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| MODULE: | CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY |
| CODE: | BAJH-2-1-09 |
| Number of Credits: | 4 semester credits / 6 quarter units |
| Stage: | Development and Integration (II) |
| Theme: | Social & Political Theory |
| Assessment Weighting: | Exam 60% Assignment 40% |

INTRODUCTION

This course will enable students to bridge the gap between action, understanding and institutions. This emphasis on the political, institutional and administrative background of current events and trends in Irish political life will enable students to 'connect' their understanding of past and present.

SYLLABUS

States and economics: the changing role of states in the global economy – states and economic development; state regulation and taxation; currencies, debt and international finance; multinational corporations and governments.

Political structures: patterns of state organisation, democracy and the limits of representation, political parties and changing forms of political organisation; civil society and the 'new social movements'.

Class and Inequality - internationally and domestically: social systems and class structures; changes in class consciousness and organisation; measuring inequality both in Ireland, Europe and internationally; the causes and extent of deprivation in the 'underdeveloped' world; changing patterns of wealth and distribution of resources; the phenomenon of 'over-consumption'; measuring wealth.

Technology and labour: the new international division of labour; the significance of technological change for economic development and patterns of work; the debates about Fordism, post-Fordism and 'de-skilling'; unemployment and union organisation.

Food, health and the environment: The environment and the reproduction of social life; global warming and the threat to the global environment; the industrialisation of agriculture and its impact on food standards and safety.

Nationality and Ethnicity:

Interpretations of nations and nationalisms; the concept of 'nation states'; introducing debates on the survival or decline of nation states; ethnic conflicts.

Ireland and the European Union

The origins of the EU and Ireland's involvement with it; how the EU functions; the relationship between the nation states and the EU; questions of democratic deficit; issues raised by the expansion of the EU; the EU's relation to wider global powers and forces.

International organisations and Global power:

The role of the four key 'Bretton Wood's organisations – the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – how they are structures and how they function; introducing the debate on globalisation; the shift from 'development' to globalisation.

The causes and resolution of conflicts:

Examining the causes of conflicts, their evolution and attempts, successful and otherwise, to resolve them. This will examine both the Northern Irish troubles and other international conflicts. It will examine threats to international peace.