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Political Thought

Standard level

May 2016 papers 1 and 2

(No specimen papers were produced for the new Political Thought course for first examination in 2017, since the format of the examinations did not change in the subject review. The May 2016 papers can be used as specimen papers)

For first examinations in 2017

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Political thought
Standard level
Paper 1

Friday 29 April 2016 (morning)

1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the sources and then answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this paper is **[30 marks]**.

Read the sources and then answer **all** of the questions that follow:

Source A *On Liberty* by Mill (1859)

In politics, again, it is almost a commonplace that a party of order or stability and a party of progress or reform are both necessary elements of a healthy state of political life, until one or the other shall have so enlarged its mental grasp as to be a party equally of order and of progress, knowing and distinguishing what is fit to be preserved and what ought to be swept away. Each of these modes of thinking derives its utility from the deficiencies of the other; but it is in a great measure the opposition of the other that keeps each within the limits of reason and sanity. [...] Truth, in the great practical concerns of life, is so much a question of the reconciling and combining of opposites that very few have minds sufficiently capacious and impartial to make the adjustment with an approach to correctness, and it has to be made by the rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners. **On any of the great open questions just enumerated, if either of the two opinions has a better claim than the other, not merely to be tolerated, but to be encouraged and countenanced, it is the one which happens at the particular time and place to be in a minority.** [...] When there are persons to be found who form an exception to the apparent unanimity of the world on any subject, even if the world is in the right, it is always probable that dissentients [dissenters] have something worth hearing to say for themselves, and that truth would lose something by their silence.

Source B *Perils of the Marxist State* by Bakunin (translated into English, 1910)

The State is the government from above downwards, by a minority, of an immense mass of men, extremely varied in their social positions, occupations, interests and aspirations. The ruling minority, even if it were elected a thousand times by universal suffrage and supervised in its acts by popular institutions, could not possibly – unless it were endowed with the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence credited by the theologians to God – understand and anticipate the needs or satisfy with an even justice the legitimate and pressing interests of everyone. [...] In any case, like the Church, the State is by its very nature a great sacrificer of living men. It is itself an arbitrary being, in whose heart all the positive, living, individual as well as local interests of the people come together, do battle and destroy each other, to become absorbed into that abstraction called the Common interest, the *public good*, the *public safety* and where all individual wills cancel each other out in that further abstraction which is called the *will of the people*. **In fact, this so-called will of the people is never anything other than the sacrifice and negation of all those actual and individual wills, in the same way as the so-called public good is merely the sacrifice of their interests.** But for such an omnivorous abstraction to impose itself on millions of men, it must be represented and supported by some actual being, some living force. And this being, this force – they have always existed in the Church as the clergy, and in the State as the ruling or governing class.

Source C *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels (1848)

We have seen [...] that the first step in the revolution of the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class to win the battle of democracy. The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, *ie* of the proletariat organised as the ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible. Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production.

Source D *Reflections on the Revolution in France* by Burke (1790)

Rage and frenzy will pull down more in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in a hundred years. [...] At once to preserve and to reform is quite another thing. When the useful parts of an old establishment are kept, and what is superadded is to be fitted to what is retained, a vigorous mind, steady, persevering attention, various powers of comparison and combination, and the resources of an understanding fruitful in expedients are to be exercised. [...] But you might object [...] “Such a mode of reforming might, possibly, take up many years”. Without question it might; and it ought.

1. **Source A** *On Liberty* by Mill (1859)

Explain the meaning and significance of:

“On any of the great open questions just enumerated, if either of the two opinions has a better claim than the other, not merely to be tolerated, but to be encouraged and countenanced, it is the one which happens at the particular time and place to be in a minority.”

[10]

2. **Source B** *Perils of the Marxist State* by Bakunin (translated into English, 1910)

Explain the meaning and significance of:

“In fact, this so-called will of the people is never anything other than the sacrifice and negation of all those actual and individual wills, in the same way as the so-called public good is merely the sacrifice of their interests.”

[10]

3. **Source C** *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels (1848) and **Source D** *Reflections on the Revolution in France* by Burke (1790)

Using the material in sources C and D **and** your own knowledge, compare and contrast the views held by Marx/Engels and Burke on revolutionary change.

[10]

Markscheme

May 2016

Political thought

Standard level

Paper 1

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This markscheme is indicative only. It is intended as a general guide, and is not prescriptive. Credit should be given for alternative approaches and insightful material not identified in this document, provided that such material addresses the question.

As in previous years, questions 1 and 2 are marked using the same set of markbands, and question 3 is marked using a separate set. Examiners must continue to refer to the markbands, as well as to the indicative content.

Markbands for questions 1 and 2

Marks	Level descriptor
0	If the answer does not achieve the standard described in markband 1–2, 0 should be recorded.
1–2	There is only limited understanding of the meaning of the passage and no attempt to address its wider significance.
3–4	There is a satisfactory understanding of the meaning of the passage and some attempt to comment on its significance.
5–6	There is good understanding of the meaning of the passage and a satisfactory explanation of its significance in relation to the rest of the source.
7–8	There is very good understanding of the meaning of the passage. The wider significance is developed effectively in relation to the rest of the source and the general ideas of the thinker.
9–10	There is excellent understanding of the meaning of the passage. The wider significance is developed effectively and evaluated critically in relation to the rest of the source and the general ideas of the thinker.

1. Source A *On Liberty* by Mill (1859)

Explain the meaning and significance of:

“On any of the great open questions just enumerated, if either of the two opinions has a better claim than the other, not merely to be tolerated, but to be encouraged and countenanced, it is the one which happens at the particular time and place to be in the minority.”

[10]

Expect candidates to recognise that Mill’s observation concerning the importance of not just tolerating but actively encouraging “minority views” takes us to the heart of his views concerning the importance of free speech, and open debate. Truth can only be approached through the free expression of all opinions and the suppression of minority views however unpopular is a mistake. Minority opinions may be right and if not, the contest can only strengthen and validate the views of the majority.

Candidates who make this point with some relevant elaboration but go no further are unlikely to exceed markband [3–4].

Marks awarded in higher markbands will depend on the degree of knowledge demonstrated and the level of relevant elaboration. Expect references in the higher mark-bands to *inter alia* Mill’s belief in the social value of eccentricity and individualism as a force for progress and social development on both the personal and social level.

Candidates who explore this territory whilst maintaining a focus on the question should score better than those who drift into a general account of Mill’s philosophy without explicit links to the question. Particularly reward candidates who recognise and underline the *moral* dimension to Mill’s tutorial liberalism – rationality and choice are engines of personal growth, development and autonomy.

2. Source B *Perils of the Marxist State* by Bakunin (translated into English in 1910)

Explain the meaning and significance of:

“In fact, this so-called will of the people is never anything other than the sacrifice and negation of all those actual and individual wills, in the same way as the so-called public good is merely the sacrifice of their interests.”

[10]

Expect candidates to recognise that Bakunin’s observation sums up the anarchist view that all governmental authority – even that which purports to be “democratic” – is based on violence and suppression.

Candidates who make this point with some relevant elaboration but go no further are unlikely to exceed the lower end of markband [3–4].

Marks awarded in higher markbands will depend on the degree of knowledge demonstrated and the level of relevant elaboration. Expect references in the higher mark-bands to *inter alia* the notion that all authority in society as presently constituted crushes individuality, that the state serves other interests than those of “the people”, that it takes decisions on their behalf which they should be taking for themselves and that even a democratic state is a violent sham promoting itself around a conjuring trick – the notion of the “common good”.

Candidates who explore this territory whilst maintaining a focus on the question should score better than those who drift into a general account of anarchist philosophy without explicit links to the question. Particularly reward candidates who apply this analysis not only to the capitalist but also

the Marxist state (the piece is entitled ‘The Perils of the Marxist State’) which of course purports to be the ultimate expression of the “will of the people”.

Markbands for question 3

Marks	Level descriptor
0	If the answer does not achieve the standard described in markband 1–2, 0 should be recorded.
1–2	There is only limited understanding of the question and no attempt to compare and contrast the sources.
3–4	There is a satisfactory understanding of the question but little attempt to organise the answer in a compare and contrast framework.
5–6	There is good understanding of the question and some reference to the sources and own knowledge. A satisfactory attempt is made to organise the answer in a compare and contrast framework.
7–8	There is very good understanding of the question with good reference to the sources and own knowledge. The answer is clearly organised in a compare and contrast framework.
9–10	There is excellent understanding of the question with thorough reference to the sources and own knowledge. There is a very clear point-by-point organisation of the answer in a compare and contrast framework.

3. Source C *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels (1848) and Source D *Reflections on the Revolution in France* by Edmund Burke (1790)

Using the material in Source C and D **and** your own knowledge, compare and contrast the views held by Marx/Engels and Burke on revolutionary change. **[10]**

Progress through the markbands will be governed by the extent to which candidates compare and contrast in a relevant and informed manner. Expect candidates at the lower end of the mark range to make reference to Burke’s defence of the organic state, “traditional” authority and the consequent emphasis on reform and gradual change and to compare this with Marxist ideology which predicts, promotes and advocates revolutionary change.

Expect answers in the higher markbands to develop this comparison with a reference to “rationalism in politics”, comparing Burke’s vision of an organic and spontaneous society – the evolutionary product of history – to the scientific and economic bases of Marxist thought with its emphasis on the dialectic and the unstoppable march of history.

Political thought
Standard level
Paper 2

Friday 29 April 2016 (morning)

1 hour 45 minutes

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: answer the question.
- Section B: answer one question.
- The maximum mark for this paper is **[40 marks]**.

Section A

Read the sources and then answer the question that follows:

Source A

The exercise of justice is only possible within the framework of established institutions which command respect. [...] A general piety towards the established order is required for the exercise of this power, and hence for the just dealings which the citizen expects from it. In return for this expectation of justice, the state expects the allegiance of its citizens: they are constrained in conscience to sanction the most violent and even “unnatural” methods in the suppression of rebellion. The conservative view of law will therefore pay special attention to the constitutional artefact known as “the rule of law”. The rule of law is the sign of a successful constitution – for it is a sign that all exercise of power can be described and criticized in legal terms. Hence it enables the citizen to make a prompt distinction between the authority of the state and the power of some dissentious or rebellious body. It is an essential feature of the conservative state that this “rule of law” should prevail, not because law has an authority greater than the power of the state but because the power of state and the authority of law should be one and the same. [...] In such a way the impatient desire to change the law meeting with frustration, can be turned at once into an attempt to defy it.

[Source: adapted from Roger Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism*, 1980]

Source B

Probably the most important justification of the right to disobey was that offered by Mahatma Gandhi. Although he was leading a campaign to oust the British from India, his theory of *Satyagraha*, “holding on to the truth”, can also justify more limited protest in democratic countries. *Satyagraha* enjoins us to disobey evil laws, as a moral duty. [...] Gandhi offered a political as well as a moral justification for protest. “I wish I could persuade everybody that civil disobedience is the inherent right of every citizen. He does not give it up without ceasing to be a man.” Gandhi, formerly a prosperous lawyer, argued that resisters are “the real constitutionalists” for, in disobeying and accepting punishment, they are, in a sense, *obeying* the law. He recommended that resistance should be active, since passive protest appeared as a sign of weakness; it should be civil not criminal, “sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant” [...] he defined self-government as a state where the whole population had gained the capacity to resist a government abusing its powers. Gandhi’s theory, then, asserts that injustice always justifies resistance, so that political protest is fundamentally moral, and should take place equally in a non-democratic or democratic state.

[Source: adapted from Barbara Goodwin, *Using Political Ideas*, 1982]

- Using information in Sources A and B **and** your own knowledge, examine critically the view that those who resist what they see as “bad laws” are the “real constitutionalists” and that political protest outside the law “is fundamentally moral”.

[20]

Section B

Answer **one** question, making reference to the ideas of political thinkers where appropriate.

2. “Direct democracy is incompatible with representative democracy.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? [20]

 3. Evaluate the claim that because they differ from culture to culture, there are no such things as universal “rights”. [20]

 4. “In the end all forms of equality involve some degree of social engineering, which means that equality of any kind must always be the enemy of liberty.” Discuss. [20]
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Markscheme

May 2016

Political thought

Standard level

Paper 2

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This markscheme is indicative only. It is intended as a general guide, and is not prescriptive. Credit should be given for alternative approaches and insightful material not identified in this document, provided that such material addresses the question.

Relevant references to the ideas of political thinkers should be rewarded as directed in the markbands. References to contemporary events and issues, although not required in the markbands, can be rewarded **if** they are relevant and illustrate or support the answer. Organization and presentation are marked according to the markband descriptors.

All the paper 2 questions are marked using the same set of markbands. Examiners must refer to the markbands, as well as to the indicative content.

Markbands for paper 2

Criterion A: knowledge and understanding

Marks	Level descriptors
0	The candidate has not reached level one.
1–2	There is only limited understanding of the question. Knowledge of thinkers, concepts and issues is limited and not always accurate or relevant.
3–4	There is good understanding of the question. Knowledge of thinkers, concepts and issues is sound and generally accurate and relevant.
5–6	There is excellent understanding of the question. Knowledge of thinkers concepts and issues is sound, comprehensive, accurate and relevant.

Criterion B: analysis and argument

Marks	Level descriptors
0	The candidate has not reached level one.
1–2	Analysis is very limited and there is little evidence of awareness of different ideological perspectives. Points are made in a random fashion without a clear focus or sense of argument.
3–4	Analysis is limited but there is some awareness of different ideological perspectives. Some attempt has been made to structure the answer but there is a tendency to lose the focus on the question.
5–6	Analysis is satisfactory and there is awareness of different ideological perspectives. There is some evidence of critical thinking and an ability to focus on the question.
7–8	Analysis is good and there is an obvious awareness of different ideological perspectives. The ability to evaluate material critically is clearly present and there is a good focus on the question.
9–10	Analysis is excellent and there is a keen awareness of different ideological perspectives. There is a confident ability to evaluate material critically and an excellent focus on the question throughout.

Criterion C: organisation and presentation

Marks	Level descriptors
0	The candidate has not reached level one.
1–2	The answer lacks coherence and clarity. There will be a basic attempt to respond to the question but ideas will not be clearly stated or carried through to a conclusion.
3	The answer will be clear, well-presented and generally consistent.
4	The answer will be very clear and well-presented. It will be distinguished by a high level of fluency, coherence and consistency.

Section A

1. Using information in Sources A and B **and** your own knowledge, examine critically the view that those who resist what they see as “bad laws” are the “real constitutionalists” and that political protest outside the law “is fundamentally moral”. **[20]**

The sources provide an overview of different approaches to protest outside the law, pitting the over-riding importance of the rule of law against the right – or rather, duty in Extract B – of every citizen to protest and resist “bad laws”. Expect candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of these approaches and to be able to recognise, interpret and summarise them. Answers with limited knowledge and understanding are likely to compare and contrast in these simple terms and not to discriminate between violent and non-violent protest or between democratic and non-democratic states (both sets of distinctions are made in the extracts). Answers demonstrating a good or excellent understanding of the question are likely to discuss these distinctions and considerations and to develop an analysis based on them.

Candidates must address the question. Better answers will analyse the possible role and limits of protest as opposed to merely identifying and describing them, or simply listing examples. Analytical answers are likely to try to balance the importance of maintaining the “rule of law” with the right to protest and will probably seek to establish under what conditions protest (peaceful and violent) is legitimate. Within this framework, candidates are expected to address themselves specifically to Gandhi’s claim that protest outside the law should be a regular feature of political life and the first not the last resort of those who perceive the laws to be “bad” (for such is the implication in the extract).

Answers which simply argue that there has to be a “balance” between the rule of law and protest are unlikely to exceed analysis and argument markband **[4–6]**. Higher markbands will usually be reserved for candidates who develop a critical, informed and well-balanced view on the difficulties involved in reconciling the two. A critical evaluation may address a number of core questions such as *inter alia* – what are laws for if they can be challenged on the grounds that they don’t suit this or that group? Is the distinction between violent and non-violent protest always easy to make? What difference (if any) does living in a democratic state make to political protest – both violent and non-violent?

Section B

2. “Direct democracy is incompatible with representative democracy.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

[20]

Expect candidates, as a minimum, to demonstrate a basic understanding of direct and representative democracy and to be able to describe, compare and contrast them. Well-developed answers will display good or excellent knowledge and understanding of these concepts and will describe the typical mechanisms of direct democracy such as *inter alia* referenda, electronic opinion polling and direct engagement versus the ceding of sovereignty to representatives, usually affiliated to political parties, who then function as the primary vehicle of politics.

Candidates must address the question. Analysis and focus are the key to higher mark-bands. Better answers will seize on the word “incompatible” and explore the extent to which the two forms of democracy can be judiciously combined. Answers which simply argue that direct and representative democracy can be combined without exploring how this might be done are unlikely to exceed analysis and argument markband [4–6].

Higher markbands will usually be reserved for candidates who develop a critical, informed and well-balanced view on the extent to which these two forms of democracy are indeed “compatible”. A critical evaluation may address a number of core problem areas such as *inter alia* – direct democracy may promote incompatible messages (lower taxes and higher public spending), require a level of political knowledge and understanding not always present in voting populations and it may be seen as undermining the crucial political function which is to aggregate, prioritise and reconcile political demands and inputs. Credit these and any other arguments which address the question with insight and internal consistency.

3. Evaluate the claim that because they differ from culture to culture, there are no such things as universal “rights”.

[20]

Expect candidates, as a minimum, to demonstrate a basic understanding of the notion of “rights” and to provide examples. Expect candidates to explore the assertion in the question that they do in fact vary. This may be done by reference to areas such as women’s rights and the relative importance given to political, as opposed to economic and social, rights in different countries and ideological traditions. Whilst not automatically qualifying a response for the highest markbands, good knowledge and understanding of how “rights” can vary, together with insightful examples, should be rewarded.

Candidates must answer the question. Analysis and focus are the key to higher mark-bands. Better answers are likely to analyse the implications of differences in perceptions of “rights” from country to country and culture to culture, as opposed to merely identifying and describing them. Answers that analyse as opposed to merely describing should attempt to address the clear implication in the question that rights are relative. This might be done in a number of ways - rights do differ but that doesn’t invalidate them for that time and place; there is a hierarchy of rights and there is in fact little disagreement on the fundamental ones. Alternatively, they do vary from culture to culture and that does indeed rob them of much of their force and legitimacy. Credit these and any other arguments which address the question with insight and internal consistency.

4. “In the end all forms of equality involve some degree of social engineering, which means that equality of any kind must always be the enemy of liberty.” Discuss. [20]

Expect candidates as a minimum to recognise and describe the various forms of equality (civil, opportunity and outcome). Well-developed answers will display good or excellent knowledge and understanding of these concepts. The term “social engineering” will be understood, defined and applied.

Candidates must address the question. Analysis and focus are the key to higher mark-bands. Better answers will explore the extent to which liberty is compromised by the pursuit of the various forms of equality. A critical evaluation may address a number of core problem areas such as *inter alia* – the existence of different forms of liberty (negative and positive); the extent to which the pursuit of equality and liberty is necessarily a zero-sum game; the extent to which the search for equality of opportunity can be said to compromise “liberty” (positive discrimination, gender and ethnic quotas of various kinds and social class criteria for university entrance may well appear as examples) and the pejorative use in the question of the term “social engineering”. Credit these and any other arguments which address the question with insight and internal consistency.
