



General Certificate of Education

Government and Politics 2151

GOV3C Politics and Power

Report on the Examination

2011 examination – January series

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Government and Politics

GOV3C – Politics and Power

General

This was a very small cohort of candidates. Unlike the entry of last January these were almost all of a very respectable standard. Candidates appeared to have been well prepared and responded to the questions, most of which could not be met with formulaic answers, with thought and imagination. Candidates answered a good range of questions showing that there had not been a concentration on a limited number of topics. The exception was Topic 2, which was not so popular. This is surprising given the opportunity for candidates to write about the Prime Minister. Equally surprising was the popularity of the EU topic. The general response shows that this paper was accessible and stimulating.

Topic 1 – Power in Modern Society

A popular topic.

Question 01

Candidates generally understood that totalitarian government exists where the state has absolute power. Aspects of totalitarianism were explained, such as restrictions on freedoms of association and speech, suppression of political opponents and a police state. Most candidates used examples of states they judged to be totalitarian, such as communist countries, Nazi Germany and certain theocracies.

Question 02

Candidates were generally able to identify various features of elitism and gave examples of its manifestation. Several candidates considered the positive effects of elitism. Examples were mainly from Britain and the USA. There could have been more references to elite theorists, past and present.

Topic 2 – Executive Power

This was the least popular topic.

Question 03

This question was not very well done. Candidates wrote rather generally about executive secrecy without really addressing the case for it.

Question 04

Although this question was generally understood, the answers could have been better developed, with more examples and analysis given.

Topic 3 – Political Culture

A moderately popular topic.

Question 05

Candidates generally understood the concept of multiculturalism. They were able to give examples of it and reasons for its development in Britain. In some cases there was particular focus on the Muslim community. It would have been good to see more analysis of the actual case for multiculturalism.

Question 06

Candidates were quite well prepared for this question. Much discussion focused on the development of political culture during the post-war period. Some candidates started with the findings of Almond and Verba and traced subsequent changes in the 'civil culture'. There was some comparative analysis. Some candidates argued that there are aspects of a political culture that can be static.

Topic 4 – Britain in Europe

A popular topic.

Question 07

Most candidates recognised the concept of European citizenship as being fundamental to the idea of the EU. They cited the Maastricht treaty as a significant step in the development of the concept. Candidates were able to note tangible expressions of the concept, such as certain rights to reside and move freely through the community and vote and stand in certain elections. Some noted that the concept was more readily accepted in other member states than in Britain.

Question 08

There were some good answers to this question, ranging across the EU impact on UK political institutions. Centrally relevant concepts such as federalism, multilevel governance, supranationality, national sovereignty and subsidiarity appeared often. Some candidates structured their analysis around the executive, legislature and judiciary. Impacts examined included an assessment of the provisions for parliamentary scrutiny of EU legislation, the use of cabinet committees, the creation of EU sections within government departments and the creation of ministers with EU responsibilities. Candidates considered the status of European legislation vis-à-vis that from the domestic parliament. Candidates also considered political parties, noting political cleavage within parties, the formation of UKIP and Euroscepticism.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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