PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	**MSc Social and Political Theory** (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip Social and Political Theory PG Cert Social and Political Theory PG Cert Politics
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
[QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England](#)	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMSSLPOT_C
HECoS Code	100491 101307
Start date of programme	October 1976
Date of programme approval	Summer 1976
Date of last programme amendment approval	November 2022
Valid for academic entry year	2023-24
Date of last revision to document	12/08/2022

Admissions requirements

A second class honours degree (2:2 or above) in a related area, or relevant experience combined with an adequate academic background (subject to interview).

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

This course provides the opportunity for students to develop an advanced understanding of key social and political problems of the present through the critical evaluation of central themes and texts in modern social and political theory. It provides a strong foundation for those interested in working in politics broadly conceived (political parties, political administration and institutions, NGOs and international organisations, journalism, activism, etc.) as well as those undertaking an MPhil/PhD related to social and political theory.

It is designed for students who are interested in exploring how theoretical reflection aids in the analysis and explanation of concrete political events and processes. A first degree in the area of political and/ or social science is useful, but the course quite deliberately ranges across ideas and approaches from disciplines such as history, psychology and psychoanalysis, political economy, philosophy, geography, and cultural studies and will appeal to those with experience of these subjects. We are very happy to consider applications from candidates who may not have formally studied politics and social science previously, but have interests in them through their work, political activity, or independent study.

Students study a variety of topics across two key modules (The Political Sociology of the Modern State and Political Theory and Contemporary Politics), that include classical accounts of sovereignty and political legitimacy, rights and political obligation, theories of the modern state and international system, the politics of race and gender, as well as contemporary debates in political theory in areas such as democracy, nationalism, culture and identity, postcolonialism, humanism and humanitarianism. In addition, students can choose from a wide-range of options in politics and from the disciplinary areas noted above. Students also pursue an independent research project, completed at the end of their studies.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	POSO023S7	The Political Sociology of the Modern State	30	Compulsory	T1
7	POSO022S7	Political Theory and Contemporary Politics	30	Core	T2
7		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Dissertation	60	Core	3
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	POSO023S7	The Political Sociology of the Modern State	30	Compulsory	T1
7		Option	30	Option	T2 or 3

Year 2						
7	POSO022S7	Political Theory and Contemporary Politics	30	Core	T2	
7		Option	30	Option	T1	
7		Dissertation	60	Core	3*	
Indicative Politics Options						
7	POSO007S7	International Political Economy	30	Option	T2	
7	POSO020S7	Modern British Politics	30	Option	T1	
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests Ideas Institutions	30	Option	T2	
7	POSO035S7	War Politics and Society	30	Option	T2	
7	POSO044S7	Nationalism and Ethno-Religious Conflict	30	Option	T2	
7	POSO082S7	Global Politics Governance and Security	30	Option	T1	
7	SSPO120S7	Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Option	T3	
7	SSPO121S7	The Geopolitics of Environment and Resources	30	Option	T1	
7	SSPO144S7	Food Politics and Society (level 7)	30	Option	T1	
7	SSPO235H7	Governing Public Services	15	Option	T1	
7	SSPO236H7	The Political Economy of the Public Sector	15	Option	T2	
7	SSPO263S7	Investigating the Social World	30	Option	T2	
7	SSPO266S7	European and International Public Policy	30	Option	T1	
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communication and Citizen Engagement in a Digital World	30	Option	T1	
7	SSPO239H7	Introduction to Quantitative Social Research	15	Option	T1	
7	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R	15	Option	T2	
7	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	15	Option	T3	
7	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15	Option	T1	
7	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15	Option	T2	
	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15	Option	T3	

*In term 3 of year 1, part-time students undertake initial preparatory work for their dissertation which is completed at the end of the second year.

A 30 credit option can be taken from the wider college, subject to any disciplinary restrictions.

Core: *Module must be taken and passed by student*
Compulsory: *Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)*
Option: *Student can choose to take this module*

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.:

Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures (pre-recorded) and seminars. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will mainly be through essays and online examinations (usually completed at home or in a workspace in college), but may also involve short written exercises, quizzes and multiple-choice questionnaires, practical assessments, case studies, or problems to solve.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- undertake critical and well-informed analyses of social and political theories
- apply theoretical approaches to a range of important and topical social and political issues
- employ the analytical, evaluative and critical skills developed in addressing problems presented in other academic and non-academic work settings
- demonstrate the ability to conduct an independent research project
- obtain and analyse information from a wide array of sources.

Careers and further study

You will find Social and Political Theory graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- research positions in universities and other public and private research bodies;
- teaching in higher, further, and secondary education;
- jobs in central and local government, trades unions, political parties, NGOs and international organisations;
- (political) journalism
- political/ civic activism
- political consultancy

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on the careers pages of our website.

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its Common Award Scheme Regulations and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.