

STAGE 3

Module	Contemporary Politics 2
Course code	BACH-MSY
Credits	10
Important Notes	Available to students with a background in media, political science, and/or sociology.
Allocation of marks	50% continuous assessment 50% final examination

Module aims and objectives

The module aims to give learners an understanding of the working of the international political order and how it is related to the global economic system. It also seeks to give them an understanding of how the political system at a regional and a national level works and how these interact with the wider society. Having studied Understanding Society and Contemporary Politics 1 at stages 1 and 2 of the programme, the overall objective here is to build on this underpinning knowledge and to facilitate learners in attaining a well-rounded grasp of some of the main political and economic forces which shape modern Irish, European and global society.

Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

- (i) Demonstrate understanding of key issues in national and international politics and economics.
- (ii) Critically analyse the institutions of Irish, European and global governance.
- (iii) Critically compare development patterns across emerging economies.
- (iv) Express a comprehensive understanding of the role played by civil society organisations in modern politics.

Module content, organisation and structure

Topic: The Irish Constitution: Women's Rights, People's Rights: In this topic, we study the background to the development of the 1937 constitution, the key sections of it, and examine how the document has been altered to respond to changing social norms because of political agitation, judicial activism and citizens' referendums.

Topic 2: Politics Without Parties: Civil Society Organisations and Social Movements: We study the history of the idea of 'civil society' and how it expanded from its national confines to become 'global civil society'. We identify Irish, European and global civil society organisations and what impact they have had on politics.

Topic 3: Understanding Your Economy: While we are not economists, as media workers, we should understand why the global economic “crisis” happened, and have a reasonable grasp on the likelihood of it happening again. Where does money come from? What is economic growth? What is neoliberalism?

Topic 4: How the Europe Union Works: Unprecedented Peace and The Democratic Deficit: With 500 million people and the world’s largest economy, European Union citizens live longer, are richer, better educated and healthier than anyone else in the world. This topic examines how the EU works, who makes decisions, and analyses the debate on what scholars call, the EU’s ‘democratic deficit’.

Topic 5: The US-led world order: After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US emerged as the world’s sole superpower. We are examining the political and economic underpinnings of US power and asking whether it is capable of maintaining its position of world leadership or whether a narrow pursuit of its own self-interests will undermine global stability.

Topic 6: The European Union: Euro Crisis: The EU developed along very different lines to the United States. Since the crash of 2008, what was a banking crisis has become a sovereign debt crisis. We are looking at the origins and development of the Euro crisis and its implications for the future of the European Union, and indeed for the world order more generally.

Topic 7: China and the Rise of the BRICS: Over the last decade a new layer of second tier powers, the so-called BRICS has emerged – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa which have begun to assert themselves against the dominance of the West. We are looking more closely at these states and consider why they have become more prominent in global politics.

Topic 8: Climate Change and the Global Order: It has become increasingly apparent that climate change is going to have a major impact on human society over the course of the 21st century. We are looking at the causes of climate change in the context of a longer environmental history and at why the political elites have been so unwilling to address the issue seriously. We also be looking at its likely implications for the world order.