

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AIMS

1. To develop knowledge and understanding of society of Hong Kong, the political and administrative institutions of Hong Kong, as well as the distribution of power among these institutions.
2. To develop understanding of some of the political concepts related to the government and public affairs of Hong Kong.
3. To develop understanding of the relationship between the Central Authorities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and the political system of the PRC.
4. To develop the skills necessary for the study and intelligent discussion of issues of current interest and importance.
5. To promote candidates' social awareness and responsible citizenship.

THE EXAMINATION

There will be two papers.

Paper 1 (1½ hours) will consist of structured/essay questions. Candidates will be required to answer 3 out of 5 questions. This paper will carry 60% of the subject marks.

[Note : The maximum paper mark is 99. Each question carries 33 marks, of which 30 marks will be awarded for subject content, and 3 marks will be awarded for effective communication.]

Paper 2 (1 hour) will consist of multiple choice questions, all of which are to be attempted. This paper will carry 40% of the subject marks.

[Note : Only one out of the seven public policy areas in topic 6 (Major Social Issues and Policies) of the syllabus will be required. The area that will be examined each year will be made known to schools when the syllabus handbook is published, about 2½ years before the examination takes place.]

THE SYLLABUS

The Preamble

This syllabus requires candidates to have an understanding of the government and public affairs of Hong Kong. Candidates are expected to apply their knowledge on basic facts and understanding of related concepts to a discussion of the latest concepts, ideas and issues.

SYLLABUS TOPICS

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Resumption of the Exercise of Sovereignty over Hong Kong by the PRC
 - (a) The principle of ‘one country, two systems’

Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong and the autonomy of the HKSAR
 - (b) The Sino-British Joint Declaration
 - (i) a brief understanding of the Sino-British Joint Declaration
 - (ii) the role of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group
 - (c) The Basic Law
 - (i) a brief understanding of the making of the Basic Law
 - (ii) the emphasis lies on the relationship between the Central Authorities of the PRC and the HKSAR

2. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its Political Structure
 - (a) The constitutional document of the HKSAR
 - (i) the meaning and purposes of a constitution
 - (ii) the roles and functions of the Basic Law
 - (iii) the Basic Law and its relationship with the Constitution of the PRC
 - (b) The political structure of the HKSAR
 - (i) the concepts of state, government, executive, legislature and judiciary
 - (ii) the Chief Executive: selection, power and roles, and the Executive Council
 - (iii) the Legislative Council: formation, structure, functions, power and its relationship with the Chief Executive and the Executive Council
 - (iv) the executive authorities

SYLLABUS TOPICS

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- (v) district organisations: formation, structure, functions and power of the district organisations, and their mutual relationship, e.g. District Councils, the Heung Yee Kuk and other communal organisations
- [N.B. Candidates are expected to analyse and evaluate the relationships among the different institutions within the political structure of the HKSAR. (i–v)]
3. Government and the People
- (a) Rights and duties of citizens
- (i) civil rights: the rights necessary for individual freedom
- (ii) political rights: the rights to participate in the exercise of political power
- (iii) social rights: the rights to a minimal economic and social well-being
- (iv) duties
- [N.B. Candidates should be able to apply these concepts to the situation in Hong Kong. (i–iv)]
- (b) Representative governments
- meaning and characteristics of representative governments e.g. the parliamentary system in the United Kingdom and the presidential system in the United States of America
- (c) Elections
- (i) direct and indirect elections and their relative merits
- (ii) conditions of free and fair elections
- (iii) importance of elections to a representative and accountable government
- [N.B. Candidates are also expected to apply these concepts to analyse the Hong Kong situation. (i–iii)]

SYLLABUS TOPICS

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- (d) Representative government and elections in Hong Kong
- (e) Communication, consultation and the redress of grievances in Hong Kong society
- (f) Mass media, public opinion, interest groups and political parties in Hong Kong
4. Law and Justice in Hong Kong
- (a) The rule of law and principles of justice
- (b) Types of courts and their jurisdictions
- (i) the development of representative government in Hong Kong since the 1980s
- (ii) elections in Hong Kong
- (i) the need for communication between government and the people
- (ii) communication as a two-way process: consultation and redress of grievances
- (iii) formal and informal channels of communication and their effectiveness
- (i) the role and influence of the mass media
- (ii) the formation and expression of public opinion
- (iii) the formation and role of interest groups
- (iv) the formation and role of political parties
- [N.B. Candidates should learn to analyse and evaluate information from such sources, to differentiate between fact and opinion and to identify garbling in reporting. (i-iv)]
- (i) the need for law
- (ii) meaning of the rule of law and principles of justice
- (iii) their significance and relation to a liberal democratic government
- (iv) protection of human rights and promotion of justice
- (v) major sources of Hong Kong laws
- (i) law enforcement and interpretation
- (ii) structure of the judiciary
- (iii) civil and criminal jurisdiction of each type of court
- (iv) significance of trial by jury

SYLLABUS TOPICS

EXPLANATORY NOTES

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| | (v) legal aid: the need for legal aid and types of legal aid services available |
| (c) Penal institutions | (i) crime, punishment and reform: their relationship and effects
(ii) correctional services and rehabilitative services |
| 5. Government and the Economy | |
| (a) The role of the Hong Kong government in the economy | (i) the orientation of government economic policy in Hong Kong
(ii) provision of infrastructure
(iii) maintaining stability and encouraging economic growth
(iv) promoting equity, e.g. expenditure on education, housing, medical services and social welfare |
| (b) Public finance in Hong Kong | (i) the making of the budget
(ii) factors affecting the determination of priorities in the allocation of government funds
(iii) major items of government revenue and expenditure
(iv) effects of government revenue and expenditure |
| 6. Major Social Issues and Policies | |
| Detailed analysis of one out of the following seven public policy areas is required: | Candidates are expected to acquire the basic knowledge, and to develop the appropriate skills and attitudes in approaching local social issues: |

SYLLABUS TOPICS

- (a) education
- (b) medical and health
- (c) housing
- (d) environmental protection
- (e) social welfare
- (f) transport
- (g) labour

In 2009 the topic is *medical and health*

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- (i) locating, gathering, organising, analysing and evaluating information
- (ii) evaluating the public policies concerned and suggesting possible alternatives
- (iii) participating effectively and responsibly in social and political processes relating to the social issues and public policies concerned

Framework for approaching social issues:

- (i) identify responsibilities of government
 - major issues and their causes
 - reasons for government's involvement
- (ii) understand the decision-making process
 - major decision-making agencies
 - consultation process
- (iii) describe major current policies and the main agencies implementing such policies
 - agencies implementing policies
 - current policy programmes of the government
- (iv) recognise limitation of resources and conflicting interests among groups and sectors
 - resource limitation but may competing ends
 - demands and expectations from competing groups and sectors
 - setting of priorities

SYLLABUS TOPICS

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- (v) evaluate the major current policies and suggest possible alternatives
 - evaluate the effectiveness of current policy programmes of the government
 - examine the possible consequences of the proposals made by competing groups and sectors on major current issues
 - suggest possible alternatives
 - (vi) participate as a student and a citizen in social and political processes related to the social issues and public policies concerned
 - suggest ways and reasons for participation
 - participate effectively and responsibly
7. The PRC and the HKSAR
- (a) State system of the PRC
 - (i) the Constitution
 - (ii) the National People's Congress
 - (iii) the State Council
 - (iv) the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
 - (b) Organisational system of the Communist Party of China (CPC)
 - (i) the National Congress
 - (ii) the Central Committee
 - (iii) the Political Bureau
 - (c) The relationship between the CPC and the state
 - (i) political and ideological leadership of the party over the government, army and society
 - (ii) their interlocking relationship at different levels
 - (d) Recent developments in China and their impact on the HKSAR
 - The emphasis lies on the major political and economic developments which have significant impact on the HKSAR.