

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ADVANCED LEVEL

AIMS

This syllabus is designed to stimulate candidates' interest in, and enthusiasm for the study of political science, and more importantly, to promote candidates' social awareness and responsible citizenship. After studying this course, candidates should be able to:

- (1) understand a number of salient concepts in the political science vocabulary;
- (2) analyse the relationship between the individual and the state;
- (3) apply the various concepts and theories learnt in (1) and (2) above to the understanding of Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States of America (USA);
- (4) examine the government and politics of Hong Kong;
- (5) discuss the underlying philosophies, institutions, and the operation of the government and politics of the PRC and the USA;
- (6) acquire a sense of social awareness and civic responsibility through an understanding of the functioning of society and the influences acting upon it;
- (7) develop a broader outlook on the world through an appreciation of different political systems and the relationship between individuals and the state; and
- (8) develop the attitudes that are conducive to their participation in political and community affairs as active and responsible citizens.

THE EXAMINATION

There will be two equally weighted papers, each of three-hour duration.

Paper 1 (50% of subject marks) will consist of two sections.

Section A (30% of paper marks) : Questions will be set on the general survey of basic concepts. Five short-answer questions will be set, and candidates are required to answer any three.

Section B (70% of paper marks) : Questions will be set on the government and politics of Hong Kong.

Part I (50% of paper marks) will consist of six essay questions. Candidates are required to answer any two.

Part II (20% of paper marks) will consist of one compulsory data-response question.

Note : The term 'data' in the data-response question is to be interpreted in the broadest possible sense to mean any type of information which may be in many different formats including, for example,

- articles, news items, reports, memos, letters, advertisements;
- written dialogue;
- tables, charts, graphs, maps;
- cartoons, pictures, illustrations.

Paper 2 (50% of subject marks) will consist of two sections.

Candidates are required to answer four questions altogether, choose two questions from Section A, and two questions from Section B.

Section A (50% of paper marks) : Six questions will be set on the government and politics of the PRC.

Section B (50% of paper marks) : Six questions will be set on the government and politics of the USA.

THE SYLLABUS

PAPER 1

SYLLABUS CONTENT

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Section A

A general survey of the following basic concepts:
state, sovereignty, constitutionalism, democracy, nationalism, legitimacy, power and authority.

These concepts enable candidates to have the basic analytical framework for an understanding of political science. Candidates should be able to understand and apply these concepts in the study of this subject. For the concept of democracy, candidates should have an understanding of: the underlying assumptions of, and the prerequisites for, democracy; its relationship with freedom; the concepts of liberal democracy and socialist democracy; and the problems of democracy. Candidates are also expected to be aware of the general features of the parliamentary and presidential systems of democracy in relation to 'separation of powers' and 'checks and balances'.

Section B

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The government and politics of Hong Kong

The relationship between the Central Authorities of the PRC and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government; the Basic Law, the executive, legislature and judiciary; the role of the bureaucracy; district organisations; elections, interest groups and political parties; public opinion and the mass media; channels for redressing grievances and the protection of human rights.

Candidates should analyse the relationship between the Central Authorities and the HKSAR Government with reference to the concepts of sovereignty, constitutionalism, legitimacy, and nationalism. Candidates are also expected to have a general knowledge of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the principle of 'one country, two systems' and the Basic Law. Moreover, candidates are required to have an understanding of the political changes of Hong Kong since the promulgation of the Basic Law in 1990.

Candidates are expected to have a knowledge of the political institutions and political process in Hong Kong. They should also have an understanding of the demands made upon, and the responses of, these institutions. Rights and duties of the HKSAR residents should also be analysed. Candidates are also required to examine the ways in which human rights are protected in practice.

PAPER 2

In this paper, candidates are required to have an understanding of the government and politics of the PRC and the USA as examples of two different political systems. These systems should be approached from (a) the philosophical, (b) the institutional and (c) the behavioural perspectives.

Section A : The government and politics of the People's Republic of China (PRC)

1. The Chinese state constitution and state structure; the constitution and structure of the Communist Party of China; the relationship between the party and the state.

Political mobilisation and political participation: elections and voting, mass organisations,

(a) Philosophical perspective

Candidates are expected to understand the basic premises of Marxism (e.g. basic ideas of historical materialism, the distinction between capitalist, socialist and communist stages, and the role of the state). Candidates should also examine the philosophy underlying the development of the

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mass campaigns, public opinions and the mass media.

Chinese socialist system (e.g. democratic centralism, the 'mass line', the 'Four Basic Principles' and socialism with Chinese characteristics).

(b) Institutional perspective

Candidates should understand the roles and functions of the ruling party, the legislature, the executive, the bureaucracy and the judiciary. The political influence of the People's Liberation Army should also be studied.

(c) Behavioural perspective

(i) This should cover the interlocking power relationship between the party and the state. Candidates should also recognise the existence and importance of the party's control of leadership selection of the PRC.

(ii) Candidates should understand the relationship between the individual and the state.

2. Issues in the contemporary politics of the PRC: political, administrative and economic reforms; the PRC's unification policy towards Taiwan.

Candidates should have an understanding of the processes and consequences of the political, administrative and economic reforms in the PRC since 1978. They are also expected to examine the PRC's unification policy towards Taiwan and its response to this policy.

In studying this section, a brief survey of the political development in the PRC since 1949 would be helpful.

Section B : The government and politics of the United States of America (USA)

The US Constitution; the concept of federalism; the roles and functions of the President, the US Congress, the judiciary and the federal bureaucracy.

(a) Philosophical perspective

Candidates are expected to understand the underlying rationale of the US

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Political participation: political parties, elections and interest groups, public opinion and the mass media.

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Constitution.

(b) Institutional perspective

Candidates should understand the principles of 'separation of powers' and 'checks and balances' as well as the roles and functions of institutional arrangements in the US political system.

(c) Behavioural perspective

(i) This should cover the actual operation of 'separation of powers' and 'checks and balances' in the US political system.

(ii) Emphasis should be placed on the relationship between the individual and the state, the demands upon, and the response of, the state.