Evidence and Argument
Paper Guide 2017-18

Evidence and Argument is a new bridge paper for History and Politics students which is designed to provide an introduction to key concepts, approaches, and methods from across the two disciplines.

Both the History Faculty and the Department of Politics and International Studies at Cambridge are unusually broad and eclectic in their interests and approaches. In History, interests range from the traditional realm of ‘high’ politics to social and cultural history, the history of political thought, and the use of quantitative data to reconstruct economic and demographic changes which stretch across decades or even centuries. Some Politics lecturers see themselves as ‘political scientists’, developing theories and models which seek to explain processes of political change, whilst others eschew social science and focus on understanding the meanings and intentions of political actors. Why do these disciplinary choices matter? How do they shape the kinds of evidence we use and the arguments we construct?

Evidence and Argument explores these questions through six case studies – of archives and manuscripts, visual sources, quantitative history, the comparative method, electoral behaviour, and ‘texts in time’ – based on original sources and ongoing research projects in Cambridge. It will be examined through a Long Essay of 3,000-4,000 words and a 1.5-hour written paper. This paper guide provides a core reading list for the Evidence and Argument classes and Long Essay and should be read in conjunction with the Moodle site, which contains many useful resources. You should also refer to the handouts and reading lists provided by your lecturers when preparing for the written examination.

If you have any questions, please contact the course director, Dr Peter Sloman, by email (pjs93@cam.ac.uk) or in person. Dr Sloman will be available to meet with students each Monday from 1-2pm in Alison Richard Building room 108 – no appointment necessary.

Teaching arrangements

Evidence and Argument is taught through eight classes spread across Michaelmas Term and Lent Term, together with 32 lectures. All lectures will take place at 2pm in Room 6 at the History Faculty. There will also be revision classes in Easter Term to help students prepare for the examination.

Lectures

Michaelmas Term

Thursdays at 2pm – Evidence and Sources
5 October – Introduction (Dr Peter Sloman)
12 October – Archives (Dr Peter Sloman)
19 October – Visual sources (Dr Tom Simpson)
26 October – Material culture (Dr Emma Spary)
2 November – Oral history (Dr Bronwen Everill)
9 November – Statistical evidence I (Dr Sebastian Keibek)
16 November – Statistical evidence II (Dr Sebastian Keibek)
23 November – Statistical evidence III (Dr Sebastian Keibek)
Mondays at 2pm – Key Concepts in History and Politics
9 October – Power in History (Dr Annabel Brett)
16 October – Power in Politics (Dr Duncan Bell)
23 October – States and empires in History (Prof. Saul Dubow)
30 October – States and empires in Politics (Prof. Brendan Simms)
6 November – Religion in History (Prof. Eugenio Biagini)
13 November – Religion in Politics (Dr Tomas Larsson)
20 November – Gender in History (Dr Ben Griffin)
27 November – Gender in Politics (Dr Bogdan Popa)

Lent Term
Thursdays at 2pm – Approaches to Politics
18 January – Studying Politics: foundational choices (Dr Peter Sloman)
25 January – The comparative method (Dr Peter Sloman)
1 February – Political sociology (Dr Peter Sloman)
8 February – Rational choice (Dr Peter Sloman)
15 February – Institutionalism (Dr Tomas Larsson)
22 February – History of political thought (Prof. John Robertson)
1 March – The interpretive turn (Dr Iza Hussin)
8 March – Public policy analysis (Dr Dennis Grube)

Mondays at 2pm – Historiography
22 January – Political history (Dr Nicki Kindersley)
29 January – Global history (Dr Shruti Kapila)
5 February – Marxist history (Dr Waseem Yaqoob)
12 February – History and the social sciences (Prof. Peter Mandler)

Mondays at 2pm – Argumentation
19 February – The structure of arguments (Dr Peter Sloman)
26 February – Deep analysis (Dr Peter Sloman)
5 March – Inductive reasoning (Dr Peter Sloman)
12 March – Making arguments work (Dr Peter Sloman)

Classes
Class 1 (MT Week 2). Studying power in History and Politics
Class 2 (MT Week 4). Using archives and manuscript sources: The miners’ strike 1984-5
Class 3 (MT Week 6). Using visual sources: Political cartoons
Class 4 (MT Week 8). Using quantitative sources: Measuring industrialization
Class 5 (LT Week 2). Comparative history: Varieties of nationalism in Asia and Africa
Class 6 (LT Week 4). Explaining political behaviour: UK general elections
Class 7 (LT Week 6). Texts in Time: Thomas Hobbes and Leviathan
Class 8 (LT Week 8): What is History? What is Politics? A concluding discussion

Class groups

Classes will be taught in three groups of 12-15 students, each led by an academic from History or POLIS with assistance from an advanced doctoral student:
- Group 1 – Dr Bronwen Everill (bee21@cam.ac.uk) and Benjamin Studebaker (bms47@cam.ac.uk). This class will meet in room 2 of the Finella Building, Gonville and Caius College, from 2-3.30pm on Wednesdays in weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8.
- Group 2 – Dr Tim Rogan (tmr34@cam.ac.uk) and Mariëtta van der Tol (mdcv2@cam.ac.uk). This class will meet at the Rushmore Room in St Catharine’s College from 4.30-6pm on Mondays in weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8.
- Group 3 – Dr Peter Sloman (pis93@cam.ac.uk) and Luna Sebastian (slks2@cam.ac.uk). This class will meet in the Bevin Room, Churchill College (Michaelmas Term) and the Sixties Room, Churchill College (Lent Term) from 4.30-6pm on Wednesdays in weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8.

Students will be assigned to class groups at the start of Michaelmas Term. If you need to switch groups because of an unavoidable clash with other lectures or classes, please speak to Dr Sloman.

Preparing for classes

Evidence and Argument is taught through lectures and classes, which provide an opportunity for students to discuss scholarly issues in a larger group than supervisions and to develop their oral presentation skills. Classes 2-7 will begin with two or three presentations from students, each lasting about 10 minutes, which should introduce key concepts from the readings (and, where appropriate, sources) and provide a starting-point for wider discussion. Your class leader will assign presentation topics at the start of the year.

You should expect to spend an average of 12 hours preparing for each class, though this may vary over the course of the year. In particular, you may wish to spend more time preparing than usual when you are giving a presentation, and correspondingly less time (say, 8-10 hours) preparing for the other classes.

An effective oral presentation should introduce the topic as clearly as possible, outline the main intellectual issues involved and explain which arguments you have found most convincing. You should draw on the prescribed texts and sources (which might be manuscripts, cartoons, data, or secondary literature) and explain why they are relevant to the question. You may wish to use Powerpoint to support your argument and provide illustrative material, though it is perfectly possible to give a good presentation without using slides. The post-graduate teaching assistant will provide informal feedback to help you develop your presentation skills.

When you are not presenting, you should prepare to participate in class discussion by reading the key texts (especially those marked with an asterisk) and primary sources (where relevant) and thinking about how you might answer the discussion questions. Although class participation is not graded at Cambridge, those who participate actively in class discussion usually learn more and so perform better in long essays and examinations.
Learning objectives

On completing the course,

i. Students should understand the different methods and approaches used in the study of History and Politics at Cambridge, and should be able to reflect on the theoretical and practical implications of these choices.

ii. Students should be familiar with some of the forms of evidence used by historians and political scientists, and should be able to analyse written, oral, visual, and statistical sources.

iii. Students should be able to construct clear and well-founded arguments and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments made by others.

Assessment

Evidence and Argument will be assessed in two ways:

i. A Long Essay of up to 4,000 words (50%). A list of six questions will be issued to students at the division of Lent Term, and the deadline for submission will be Thursday of the third week of Easter Term, at noon. The Long Essay questions will be closely related to the topics studied in class.

There will be one question on each of the following six topics: archives and manuscript sources (the 1984-5 miners’ strike), visual sources (political cartoons), quantitative sources (measuring industrialization), comparative history (nations and nationalism), political behaviour (UK general elections), and texts in time (Thomas Hobbes and Leviathan).

The Long Essay should be formatted according to the History Faculty Style Guide, available online at https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/hist-tripos/info-all-years/style-guide, and students should submit two copies to the History and Politics Administrator in the History Faculty Office by the deadline. A digital copy is also required: information about how to submit this will be circulated nearer the time.

ii. A 1½-hour written examination (50%), in which candidates must answer one question from a list of no fewer than seven. The examination questions will draw on material from the lectures as well as the classes, and will ask candidates to reflect on the theoretical and methodological issues involved in the study of History and Politics.

There will be at least one question on each of the following seven topics: power, political history, qualitative evidence and sources, quantification and economic history, foundational choices in the study of politics, empirical political science, and the history of political thought.
Sample questions for the written examination (answer one):

1. Why have historians and political scientists found it so difficult to define the nature of power?
2. ‘Political history is fundamentally concerned with the state.’ Do you agree?
3. What kinds of evidence are most useful for the political historian?
4. What is the point of quantification in History AND/OR Politics?
5. How far are states and nations modern phenomena?
6. How useful are other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to historians?
7. ‘The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle’ (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, 1848). Discuss.
8. Should historians of political thought prioritise study of the author of a work over study of the readers of a work?
9. How useful are rational choice approaches to political science?
10. What is historical about ‘historical institutionalism’?
11. Why have some Politics scholars rejected the label of ‘political scientist’?
Reading list for Evidence and Argument classes

**General and introductory**

David Cannadine (ed.), *What is History Now?* (Basingstoke, 2002)
David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Basingstoke, 1995 and subsequent editions)
Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (1962 and subsequent editions)
Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (Cambridge, 2008)

**Classic works**

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (various editions)
Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, IL, 1962)
Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, 1979; paperback edition, 2015)

**Class 1 (MT Week 2). Studying power in History and Politics**

No particular reading is required for this class, which will draw on the lectures on ‘Power in History’ and ‘Power in Politics’ in weeks 1 and 2. You may like to prepare by reflecting on the definition of ‘power’ and the different ways in which the concept might be used.

If you are particularly keen to carry out some reading, you could look at one of the following works:


Class 2 (MT Week 4). Using archives and manuscript sources: The miners’ strike 1984-5

This exercise is an introduction to the ways in which political historians use archival sources to understand the past. It focusses on a range of documents produced before and during the 1984-5 miners’ strike which are held in the papers of Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock at the Churchill Archives Centre and at the National Archives in Kew: these have all been uploaded to the Evidence and Argument Moodle site. You should read the documents carefully and think about what they tell us about the Conservative government’s strategy, the difficulties which the strike caused for the Labour Party, and the experiences of miners – both those who went on strike and those who didn’t. The secondary reading provides useful context for understanding why the strike took place and the conditions in which these documents were produced.

Questions for presentation and discussion

What do the documents tell us about
1. The Conservative government’s strategy during the miners’ strike?
2. The challenges which Neil Kinnock faced as leader of the opposition?
3. The experiences of striking and working miners?

For discussion: What are the strengths and limitations of these kinds of archival sources for studying recent political history?

Prescribed documents (in chronological order – all available on Moodle)

- ‘Record of a Meeting held at No. 10 Downing Street on 15 September 1983’, 15 Sept. 1983 (PREM 19/1329)
- Cabinet conclusions, 15 March 1984 (CAB 128/78/114)
- John Reid memo to Derek Foster, ‘Synopsis of Speeches etc. on the Coal Dispute’, 16 May 1984 (KNNK 15/2/4 pt. 1)
- Peter Walker letter to Conservative MPs on coal stocks and return to work rates, 26 June 1984 (THCR 2/6/3/107)
- Kathryn Slater circular, ‘Women Against Pit Closures National Rally’, 20 July 1984, with flyer ‘Women Against Pit Closures National Demonstration’ on NUM notepaper (KNNK 15/2/13)
- David Hart memo to Margaret Thatcher, ‘Winning the War against Scargillism’, 18 Sept. 1984 (THCR 1/12/26)
- Notes for Margaret Thatcher’s 1984 party conference speech on unemployment and the miners’ strike, by Angus Maude, 6 Oct. 1984 (THCR 5/1/5/269)
- Bernard Ingham memo to Margaret Thatcher, ‘After the NUM strike’, 21 Nov. 1984 (THCR 1/12/26)
- Draft of Neil Kinnock’s speech to Stoke rally, 30 Nov. 1984 (KNNK 15/2/42)
Reading list

Core reading

*Richard Vinen, Thatcher’s Britain (2009), chapter 7 – ‘Victory foretold: The miners’ – available on Moodle

Background


Further reading

Margaret Thatcher, The Downing Street Years (1993), chapter 13
Martin Westlake, Kinnock: The Biography (2001), chapter 13

Reflections on modern British political history

Susan Pederson, “What is political history now?” in David Cannadine (ed), What is History Now (2002)
Class 3 (MT Week 6). Using visual sources: Political cartoons

This class will explore how we might use political cartoons as a source for understanding the development of democratic political behaviour since the eighteenth century. You should start with the core readings, look at some cartoons online, and think about the questions below.

Questions for presentation and discussion

What can political cartoons tell us about changing views of
1. Democracy and representative government?
2. Political parties?
3. Nations and national identity?
Each presenter should select three or four cartoons to illustrate their argument.

For discussion:
- What can visual sources tell us about contemporaries’ views of political culture?
- Do political cartoons require special methodological approaches?
- How do historians and political scientists use cartoons, and other visual sources, differently?
- Can satire transcend national political contexts?

Primary sources

There are thousands of political cartoons available on the internet. This list is just somewhere to start, and students should feel free to search more widely.

http://app.harpweek.com
https://www.cartoonbank.com/
Proquest Historical Periodicals – available through iDiscover
www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/political-cartoons/
https://www.brown.edu/academics/libraries/john-carter-brown/jcb-online/image-collections/political-cartoon-collection
http://www.americanantiquarian.org/american-political-cartoons
http://theweek.com/cartoons

Reading list

Core reading

Further reading

Robert Mann, *Daisy Petals and Mushroom Clouds: LBJ, Barry Goldwater, and the Campaign Ad that Changed American Politics* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2011)
Class 4 (MT Week 8). Using quantitative sources: Measuring industrialization

Historians and political scientists use both qualitative and quantitative sources in their work. The lectures on statistical evidence focus on the latter, and on the type of analyses and results for which they form the basis. Quantitative sources provide information which can be expressed as one or more numbers. This has obvious benefits, but also comes with unique challenges. The lectures will discuss the potential and pitfalls of quantitative analysis in more detail. They are accompanied by a case study in which you are asked to look at several historical sources providing quantitative information, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Neither the lecture nor the case study require any special maths skills or knowledge of statistics, and all the sources mentioned below are available on Moodle.

Case study

When economists and politicians discuss the state of today’s economy, they often talk in terms of GDP, a monetary measure of a country’s total economic output. Accurately calculating this number requires collecting large amounts of information from private firms and government departments, a task undertaken by national statistics offices. Direct information on the national economy in Britain in terms of outputs, that is, quantities and prices of goods and services produced, is scarce before the advent of national accounts in the 1940s. To study economic developments before the 1940s, the best available information is often not on what goods were produced in which quantities, but on who was involved in this production; in other words: on the composition of the labour force.

Information on what individuals did for a living was often collected in official documents, particularly if those individuals were men. We can use this information to generate a picture of the composition of the labour force at certain moments in time. One way of expressing this in a quantitative way is to allocate individuals to occupational sectors. Such an allocation can be made at several degrees of precision, but for this case study we will limit ourselves to the highest level of abstraction, and divide the labour force in just three sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Economists often characterise the state of a country’s economic development in terms of these three sectors – as depicted in this stylised chart. The underlying idea is that in little-developed, low-income economies, the vast majority of people was/is engaged in agriculture, consuming almost all the food they produce(d) themselves, with only a limited surplus which they could/can trade for non-food essentials (such as clothing), and hardly any for luxury goods (e.g. interior decorations) or services (e.g. paid entertainment). In more developed economies, with higher household incomes, this surplus was/is larger, providing employment for a larger share of the population in manufacturing and, to a lesser degree, services. In wealthy Western economies today, incomes are so high that we can afford to spend a large share of it on services (such as a university education), whilst technology has greatly reduced the number of people working in manufacturing and agriculture – resulting in an occupational structure dominated by the service sector. All of this means that if we could reconstruct the occupational structure of a country or region at some moment in the past, this would give us information on the contemporary state of the economy, compared to some earlier or later time, or to some other country or region.

On Moodle, you will find a number of English historical sources which provide occupational information:
1. Returns from the 1851 census for the village of Allerthorpe. More information on this village can be found here. Censuses were taken every ten years, starting in 1801. The amount and quality of occupational information collected improved over time, but only becomes really useful from 1841 for men, and from 1851 for men and women. As you will see, information was recorded per household. The word ‘do’ stands for ‘ditto’ and simply means that the information on the previous line should be repeated.

2. Gregory King’s social table of England and Wales for 1688. In 1696, King published his pamphlet on the ‘Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England’, which is one of the first attempts to ‘count’ the population and income of England and Wales. The so-called ‘social table’ in this pamphlet categorises the number and income of all English and Welsh households by social class for 1688, and has been used extensively by economic historians to estimate the composition of the labour force for that year.

3. The probate inventory of John Porter. Just like today, people in early modern Britain sometimes created a ‘last will and testament’, which stipulated how the inheritance should be divided when he/she died. To support the fair division of the inheritance, a so-called ‘probate inventory’ might also be drawn up after a person had died. Such a document provided a list of all material possessions (except real estate), with their estimated value. In the ‘header’ of the inventory (the preamble above the actual list of goods), the deceased was, if he was a man, typically identified not just by his name but also by his occupation – as is the case in this example. To allow the retrieval of these documents from the archives, indexes have over time been created, listing millions of documents, repeating much of the information from these headers. An example can be found here.

4. A transcript of the 1522 military survey for the county of Rutland. Similar surveys have survived for the town of Coventry and the Suffolk ‘hundred’ of Babergh. This survey was taken to create an estimate of England’s capacity to provide men, arms, and armour in times of war. Since the provision of arms and armour was linked to a person’s wealth, with wealthy men being able to provide horses and expensive equipment, those surveyed had to provide a sworn valuation of their possessions. Similar survey returns exist for later moments in time, but this is the earliest useful example.

Questions for presentation and discussion

Study the four sources with the following questions in mind:

a. What type of occupational information do they provide?

b. Can this information be easily characterised in sectoral terms (agriculture, manufacturing, services)?

c. How complete is the information, within the scope of the geographic entity covered by the source?

d. How easy would it be to obtain a reasonable impression of the contemporary occupational structure of Britain as a whole on the basis of this type of source? What problems (incompleteness, vagueness, bias, etcetera) would have to be solved to achieve this?

e. Historians have used all of the above types of sources to reconstruct Britain’s historical occupational structure. A recent example is provided by Stephen Broadberry et al. in their study of British Economic Growth, 1270–1870 (Cambridge, CUP 2015). Read the journal article by Broadberry et al. (2013) – particularly pages
18 and 19, which deal with how they used the 1522 militia surveys and Gregory King’s social table – and critically evaluate their approach.

Each presenter should discuss questions a-d by reference to one of the prescribed sources.

**Reading list**

**Core reading**

*Stephen Broadberry, Bruce M.S. Campbell, and Bas van Leeuwen, ‘When did Britain industrialise? The sectoral distribution of the labour force and labour productivity in Britain, 1381–1851’, *Explorations in Economic History*, 50 (2013) – available on Moodle

**Further reading**

E.A. Wrigley, *The Path to Sustained Growth: England’s Transformation from an Organic Economy to an Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 2016)
(For a short summary of Professor Wrigley’s views, see ‘Opening Pandora’s box: A new look at the industrial revolution’, Vox EU website, 22 July 2011, available online at http://voxeu.org/article/industrial-revolution-energy-revolution.)
Emma Griffin, *A short history of the British industrial revolution* (Basingstoke, 2010), chapters 2 and 5
Class 5 (LT Week 2). Comparative history: Varieties of nationalism in Asia and Africa

This class provides an introduction to comparative history through a case study of the development of nationalism in Asia and Africa. The readings focus on the writings of nationalist leaders in four contexts – India (Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru), China (Mao), the Arab world (Nasser), and sub-Saharan Africa (Awolowo). You should prepare for the class by looking at the core readings marked with an asterisk below, and at least one or two of the primary sources marked with a dagger (†), and thinking about the questions below.

Questions for presentation and discussion

Each presenter should discuss one of the four cases (India, China, the Arab world, and sub-Saharan Africa) in the light of the following questions:

- What do the individual biographies tell us about the making of nationalism?
- In what way was nationalism a critique of imperialism?
- What were the visions of politics of the newly decolonized societies?

For discussion:

- Is nationalism ‘modular’?
- How do we account for the rise of peasant nationalism?
- In what way is popular culture significant for the making of national identity?

Reading list

Core reading

* C.A. Bayly, The Birth of The Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons (Malden, MA, 2004), chapter 6 (‘Nation, empire and ethnicity’) – available on Moodle (TBC)

Further general reading

Adrian Hastings, The Construction of Nationhood (Cambridge, 1997) – available as an ebook

India

†Rabindranath Tagore, Nationalism (1917)
†M. K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, ed. by Anthony Parel (1909 and various editions)
†Jawaharla Nehru, The Discovery of India (1946), chapter 8
Faisal Devji, The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence (2012)
Faisal Devji, “Hind Swaraj” and Gandhi’s thought’, Public Culture, 23 (2011)
Benjamin Zachariah, Nehru (2004), chapters 2-3
China

†Mao Zedong, ‘Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement In Hunan’ [1927] and ‘On New Democracy’ [1940], in Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung – available in various editions and online
Rebecca Karl, Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History (Durham, NC, 2010)

The Arab world

†Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt’s Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution (Cairo and Washington, DC, 1955)
Ziad Fahmy, Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the modern nation through popular culture (Stanford, CA, 2011)

Sub-Saharan Africa

†Obafemi Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom (1947)
Frederick Cooper, Africa since 1940 (Cambridge, 2002), chapters 4-6
E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (eds.), Mau Mau and Nationhood (Athens, OH, 2002), chapters 3, 6, 10
Class 6 (LT Week 4). Explaining political behaviour: UK general elections

This class will introduce students to the analysis of political behaviour through a case study of electoral behaviour in the UK and beyond. Students will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different theories of voting and examine how historians have applied social science methods to historical data.

Questions for presentation and discussion

How might the following theories of electoral behaviour be used to explain the results of recent British general elections?
1. Sociological – e.g. class politics (see esp. Clarke, Lawrence and Taylor, and Achen and Bartels)
2. Rational choice (see esp. Downs, Ansolabehere and Hay)
3. Valence – also known as competence or performance politics (see esp. Clarke and Dalton ch. 10)

For discussion:
- How might sociological and rational choice theories of electoral behaviour be used to explain the results of the 2010, 2015 and 2017 British general elections?
- Why have political scientists placed growing emphasis on ‘valence’ (or competence or performance) in recent years?
- What are the challenges involved in applying social science theories of voting to historical elections?
- Is social survey data more useful for answering some questions than others?

Reading list

Core reading


Political science literature

Christopher A. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, Democracy for Realists (Princeton, NJ, 2016), esp. chapter 9 – a recent defence of social groups as the main basis of political identities.
British general elections


Historical approaches and applications


*NB. More readings may be added to Moodle as studies of the 2017 general election become available*
Class 7 (LT Week 6). Texts in Time: Thomas Hobbes and *Leviathan*

This class will explore recent theoretical debates in the history of political thought, especially the approach taken by the ‘Cambridge school’. It provides an opportunity to reflect on how you might use the texts you have studied in POL1 – such as Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* – as historical sources, and also to think about the changing ways in which these texts have been interpreted and used at different points in time.

**Questions for presentation and discussion**

1. How does the context of *Leviathan* help us understand Hobbes’ argument?
2. How did the reception of *Leviathan* change during the twentieth century?
3. Should the political thought of the past always be studied through its ‘languages’?

**For discussion:**

- Is the requirement to study texts in their historical ‘contexts’ unnecessarily restrictive of the ways in which we can understand the political thought of the past?
- How should we go about articulating a relationship between historical contexts and contemporary problems?

**Prescribed text**

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), editions by Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1996), and others: esp. chapters 13, 14, 15, 31

**Reading list**

*Core readings*

*Peter Laslett (ed.), *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (Oxford, 1956), introduction – available on Moodle (TBC)

**Methodology: Contexts and Languages**


**Historical commentary: the contexts and languages of Hobbes**

Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories* (Cambridge, 1979)

**The reception of Hobbes in the 20th century**

David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge, 1997)
Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society* (Harvard, 2015), chapter 1

**Class 8 (LT Week 8): What is History? What is Politics? A concluding discussion**

This class will examine the relationship between History and Politics in the light of the material you have encountered in the lectures and previous classes. You should come prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What is distinctive about the historical method?
- Where does History end and Politics begin?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of studying Politics as a ‘social science’?
- How might different methods and different forms of evidence help us answer different kinds of questions?
  - e.g. Was there an ‘industrial revolution’ in 18th century Britain?
    - Why did France experience a revolution after 1789 when Britain did not?
    - How significant was Mohandas Gandhi to Indian independence?
    - Why did the Allies win the Second World War?
    - Has class become less important in British politics since the 1970s?
    - What is democracy?
- What topics have you found (a) most interesting and (b) most confusing or difficult in the Evidence and Argument course?

You may find it useful to refer back to some of the general readings on p. 6 to help you link the different elements of the paper and think about these larger questions.