The better answers focused more attentively on the terms of the questions. The answers on Natural Law all provided convincing answers to the question, but in some cases could have tried to make more use of the set texts.

POL9: Conceptual Issues and Texts in Politics and International Relations

Examiner: Professor Helen Thompson

There were 86 candidates for the paper. The examiner and assessor agreed 11 firsts, 61 upper seconds, 14 lower seconds, and 1 third. The external examiner then reviewed several of the higher upper second marks.

36 candidates answered questions on passages and 50 a general question. By far the most popular question was question 8 on whether great powers can be a force for good.

There were a number of encouraging features in this year's scripts. Most candidates made a substantial argument without falling back on exposition of what different theorists might think about the argument or question at stake, or simply rehearsing material from other papers. The best answers showed considerable sophistication and some serious reflection on politics. Most candidates also used specific knowledge to some effect in making analytical arguments.

The weaknesses in this year's scripts were similar to those in the recent past. Too often candidates answering questions 5-10 embarked upon a specific argument without having set up their answer in relation to the general question and the conceptual terms in it. This weakness was particularly marked on the great powers question. Rather few candidates actually engaged with the concept of great powers in any rigorous way and instead took the great power they wished to discuss – in most instances the United States – and simply asked whether that state acts as a force for good. The fact that the United States here is one case of a wider phenomenon was too often absent from the discussion. As a consequence, some candidates did not start their argument at the point of entry required by the question.

The answers on the great powers would also have benefitted at times from more historical nuance. There were some quite sweeping generalisations about the post-war international order and its purportedly liberal nature. Some candidates were insufficiently aware that liberal arguments about American power are contested not just by post-colonialist theorists but realists. Generally, on this question few candidates showed that much understanding of power dynamics in relations between states in the international system.

In the passage questions some candidates misread the text, or didn't set out clearly the propositions constituting the arguments in the passage. There was a particular issue with

the passage on myth where quite a number of candidates treated myth as synonymous with a lie or erroneous belief even though that is clearly not the way the author of the passage conceived myths.

There is significantly less of an issue than there was a few years ago with under-length answers. But it is possible that some candidates would benefit both from taking a little more time to decide upon which question to answer and for reflecting on how argumentatively to structure the material they choose to deploy.

POL10: The History of Political Thought from 1700-1890

Examiner: Dr Tom Hopkins

Fourteen candidates sat this paper this year, of whom four received Firsts and the remainder Upper Seconds. The median mark was 67 and the mean 66.5. As these figures suggest, the overall standard was high, with a number of candidates receiving marks for individual questions in the high 70s. Candidates tackled a pleasingly wide range of questions. Every topic in Section B received at least one answer: Nationalism attracted four answers, the French Revolution three, and the American Revolution and Culture and Aesthetic Politics in Germany two each. The pattern for Section A was a little more clustered. Burke led the field (6 answers), followed by Hume and Montesquieu (4 each), Constant (3), Rousseau and Tocqueville (2 each), and Smith, Kant, Hegel and Mill (1 each). Most unusually, Wollstonecraft, Marx, as well as Bentham, received no answers.

As always, the best answers displayed a firm grip on the question posed; good (and in some cases outstanding) knowledge of the primary texts; the ability to construct a coherent and well-structured argument; and good judgement in using secondary literature either to support an argument or to provide a target for criticism. Weaker answers demonstrated either a failure to answer the question directly; a deficiency of understanding of the set texts; or a poorly-constructed argument.

Of those topics where it is possible to draw out some general trends, Montesquieu was the most consistently well-answered. Candidates were generally well versed in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century French political debate and were able to draw out some plausible connections in discussing Montesquieu's political theory. The question on Hume was most compellingly answered by candidates who could confidently connect his theory of property with the theory of government. Answers on Burke were rather too often somewhat generic, discussing his writings on Ireland, America and France in turn and making a more or less plausible case for or against consistency. The better answers tended to be those that were more confident in tying the material together into a coherent argument. On Constant, it was clear that Garsten and Rosenblatt's discussion of Constant's religious thought have made an impact, but this sometimes led to the political dimension being downplayed. It was noticeable on this topic, as on some others, that some candidates were tempted to rehearse arguments from practice essays that did not always speak to the matter at hand. On Nationalism, the best answers were those that were more ambitious in their attempts to draw out what a 'coherent doctrine' might have been. On the French Revolution, all the answers

started sensibly enough from a comparison between Sieyès and Robespierre, but without advancing especially far in their analysis of the concepts of 'nature' and 'artifice'.

POL11: Political Philosophy and the History of Political Thought since c.1890

Examiner: Dr Christopher Brooke

Thirty-five candidates sat this paper. Fifteen ended up with a first-class mark overall; there were nineteen upper seconds, and one lower second. For over forty per cent of candidates to receive a first-class mark is obviously a strikingly high proportion, but this owes to the excellent quality of the work by Politics candidates, who in general earned higher marks than those sitting the paper as part of the Historical Tripos.

There were eleven answers on environmental political thought, which is now firmly established as a mainstream topic on this syllabus, in a way that it has perhaps not been so much in earlier years. There were also eleven on Rawls, nine on the critics of totalitarianism and on Hayek, eight on Nietzsche, seven on feminism, and six on Weimar political thought. Six questions attracted no answers—on Revisionism, Weber (!), Marxism at the time of the First World War, the American theorists of welfare and democracy, political obligation, and egalitarianism.

One general reflection is that candidates were more confident writing about other people's ideas than they were at grappling with problems in political theory in a less mediated way. It was striking, for example, that the most popular questions in Section B were on environmentalism and feminism, where candidates typically organised a range of views found in the literature they had studied; whereas those questions that pushed them to state and defend their own normative arguments on questions in political philosophy were much less popular. On the one hand, if it is the case that Cambridge final-year Politics students are sticking to what they are more comfortable doing, the sheer quality of their answers doesn't suggest that they are straightforwardly making a mistake; but on the other hand, this is something of a shame for a paper that ought to be as much about philosophy as the history of ideas, and candidates heading into this paper do need to be aware that if they stick their necks out and write high-quality political theory answers, the Examiners will reward them for doing this.

In Section A, answers on Nietzsche were stronger to the extent that candidates acknowledged that his thinking about the democratisation of Europe was more complicated than positioning him either For or (more commonly) Against. The question on Lukács demanded some knowledge of the chronology of his political commitments, which candidates were pleasingly able to supply. Essays on imperialism too often read like introductory surveys of the key ideas, and a tougher-minded engagement with Hobson and Lenin in particular would have been welcome. The question on Weimar political thought was generally handled more effectively by candidates who discussed both Kelsen and the broader constitutional debate, rather than simply treating this as an essay on Carl Schmitt. Stronger essays on the anti-totalitarians discussed a broader range of the set texts and sought more challenging shared affinities than opposition to, e.g. utopianism or central planning. Weaker essays on Hayek lent a bit too hard on his 1970s support for General Pinochet's regime; stronger essays dealt more confidently with the sweep of his political thinking across the long arc of his writing career. It was

refreshing to see some of the essays on Rawls drawing on the most recent research from scholars such as Katrina Forrester or Kenzie Bok, in addition to the more established literature.

In Section B, the question on political virtues was sometimes handled awkwardly by candidates who were a bit too quick to try to transform it into an essay on dirty hands or political realism and didn't have enough to say about specific virtues. Answers on feminism covered a wide range of authors (MacKinnon, Nussbaum, Butler, Chambers, Okin, Crenshaw, Pateman, etc.), with the stronger essays being those that were willing to grapple with the general problem raised by the question rather than just saying, for example, well here's someone who valorises the state, and here's someone else who tries to undermine it. Good answers on global justice question were those that went beyond documenting the ways in which some participants in the debate were "statists" whereas others were "cosmopolitans" to engage with the more challenging issue about the state that the question posed. And the stronger answers on environmental political theory offered a focused answer to the question, rather than a more leisurely or historical survey of the subfield.

POL12: The Politics of the Middle East

Examiners: Dr Devon Curtis and Dr Faiz Sheikh

There were 19 candidates who took this paper by examination, and 16 by long essay. Out of the candidates taking the paper by examination, five candidates received first class marks, one candidate received a 2.2, and the other candidates received marks of 2.1.

There were some very good scripts. Many candidates were good at developing their own arguments, and providing evidence for the claims they were making. We were impressed by the range of examples in many exam scripts. The stronger scripts took time to justify their choice of factors/cases. Some questions were more popular than others, with ten candidates answering a question on the Gulf Cooperation Council (Q6) and ten candidates answering a question on the state and democracy in Iraq (Q11). All other questions were attempted by at least two candidates, except Q4, which was not chosen by any candidate.

Weaker answers received low 2.1 or 2.2 scores. Often these did not develop a clear argument, or did not use examples to support the main points being made. Sometimes these answers were imprecise or contained material that was superfluous or incorrect. Weaker answers showed an over-reliance on sweeping claims about the international environment (US does or does not want to engage, Russia as a spoiler), taken as self-evident, while avoiding engagement with domestic or regional factors.

The best scripts were notable for their ability to use examples effectively, for their range of references and for their ability to provide critical reflection on aspects of the politics of the Middle East.

POL13: The Politics of Europe

Examiner: Dr Peter Sloman

44 students took POL13 in 2018/19, up from 33 in 2017/18 – an encouraging sign of growing interest in British and European politics. One candidate (who had intermitted in 2017/18)

was allowed to take the paper by long essay according to the previous year's regulations; the remaining 43 took the paper by written exam. 30 of the students came from the HSPS Politics and International Relations track, 6 from other tracks within HSPS, and 8 from the Economics Tripos. As in 2017/18, the exam paper was undivided, so students could choose to specialize in British Politics (24 students) or the Politics of the European Union (15 students) or to answer questions from both parts of the paper (4 students).

The standard of the written exam scripts was high this year, and there were signs that a growing proportion of students had engaged deeply with the scholarly literature and the analytical questions which this paper poses. The exam produced 11 first-class marks (up from 4 firsts from 24 scripts in 2017/18), 30 upper seconds, and 2 lower seconds. A small number of borderline cases were reviewed and confirmed by the external examiners. The questions on Thatcherism and New Labour were the most popular questions on the paper, with 16 answers each, followed by Brexit and the 1945-64 period (10 answers each), the 2017 general election, prime ministerial power, UK immigration policy, EU enlargement, and the role of member states in the European integration process (8 answers each). Some candidates' scripts were held back by a tendency to reproduce material from supervision essays in response to apparently familiar questions without adequately considering what the question was really asking.

British Politics

1. (10 answers – 7 on the 1945-51 Labour government and 3 on the 1951-64 Conservative governments.) The question asked candidates to evaluate how far the policies of the post-war Labour and Conservative governments were shaped by ideology. The best answers deployed an impressive array of detail to support their answers, whereas the worst defaulted to a stock discussion of the 'post-war consensus' debate without engaging directly with the question. Many candidates emphasized the extent to which policy was shaped by practical and electoral constraints (e.g. the need to win doctors' support for the new NHS) and were less impressed by the importance of ideological commitments.
2. (5 answers.) This was not a particularly popular question, but those candidates who answered it acquitted themselves reasonably well, with some impressive knowledge of the details of incomes policy and the ways in which economic and sociological changes shaped the context of trade union bargaining during the 1960s and 1970s.
3. (16 answers.) This question was relatively well-answered, and the scripts showed that students have been reading widely and engaging thoughtfully with the growing literature on Thatcherism. Most candidates emphasized Margaret Thatcher's importance in giving ideological definition to 1970s Conservatism and instilling a sense of moral purpose, though some answers were held back by a failure to integrate disparate points into a coherent argument, or to focus sharply enough on Mrs Thatcher's own significance.
4. (16 answers.) This was an extremely popular question, and most candidates argued persuasively that New Labour's policies combined elements of neoliberalism (particularly in the economic sphere) with a more conventionally social democratic agenda in the sphere of public services and welfare policy. The best answers deftly explored the ways in which

perceived electoral imperatives and global economic trends constrained Tony Blair and Gordon Brown's policy choices, and the influence of neoliberal ideas on social policy. Weaker candidates treated the question as an invitation to reproduce supervision essays and rehearse the debates in the literature.

5. (8 answers.) The most effective answers to this question showed an awareness of recent trends in the electoral studies literature, and analysed prevailing assumptions (such as the importance of competence and leadership ratings) in the light of evidence from the 2017 general election. Weaker candidates relied on anecdotal evidence and generalizations about the election campaign, or spent too much time giving chapter and verse on competing theories of voting.

6. (8 answers.) This was generally quite well answered with reference to the power resources and strategies of a range of recent Prime Ministers. Practically all candidates looked at Tony Blair and David Cameron, and some drew Margaret Thatcher, John Major, and Theresa May (though, oddly, not Gordon Brown) into the analysis. The literature was mostly deployed effectively, though some candidates could have offered a more precise account of the factors which shaped variation between prime ministers.

7. (4 answers.) This was not a popular question, but those candidates who did tackle it knew quite a lot about Parliament and were able to offer a persuasive analysis of how parliamentary power varies according to circumstances.

8. (3 answers.) Only three answers on devolution this year, which were quite thoughtful but showed a tendency to lapse into historical narrative.

9. (8 answers.) A popular and mostly well-answered question, though many candidates focussed on the backlash which post-war immigration generated and the problems this caused for Labour and the Conservatives. This is perhaps understandable in the light of the contemporary debate over EU migration, but it was disappointing that candidates did not have more to say about the political activities of Commonwealth immigrants themselves.

10. (2 answers.)

The Politics of the European Union

11. (5 answers.) The exam question was relatively similar to a supervision question (on the role of prosperity and security in the development of the three founding Communities in the 1950s), but asked specifically about the role of economics, and required candidates to look at the contemporary integration process as well as the early history of the EEC. Most candidates were able to deploy supervision material to produce a competent answer, but only one or two managed to unpack exactly how economic motives interacted with other factors and to give a convincing account of how this relationship has changed over time.

12. (8 answers.) A popular and generally well-answered question. The best candidates thought hard about what it might mean for member states to supplant the European Commission as the 'motor of integration' (as opposed to simply setting the framework in

which it operates) and about the ways in which the European Council and Parliament have come to shape the integration process.

13. (5 answers.) The best candidates made sustained comparisons between particular policy areas (e.g. EMU and immigration policy), though they rarely broadened the discussion out to show how these case studies can help explain variations in integration more generally.

14. (4 answers.) Generally well-answered, especially where candidates were able to deploy empirical detail about changes in turnout and voting behaviour in European Parliament elections since 1979 to assess Karlheinz Reif's thesis. Weaker answers veered into normative arguments about the EU's perceived democratic deficit and the difficulty of constructing a common demos.

15. (1 answer.)

16. (3 answers.) The answers to this question were not bad, but some candidates tried to use it as a peg to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the European project in general without engaging with the specifics of treaty reforms.

17. (10 answers – 6 answers for part (a) and 4 for part (b).) This was generally very well-answered, with plenty of detail on enlargement and the EU's neighbourhood policy (of which candidates tended to be quite critical).

18. (4 answers.) Most candidates who tackled this question recognized the Jean Monnet quote and focussed on a small number of recent crises. This was fine, provided they showed why they had chosen these case studies and what their implications were for our larger understanding of the EU's development.

19. (10 answers.) A popular question on Brexit, which was taught from the perspective of the EU module in this paper. The best candidates thought hard about the relationship between structure and contingency in the UK's relationship with the EU, but too many fell into the trap of historical narrative – recounting the events leading up to the 2016 referendum without clearly interrogating the concept of 'inevitability'.

POL14: US Foreign Policy

Examiner: Professor Brendan Simms

This year, 32 students took this paper on US foreign policy. There was a certain amount of bunching around popular topics like the Middle East and the United Nations. It was a bit disappointing that so few tackled anything on a pre-1900 period. This was a pity, as some of the answers on later periods were based on problematic assumptions about what had gone before (e.g. the supposed lack of interest of the founders in foreign policy). That said, the scripts were generally well organised, with candidates following a clear structure, offering plenty of engagement with theoretical debates and literature. Usually, statements were backed up with specific examples and there was relatively little waffling.

Pol 15: The Politics of Africa**Examiner: Dr Adam branch**

The marks ranged from a high of 73 to a low of 47 (which was a significant outlier). There was a dramatic imbalance between the numbers of students taking the 3-hour exam (3) and those taking the long essays (13). On the exams, the students showed a good combination of detailed knowledge about specific cases and a solid grasp of the broader debates and themes. The essays comprised a considerable range of approaches and focuses, with the best drawing on an array of sources and grappling with specific debates in the literature. I would hope that the students who are writing the long essays would be attending all the lectures, since the breadth of understanding evidenced by some of the long essays was a real strength.

POL16: Law of Peace: The Law of Emerging International Constitutional Order**Examiner: Prof. Marc Weller**

This was the first time an undergraduate course on international law was offered. The course is demanding as it requires the application of a method of understanding and analysis that is different from all other courses. Moreover, for a distinction, an element of critical understanding or original or sophisticated argument is required.

The candidates were given a choice from among five questions, three of which were in the manner of a case analysis, with two essay options. While there had been some anxiety about the format of case analyses, in fact only one candidate selected the essay option, addressing a broad, conceptual question concerning an emerging international constitutional order. In fact, that essay received the lowest mark, missing out on many of the contested issues that could or should have been raised.

Question 1, offering a case relating to a difficult claim to self-determination not dissimilar to the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan proved the most popular. Marks on this question ranged broadly, from a lowish 62 to a splendid 73, with many higher marks among the groups. Most candidates identified the underlying tension between self-determination and territorial integrity and often displayed a very advanced knowledge of relevant authorities to address the case and offer critical conclusions.

The second most popular question concerned the use of force in international law. Again, performances ranged fairly widely, although at a somewhat higher level, ranging from 66 to 75 in the marks I awarded. Once again, the level of knowledge and technical ability, along with critical reasoning was impressive.

The third case study question, concerning sources doctrine as applies to the law of the sea, only attracted one candidate who scored well with a mark of 71. No candidate attempted the remaining, fifth essay question addressing the UN Security Council and the question of 'might vs right'. The lack of takers for this question is in its own way impressive. The issue

could have offered an easy 'refuge' for those who had not become comfortable with the law-based approach taken in the course (and was intended as such), allowing for a more conventional, IR approach had that been wished.

Overall, the marks in this course, also as reflected in the assessment of the co-examiner, a slightly higher than in some other offerings when considering the average marks. This is entirely warranted, given the difficulties posed by a new subject, its own, distinct method, and the critical level of engagement demanded throughout the teaching. The work-load was admittedly high, and the candidates are to be commended for their strong performance. This is perhaps also to be explained by the fact that the comparatively small number of participants (16 overall) represent a self-selecting group who were willing to risk participation in this venture which was known to be difficult. Moreover, the excellent provision for supervisions by Dr Retter and Ms v Santen has been much noted by the candidates.

POL 17: Politics of Asia
Examiner: Dr Iza Hussin

There were 7 exam candidates for POL17. Two candidates received agreed first-class marks, two candidates received agreed high second-class marks, and three candidates received agreed low second-class marks. The agreed marks ranged between 74 and 63.

All exam scripts showed evidence of sustained engagement across the year's topics, wide reading and careful consideration of the broader issues in Asian and comparative politics that the course seeks to cover. Candidates answered nine of the twelve possible questions, with four candidates answering Q2 and Q9, three candidates answering Q3 and Q5, two candidates answering Q1, Q6, Q10, and one student answering Q11.

The best answers provided a clear argument in response to the question, supported that argument with reference to a number of empirical cases, and reflected upon the implications of this data for the larger concepts in play in the question. The very best of these answers were original, confidently argued, and well structured, with some reference to the debates among scholars of comparative and Asian politics. The weaker range of answers either provided empirical material without clear argument or analysis, or analysis unsupported by detailed empirical evidence from the relevant countries. A number of the weaker essays did not engage with the key terms of the questions in a sufficiently explicit manner.

Candidates who took time to construct a clearly organised answer, articulating their use of evidence in terms of their major arguments, consistently did well.

POL18: Politics and Gender

Examiner: Dr Jude Browne

25 students sat the exam for POL 18, Politics and Gender. 13 were from the Politics and IR track, 7 from Politics/SocAnth, and 5 from Politics/Soc. All students answered three questions in a three-hour exam, as was the only option for this paper. The average mark was 67.3, reflecting the overall high quality of responses. Eight students gained average marks of 70 or over for a first class, with the remaining students 17 students all averaging between 60 and 69 for a 2.1. The top average mark was a 75 and the lowest a 60.

There were 11 questions overall. The most popular question was #9 on war and masculinity, with 21 students attempting this question. Stronger answers to this question were able to provide a sophisticated analysis of relevant questions and involved while providing examples beyond those mentioned in lectures. The next most popular question was #4 on whether gender justice should be framed in terms of rights, with 12 students attempting. Stronger answers were able to link theory and examples, while weaker answers suffered from too many generalities and assertions without sufficient justification. Question #2 on gender and representation was also popular with 11 attempts. As with most questions, the stronger answers went beyond material discussed in lectures and hand-outs while delivering clear arguments displaying a range of examples for evidence. Questions #1 and #11 only had one taker. Overall, it was encouraging to see students engage with a range of different theories and perspectives on gender/sexuality as well as use many examples, often outside of those discussed in lectures, as well as to see creative responses to the specifics of the questions developed as arguments. Some of the weaker arguments relied too heavily on assertion of preferred perspectives without enough critical analysis or reflection on the limitations of perspectives adopted.

POL19: The Politics of the International Economy

Examiner: Dr Jeremy Green

Only fifteen candidates sat the exam this year. The answers were generally of a very high quality. Five candidates achieved 1st class grades on the paper, nine achieved a 2:1, and only one candidate received a 2:2. Answers were tightly clustered around a narrow range of the questions in the exam script. For example, eleven students answered the question on the breakdown of Bretton Woods, ten answered the question on the liberal international order, and seven answered the question on crises and contemporary capitalism, while conversely, no candidate answered the questions on the inter-war economy or climate change.

The strongest answers developed clear and insightful arguments and adopted a consistently analytical approach that was carefully supported with evidence. Some of the arguments provided an accurate engagement with relevant literature and empirical content but provided less insight and originality in answering questions. Some of the weaker answers were in response to question 12, on the liberal international order, and either didn't sufficiently define the liberal order or rather took its existence for granted rather than reflecting critically on its scope and content. Overall, this was a really strong set of candidates that provided well informed and well-argued answers, demonstrating a good degree of learning during the paper.

POL20: The politics of the future, 1880-2080
Examiner: Dr Christopher Brooke

Twelve candidates took this paper, which was examined, as previously, through two long essays. The titles were circulated as part of the paper guide, with six choices for each of the first and second essays. Of the twelve questions, therefore, only one was passed over entirely—the question on Cold War futurology. The questions on H. G. Wells, on empire and on imagining future war before 1914, and on Judith Shklar each attracted only one answer. The most popular question was on Margaret Atwood's concept of "ustopia" with five answers, with the others all attracting either two or three.

The marks were high, with an average of over 69. This is outside the Departmental marking norms for Part II papers, so it is worth noting that both markers were in agreement that this was generally high quality work: there was no disagreement of more than six points on any individual essay mark, and the median difference between the two markers' marks across all essays was only two. All in all, taking both essays together, the Examiners awarded five first-class marks and seven upper-second class marks for the paper, with all marks falling in the range 66-74.

The combination of both having no essay title attempted by more than a handful of candidates together with the generally high marks means that it is difficult to provide focused critical comments about particular questions. But the usual qualities that make for good essays were certainly rewarded by the markers: clear answers, independent argument, conceptual sophistication, solid structure, and so on.

POL21: China in the International Order
Examiner: Dr KC Lin

The nineteen exam takers as a whole performed admirably well for a course that covers historical and contemporary issues, and spans regional and theoretical perspectives. Students averaged 66.96 on their final exam, which falls within the range of expected average for HSPS Part II modules. The highest mark was 75; lowest was 56. Five students received First Class marks. Students in the 2.1 cohort demonstrated strong empirical knowledge and aptitude in reference to theories and authors. The main issue for them was incomplete arguments, neglecting to cover important aspects of the topic raised in lectures. Two questions out of twelve were answered by a majority of students, and two received no response, other responses reflected the diverse interests of students in the topics and approaches in the syllabus.