

MODULE: Modern Society (course code BAJH-MOD)

Griffith College Dublin – Journalism and Visual Media

Fall Semester

***PRE-REQUISITE:* background in Media, Political Science and/or Sociology**

Introduction

Having studied the first year module of Understanding Society, and the second year module of Contemporary Society, this Modern Society module then contextualises Irish and European society and politics within a global perspective. The module requires that students understand the political background and relevance of the Irish Constitution and the Treaties of the European Union. It delivers a framework within which the modern Irish, EU and global economies can be analysed simultaneously with modern Irish, EU and global civil society, to give students a well rounded grasp of the social, political and economic forces which shape modern Western societies.

Module Aims

This module aims to enable the student to:

- Express confidently the symbiotic relationship between civil society and modern democratic societies.
- Grasp the complex dynamics of the manner in which state economic policy is developed and the impact it has on democratic societies.
- To provide students with an overview of the central structures of power in the world today, and the problems and conflicts flowing from these.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- Express a comprehensive understanding of the roles played by civil society in modern democratic societies and its impacts on the politics of Ireland and the European Union.
- Display a detailed knowledge of the importance of understanding the impact that state economic policy has on Irish and European society.
- Identify key features and institutions of global politics; and critically analyse central problems in global politics and economics.
- Exercise appropriate judgement to complete guided research involving analysis of modern political and social structures and practices.

Indicative Module Content

Irish Political Structure:

The 1922 and 1937 constitutions: background, differences, main points, development.
Irish political parties: the backgrounds, splits, coalitions and trends.

Economic Policy and the Processes of Globalisation:

Calculating economic growth: sources, impacts, alternatives.
Analysis of alternatives to economic growth.

Irish and European Civil Society:

The origins and modern development of civil society organisations.
The dynamics of the role of modern civil society organisations.

European Political Structure:

The power and roles of the main EU institutions.
Reflecting on the EU's so-called 'democratic deficit'.

The Structure of Global Politics: Formal and Informal:

The UN and other bodies of global governance; the concept of hegemony in global politics; comparison between British hegemony in the 19th century and US hegemony since 1945; the debate on whether there a hegemonic crisis today.

Global Political Economy: the Central Importance of Currencies in Global Economics:

Dollar seniorage and its problems; the institutions of the Washington consensus and their problems; financialisation and economic crisis

The Politics of Uneven Development: the 'Developing' World, Myth and Reality:

The rise of East Asia and its significance for global politics; surveying the global picture of uneven development; 'a billion people living in slums' and its implications.

The Politics of Ecological Disorder: Surveying Global Patterns of Environmental Damage:

The social and political implications of climate change. Changes in agriculture and food production: the end of the peasantry?

Assessment

This module will be assessed by two assignments (Continuous Assessment 40%) being two research-led essays based on module content, and by a written exam (60%).