



Centre for the Study of Politics, Department of Sociology

Maynooth University

## FIRST YEAR POLITICS

Bachelor of Arts in Politics

First year handbook, 2020-21

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## **Table of contents**

Message from Head of Department, Prof. Seán Ó Riain	page 3
Our learning community key principles	page 4
Introduction	page 5
The BA in Politics	page 7
What do I have to do?	Page 10
The fundamental pillars of the degree	page 11
Alternative streams within the degree	page 12
Structure of the course	page 13
Teaching and Learning formats 2020	page 14
Tutorials	page 17
First year module information	page 18
Staff and their research interests	page 20
Important Dates	page 21
Consultation	page 26
Communications	page 27
Essays	page 27
Plagiarism	Page 28
Guidelines for citation	page 29
Penalties for late work	page 29

## A Message from the Head of Department, Prof. Seán Ó Riain

Dear students,

Welcome to the Department of Sociology and the Centre for the Study of Politics at Maynooth. This will certainly be the most unusual start to the academic year that we have experienced and we know that you have many questions and concerns.

It is our goal to make the year enlightening and interesting for you (and therefore for us), but we also want that experience to be as safe and comfortable as possible. You can find out more about our exciting [undergraduate](#), [Masters](#) and [PhD](#) programmes through the relevant pages on our website - and about [what you can do with a degree in Politics or Sociology](#). Find out about the fascinating [research](#) of our staff and students, as well as the work of our [Centre for the Study of Politics](#).

*You will also find details of our teaching approaches this year - in general and each module - on the page for our [Blended Learning Hub](#). This will be the main location for further information about the general departmental approach to teaching and learning this year and I would ask you to visit it regularly for updated information.*

*Please read the materials available on the Blended Learning Hub along with your outline Timetables, available on the undergraduate page, for a comprehensive view of the overall programme that you will follow (as far as we can predict it in these uncertain times).*

Most of what you need to know is contained in this student handbook. But if you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

Beir bua

Seán

Professor Seán Ó Riain

***Our Learning Community***  
***Key Principles***

Our department is a community of teachers and learners who endeavour to learn from each other through relationships that are open, respectful and engaging.

We are a diverse group of people who respect each others' varying experiences and perspectives.

We engage in active discussion and debate in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect, in-person and online, inside and outside the classroom.

We respect others by avoiding disrupting their teaching and learning – we try to avoid talking during lectures, arriving late and/or leaving early from lectures, and other disruptive actions.

We respect the policies of each lecturer and tutor regarding classroom and module policies and practices, including the use of technology in the classroom.

We understand that the staff of the department are concerned for the welfare of students, for fairness and inclusiveness in our work and, overall, to promote learning in the ways that are judged to be most effective.

We understand that we can bring concerns that we might have to academic and administrative staff, and in particular to the Head of Department.

## Introduction

This handbook is intended to provide you with the information you need about our programme for the year and our policies. You will find additional information about the Centre for the Study of Politics in the Sociology Department on our website

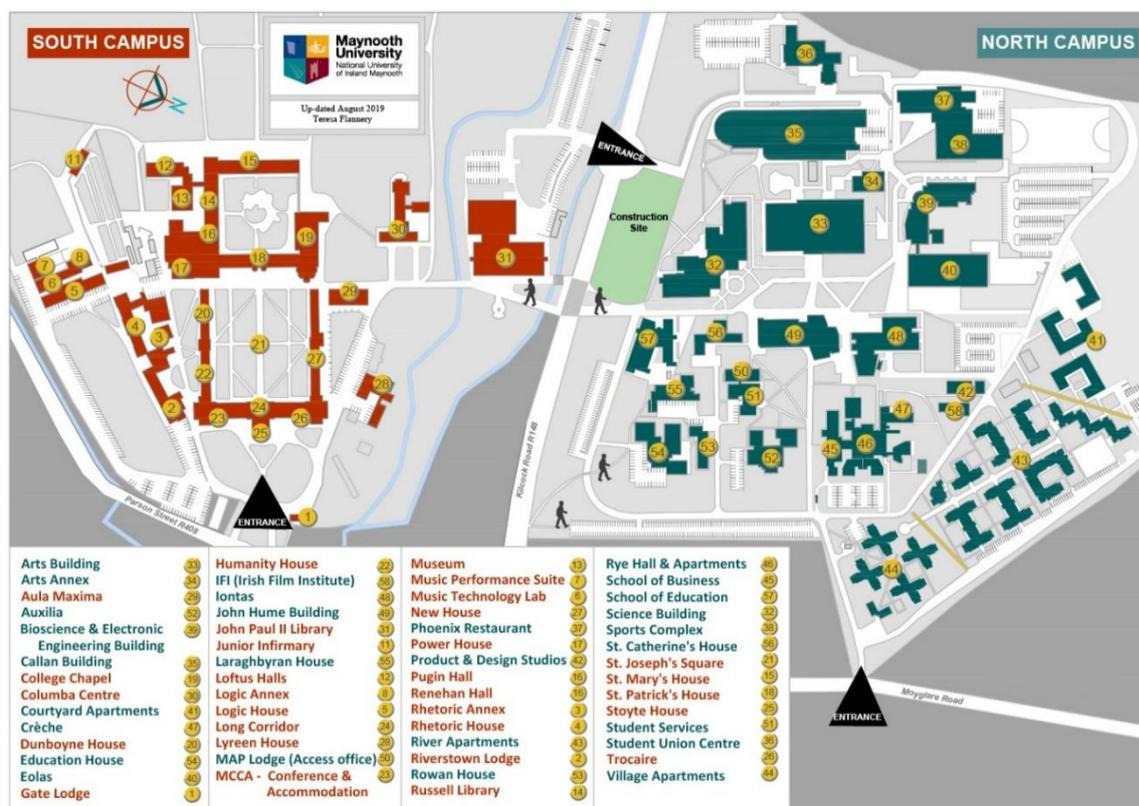
(<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology>), on the department noticeboards in Auxilia, and by following us on twitter @MU\_Sociology

We are delighted to welcome you to the campus of the Maynooth University to begin your studies in Politics. The First year Co-ordinator for 2020-2021 is Prof. John O' Brennan, Room 2.2, Auxilia Building. Phone: (01) 7086554 email: [john.obrennan@mu.ie](mailto:john.obrennan@mu.ie)

Prof. Mary P. Murphy is also your lecturer for your first semester module PO152 and the tutor co-ordinator.

The Centre for the Study of Politics in the Department of Sociology is situated in the Auxilia Building on the North Campus, behind the John Hume Building. The Departmental office is located at Room 1.5 (first floor). It is accessible by stairs and by lift. There is a Departmental post-box in the ground floor foyer where you will be required to submit administrative forms and essays.

**Note for 2020: Due to current Covid-related restrictions we may require online submission of essays and all information on this will be provided in your Modules.**



We have prepared this handbook as a guide to our first year programme. Please retain it for reference throughout the academic year. If you have any query that is not answered in this handbook, if you require clarification about any issue relating to the academic programme or if you have any academic concerns during the year please contact Prof. John O'Brennan in the first instance.

Apart from the standard programme organised for each undergraduate year, you may be interested in other initiatives that are run by the Department of Sociology. Guest seminars and symposia take place from time to time during the teaching semester. These seminars are open to all staff and students, and will be of particular interest to Politics and Sociology students. Please check on the Sociology notice boards in the Auxilia building for details of forthcoming events. You may also access information on the Centre for the Study of Politics in the Department of Sociology on our website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology>. Follow us on twitter @MU\_Sociology for regular updates.

The Centre for the Study of Politics in the Department of Sociology prides itself on the excellent service which we provide to students. In return, we request that you treat your lecturers, tutors and fellow students with the respect and civility they deserve.

This year will also see regular seminars organised by the Maynooth *Centre for European and Eurasian Studies* ([www.maynoothuniversity.ie/Europe](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/Europe) ) which is an inter-disciplinary group focused on contemporary Europe. The Centre was launched in November 2008 and has quickly established itself as one of the leading academic venues for discussion of European affairs; please check the website regularly for updates on seminars and other events.

## The BA Politics

This degree allows students to explore the different ways that politics shapes our lives, the various forms that politics takes, and how politics is organised differently around the world. The key distinguishing feature of Politics at Maynooth University is that we expand the study of politics beyond the conventional focus on *formal political institutions* to include *political sociology* and a distinctive focus on *active citizenship*. Adding these extra pillars to the politics degree means that the BA Politics at Maynooth includes, but goes beyond, the traditional study of parties and elections to include a much broader variety of aspects of politics (including public opinion, community activism, the media, NGOs, new social movements, trade unions etc.). The three interwoven strands of the course are outlined below.

### **Political institutions**

The study of politics begins with the effort to understand political institutions – the formal mechanisms and instruments employed at local, regional, national and international level, to give expression to the political character of collective (human) groupings. Political institutions are formed by and embedded in specific cultural and historical practices. They reflect both traditional or local sensibilities and important external influences on political ideas and societal organization.

The core courses which you will take will focus on the most important political institutions to be found at local, regional, national and international level, the actors who are most active within them, and the activities which these institutions engage in. These institutions range from local bodies such as Kildare County Council to national institutions such as the Dáil and Oireachtas Committees, to regional groupings such as the European Union, and international organizations such as the IMF, United Nations and NATO.

The study of political institutions is vital to gaining an understanding of how individuals are represented within different types of political systems. It also reveals much about where power is concentrated in given political settings, and how specific political actors and social agents interact to produce policy outcomes. We hope that the study of a diverse range of political institutions, from the local to the global, will provide students with a sophisticated understanding of how politics is constituted in the formal sense in different parts of the world.

### **Political sociology**

Political sociology is the study of political inequalities and the connection between political and other forms of inequalities across class, gender and ethnicity. Political sociology is therefore interested in power, who has it and how it is used. It includes a broad range of approaches which study the relationship between politics and society. It studies how underlying social contexts of class, gender

and ethnicity impacts on political actors, pressure groups and social movements and how, in turn, politics shapes social structures.

It examines the central issue of how power is distributed between the state and society, how it is institutionalised and how it is exercised. It examines competing definitions of power including traditional theories of elite power, pluralist power and corporatist power as well as theories of informal power including citizenship, participative democracy, social capital and social movements. In exploring the interdependent relationship between the state and society it examines various arguments for the state to have a more minor or more central role in modern societies.

The modern evolution of the state and society has been made more complex by globalization and the course examines how globalization might impact on state - society relationships, whether it might, for example, diminish the power of the state, whether it gives rise to new forms of power in the shape of new social movements and how it might impact on citizens capacity to be active shapers of their own environment.

### **Politics and active citizenship: a study, a practice and a career**

This course is aimed towards those interested in the process of politics and active citizenship - creative involvement in political life whether at a community, national or global level. We have a quota for mature students and many students will already be active in this way.

Students are likely to go on to find work in areas such as NGOs, political research, activism, diplomacy and international affairs, journalism, development work, community work, public policy, human rights, or other forms of active involvement. Others again may enter electoral and party politics or the institutions of the European Union. Indeed the evidence shows that quite a large number of our BA Politics graduates in recent years have gone on to work for TDs, MEPs or political parties in Dublin and/or Brussels

In first year, you will go on field trips (including the Oireachtas) enabling you to experience a range of political activity, from formal organisations to public protest. The second-year "Active citizenship and participation" core module includes a placement element geared towards active engagement in some area of everyday political life and a fieldtrip to Northern Ireland to examine the roots and legacy of the Troubles. Another fieldtrip to visit the European Union decision-making bodies in Brussels is available to students taking EU politics. Your dissertation will also often involve you in a degree of practical work, and may well grow out of your placement. Finally, it is planned to organise an extended field trip or summer school in a European city as an elective module which would substitute for one of your final-year electives (including prior preparation and a subsequent essay).

These elements are an invaluable way of gaining practical experience and developing your own direction for political involvement as well as possible future careers. For students with prior

experience, they offer the chance to reflect in a more systematic way on their own everyday practice, and to bring research and theoretical skills to bear on the area.

A degree in politics will also provide the knowledge, theories and research skills that will serve students well in any career. The degree equips the graduate with various skills, including the abilities to understand topical issues, to investigate public life through systematic research, to analyse and present information, and to apply these skills to a wide variety of societies around the world.

The course gives you a good overall grounding in key areas of political understanding: active citizenship, formal politics, political theory, political sociology and research methods. You can develop each of these to a greater or lesser extent although you will engage seriously with each pillar of the degree.

### **First year Politics in Maynooth University**

In the first year, students take politics along with three other arts subjects (excluding English and Mathematical Studies). You may also substitute a Critical Skills module for one of those three subjects. First year modules introduce students both to the main concepts in the study of politics, both within the conventional institutional frameworks and within the broader perspectives of political sociology, and to the theory and practice of active citizenship. These topics are covered empirically with modules tackling how politics works in Ireland and a choice of either comparative European or global politics. Modules are taught through lectures and a tutorial programme. In first year, students are given the concepts and knowledge to develop their “political imagination” – the way that we think about and understand politics.

### **Second and third year**

In second year, students take politics along with one of their two other first-year arts subjects. You may take Politics as a Major, Double Honours, or Minor subject along with another subject. In this year, you will deepen your theoretical understanding of politics as well as acquiring the tools to research politics effectively. A key element of this year is the practice placement, offering students the chance to move from observation and analysis of politics to hands-on experience and reflection on that experience. For those studying the EU the opportunity to participate in a fieldtrip to the EU is offered. In second year, students take another required module on society and state and develop their own research into political life, using the research methods learned in second year to write an original research thesis, supported with departmental tutorials. In second and third year, students can take a variety of other optional (elective) modules, with different options being offered each year. Relevant modules from other departments may also be taken.

### **BA (International) degree**

A BA (International) degree will be an option for students who meet the standard required in their first year examination in arts for admission to second year. The programme aims to enrich the

educational experience of the individual student and provide those who successfully complete it with an enhanced degree. This is a four-year degree programme, the third year of which will be spent studying at a university abroad. The modules taken abroad will normally be divided equally between the two subjects studied during second year. Students interested in pursuing the BA (international) degree apply to the relevant Heads of Department in March of their second year.

We encourage students considering B.A. International to take language options within the politics degree structure or taking another language as one of their other course choices. For students restricted to English-language environments, possibilities include the UK, Northern Ireland, the United States, Canada, Bulgaria, Poland and the Netherlands. For those able to operate in other linguistic environments, the possibilities include literally the rest of the world. Over time the Department will develop structured links with particular institutions to facilitate this option further.

### **What do I have to do?**

#### **Study skills and tutorials**

University-level work, and the study of politics in particular, places a high demand on your study skills. It is likely that you will need to learn a range of new study skills, and we will be focussing on these in the first-year modules. In second year, the tutorial programme supports the research component and helps you develop the skills you need to research political life.

#### **Placement programme and assessment**

The “active citizenship” element of the course is not only theoretical, it is also practical. The practice placements in second year are both a key learning opportunity and a chance to develop your future career, finding out what your strengths and preferences are and making contacts which may be useful for your future working life. In the “Active citizenship and participation” module, you are expected to do an average of 3 contact hours per week over 10 weeks, working in the political world (e.g. in an NGO, a community group, the local branch of a political party, a newsletter, a grassroots campaign, or other group or organisation as agreed with the placement coordinator). These placements are supervised by a permanent member of the organisation you are working with, and are assessed on the basis of a “learning journal” which you keep during your time and submit at the end of the placement. Placements may either be organised by yourself or by the placement coordinator.

#### **Dissertation, workshop and assessment**

In third year you carry out a substantial piece of independent research on a topic of your own choosing. This is supported by a one-hour workshop which runs throughout the year. Often this dissertation is based on an organisation or group you have worked with in a placement capacity, and may be exploring some information which is of interest to that organisation or group. The

dissertation counts for a significant proportion of your final marks, and is assessed on the basis of an essay submitted at the end of the first semester and the dissertation itself.

### **The international and comparative approach**

Running through all the different themes and years of the course is an emphasis on the use of historical and comparative analysis as a tool for understanding: setting our own time in perspective so as to get away from assumptions that the way things are now is the way they have always been and always will be; comparing our own experience with the experience of other countries and regions in order to stand back from what is most familiar to us; and developing the linguistic skills needed to go below the surface of the official documents which are routinely translated into English. The course expresses this in modules which focus on comparative and historical methods, on world-systems analysis and the exploration of politics in other countries, but also in many modules which take a comparative and / or historical approach to their subject matter. The options of the BA (International), of taking language options and of the international field trip / summer school are all available for students who wish to pursue this in more depth.

### **The fundamental pillars of the degree**

The course is centred around a number of key themes: active citizenship, formal politics, political sociology, political theory and research methods. These are among the core modules offered; you can take each of them further by choosing options in this area. The distinctive feature of the degree is this breadth of vision of the study and practice of politics.

#### **Active citizenship**

A focus on active citizenship – the ways in which ordinary people take part in politics, often in opposition to the official structures – is a distinctive feature of Politics at Maynooth University. This course introduces you to the theory and practice of active citizenship, supporting this with practice placements in voluntary, community and other political organisations as well as with a range of electives exploring the area in more detail.

#### **Formal politics**

The study of formal political institutions is a core part of any politics course. This course introduces you to the theory and practice of how institutions such as elections, political parties, governments or the European Union work, backed up with electives covering the practical aspects of formal politics and the way it works in a range of countries and areas.

#### **Political sociology**

Although formal institutions are important, they are by no means the only part of politics. Power, organisation and decision-making are central parts of the informal politics that underpins much of the everyday world, from residents' associations to national partnership agreements and from the study of the workplace to the study of crime and punishment. This theme draws on the Sociology

Department's existing strength in political sociology, offering a wide range of electives as well as modules on specific countries and themes.

### **Political theory**

Political theory is both the attempt to understand how the political world works and the debate over how it should work; as such it inevitably goes deep and raises the big questions – of freedom, justice, how we should live and who should decide. This course explores classic and contemporary political theorists as well as electives in a range of areas.

### **Research methods**

This theme gives you the core tools for researching politics. In second year you take either survey or fieldwork research methods, while in third year a range of methods electives are available. Your final-year dissertation is organised around an original, independent piece of political research that you design and carry out in consultation with an experienced supervisor.

### **Alternative 'streams' within the degree**

These are suggested combinations of elective modules which you can choose in order to develop a strength in an area which you are particularly interested in: global citizenship (the politics of global change), cultural citizenship (aspects of politics and culture), and social citizenship (aspects of social policy). These are not formalised options, but suggestions from the Department as to which courses are more closely interconnected. Modules offered may vary according to resources and staff availability.

#### **Global Citizenship: the Politics of Global Change**

Politics is increasingly global, from the construction of inequality via public issues such as the environment, human rights or corruption through to the politics of the 'New World Order' and the complications presented by climate change. This stream offers a range of electives tackling these topics at a global level including International Relations and the European Union.

#### **Cultural Citizenship: Aspects of Politics and Culture**

The Sociology Department has a long-standing focus on the politics of culture, taken up in this stream with an exploration of issues such as popular music, technology, the role of the media and collective memory.

#### **Social Citizenship: Aspects of Social Policy**

Social policy is a key aspect of politics, and this stream offers a range of options for those interested in pursuing the topic further. In particular social policy is analyzed from a broad perspective which seeks to combine economic, political and governance issues with a rigorous grounding in social theory.

### Language Options

The course includes the option to study a number of languages which can be stepping-stones to a BA International or to further study in or about the countries where these languages are spoken.

### Cognate disciplines and course combinations

We recommend combining this course with subjects such as European Studies, Sociology, History, Anthropology, Geography, Philosophy or Applied Social Studies. It can also work well with a linguistic / international subject such as French, German, Spanish, or Basque. This course **cannot** be combined with English or Mathematical Studies.

### Structure of the course (courses change from year to year depending on staff availability)

#### Semester 1

*28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020*

COMPULSORY MODULES	Credits
PO152 Introduction to Political Institutions Prof. Mary Murphy	7.5

#### Semester 2

*1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 – 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021*

COMPULSORY MODULES	Credits
PO151 Introduction to Political Ideas Dr. Philip Finn	7.5

## Teaching and Learning Formats 2020

There are still a lot of uncertainties about the year ahead. We have done our best here to provide a guide to how we see the teaching in the department operating in the first semester, under current health guidelines.

Please keep a close eye on our 'Blended Learning Hub' on the department website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology/blendedlearninghub>

This will be updated during the year with information regarding various aspects of teaching and learning in the department.

Please follow the information from your lecturers through Moodle and other media particularly closely.

Our overall approach is to provide as much 'content' (lectures, readings etc) as clearly and interestingly as possible and to provide you with plenty of opportunities to discuss the ideas, knowledge and information in each module. In some cases, that will be in-person and in some cases it will be through a variety of online formats.

We have three main formats – Live, Flipped and Remote – and you can find explanations of these different approaches [here](#). The exact form these take will vary by module across each year. The format for your First Year, First Semester module SO152 is 'Flipped' and this is detailed on Page 12.

Given the ongoing health crisis, it is very possible that the mix of courses may change during the semester and affect the format of each module. You will understand that the specifics of some of these factors are confidential and it may not be possible to fully explain changes in format. It is possible that overall we may be able to move to more in-person teaching as the year goes on, but it is also possible that we will shift towards more remote, online teaching and learning, as circumstances change.

While we provide a mix of in-person and online teaching, we also understand that student circumstances vary. In general, please prepare as much as possible for both. However, our approach is also to provide as much back-up as possible for the in-person teaching so that students who miss out on some of that teaching will have an online backup to turn to.

This includes:

- recording of live lectures (except in the case of discussion oriented or tutorial style sessions);
- provision of other online materials;
- avoiding assessments in class;
- avoiding attendance marks (although there may be participation marks, which can be completed online)

If you miss in person sessions, we can't guarantee that everything will be replaced or replicated online. However, the bulk of the material will be available in some recorded or other online format. There may be technological or other issues that interfere with that from time to time but please bear with us while we do our best to mesh together in person and online learning.

We will also make clear before the start of the semester how sub-groups within classes will be allocated (probably on an alphabetical basis) and how your tutorials will be organised.

Please don't hesitate to contact the relevant university offices if you think that you could benefit from various supports that the university offers. Every year, many students avail of these supports and they make a huge difference in their university experience.

## Teaching Format for Semester 1: PO152

Title	In-Person Elements	Online Elements	Student Engagement with the Course Material	Most likely adjustment in case of fully remote teaching
'Flipped'	<p>Meetings in person with groups of less than 50.</p> <p>For modules with over 50, sub-groups of the class will attend different meetings.</p> <p>Focus on discussion and questions around lecture materials which are primarily online.</p> <p>Unlikely to be recorded, may be supplemented with online Q&amp;A</p>	<p>Lectures and other course material will primarily be provided online</p> <p>The usual materials (slides, readings etc) would be on Moodle</p> <p>Discussion fora, questions for lecturers etc available on Moodle but also at in person meetings</p>	<p>Follow the primary course material (eg lectures) online</p> <p>Attend the in person meetings for discussion, clarification etc</p> <p>Use of Moodle to access materials, Q&amp;A etc</p>	<p>Move of discussion to online formats (lectures etc will already be provided remotely)</p>

Individual meetings with lecturers will vary depending on the circumstances with some meetings online (eg via Teams) and some in person. While we can't guarantee that you won't miss anything if you can't make an in-person meeting, the great bulk of the material will be accessible in online formats.

## **Tutorials:**

All modules are linked to an innovative tutorial programme that emphasises the skills required for critical thinking in politics- the ability to read critically, analyse and evaluate arguments, compare and contrast perspectives and develop your own independent political imagination. The tutorials, facilitated by experienced tutors, provide practical instruction in the art of reading and writing political ideas and institutions and also provide the skills needed for writing your essays.

First semester Tutorials will commence in Week Three of the semester, Week beginning October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and will run for eight consecutive weeks (with the exception of the reading week). Second semester Tutorials will commence in Week Three of the semester, Week beginning February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and will run for eight consecutive weeks (with the exception of the reading week). Students **must** attend their weekly Tutorials. Further details on Tutorials and on a writing support initiative will be given at the beginning of lectures.

Tutorials are designed in small groups and you need to sign into a tutorial group through the module MOODLE site. There will be a list of times and signing into a particular time is organised on a first-come, first-served basis. Once you have logged onto the MOODLE site you will be invited to choose a tutorial time from a menu of optional hours. Please ensure that you choose a tutorial time that does not clash with times for your modules in your other subjects in both semesters.

**You can sign into your First Semester Module Tutorials [PO152] on the Moodle homepage for this module. Tutorial sign-ups will open on the PO152 MOODLE page on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2020 at 10am and will run until 12noon on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020. You will remain in this tutorial group for your Second Semester Module [SO151]**

## **Note on tutorials in 2020:**

Tutorials will be provided in person but with online provision available where needed, based on individual, university and societal circumstances. This may be subject to change and you will be informed of any changes in advance.

Further information on tutorials will be provided at the beginning of term in your first semester module and available on Moodle.

## First Year Programme: overview



In the first year programme we introduce the conceptual tools that form the basis for the study of politics. Our aim is to develop your capacity to think about political ideas and institutions, where these come from and why they matter, in order to make the crucial linkages between different elements of politics at local, national and international level. Politics shapes the lives of individuals and communities. Equally, how we experience politics may lead us, over time, to seek changes in how political institutions are organised. Thus, our collective experiences help to configure and re-configure social and political reality. Choosing Politics means choosing to embark on a new and exciting educational adventure. We are here to guide you in your quest for knowledge, insight and a deeper understanding of social reality.

### Goal for the year:

- To develop critical thinking by introducing you to key concepts and contributions in Politics both in Ireland and internationally.

**Introduction to Political Institutions** (PO152, Dr. Mary P. Murphy) This module introduces students to government and politics, and focuses on the key institutions to be found in modern political systems, what they contribute to processes of governance, and how power is distributed across and among those institutions. It interrogates the power of the principal political actors in Irish and European contexts and provides a comparative theoretical approach to understanding the role, function and relative power of these institutional sites. It encourages students to think about how institutional design impacts on politics and policy-making. Studying political institutions reveals much about where power is concentrated and how political actors interact to produce policy outcomes and shape the world we live in. Political institutions are thus formal mechanisms and instruments employed to manage power relations and enable decision making at local, regional, national and international level. By formal political institutions we refer to, for example, constitutions and laws, executives and legislatures, parties and elections. These institutions regulate, channel and shape interests, identities and ideologies in political communities. Yet they also reflect, and often stabilise existing power relations. Politics and political systems have been characterised in recent years by distinct modes of flux, with an increasingly discernible mood which political scientists refer to as ‘anti-politics’, ‘anti-system’ and ‘anti-establishment’. The most obvious manifestation of that mood has been the drop in electoral support for established parties of the centre, a corresponding rise in support for populist right and left wing alternatives and, in some jurisdictions, significant protest movements. This course will highlight these important contemporary phenomena as it evaluates the significance of political institutions in contemporary politics.

**Introduction to Political Ideas** (PO151, Dr. Philip Finn)

The main aims of this course are to introduce students to some of the principal ideas which inform how politics is practiced, and relating these to the contemporary context in order to understand better how they work. The course will introduce, examine and interrogate three basic ideas central to politics: power, liberty and justice. With the first, a central concern in politics is the balance between the power of the state and that of the individual. But are all individuals equally powerful? And if not, what implications might this have for the power of the State? Using general readings on theories of power, and specific readings from key theorists Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704), we will examine a range of contemporary issues. The second objective of the course is to examine the issue of liberty – a key concept in political theory. When are we truly free? To help answer this question we will look at two opposing viewpoints, John Stuart Mill’s (1806-1873) classic liberal conception and Karl Marx’s (1818-1883) critique of that perspective. Finally, we will examine

the notion of justice looking at three radically different conceptions of it; first the liberal tradition of John Rawls (1921-2002), then the libertarian tradition as exemplified by Robert Nozick (1938-2002) and finally the socialist tradition, represented by G.A. Cohen (1941-2009). The central issue in our enquiry is the balance between individual rights and responsibilities versus those of the collective, taking the issue of taxation as a contemporary example to explore this dichotomy. In this way students will have a broad conception of three main ideas guiding the practice of politics, and the issues and dilemmas which these ideas present as they are exercised in contemporary life.

Staff teaching on the first-year modules and their research interests

**Prof Mary P. Murphy** is Professor of Politics in the Department of Sociology. She has research interests in gender and social security, globalisation and welfare states, the politics of redistribution and power and civil society. She has published widely, most recently *Careless to Careful Activation: Making Activation Work for Women* (Dublin NWCi 2012) and *Towards the Second Republic: Irish Politics after the Celtic Tiger* (with Peadar Kirby, Pluto Ireland, 2011). She is an active advocate for social justice and gender equality, a member of the national advisory group on tax and social welfare, a Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and a regular media commentator. Her work has also appeared in journals such as *Administration*, the *Irish Journal of Sociology*, *New Political Economy*, and *Policy and Politics*. She is also a regular contributor to Irish television and radio on issues of social justice including *RTE Prime Time*, *RTE The Late Debate*, *RTE Morning Ireland*, *TV3 Tonight with Vincent Browne*, and many other outlets. Prof Murphy is also a member of the Council of State.

#### **Dr. Philip Finn**

Dr Philip Finn is Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Maynooth University. His research interests include welfare conditionality, the sociology of everyday life, social reproduction, and the politics of work and non-work. He has recently completed his PhD, *The Absurdity of Welfare: Experiences of Irish Welfare Conditionality*. He was a visiting fellow at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, York University, as part of the Welfare Conditionality Project in 2019. He has presented his research findings on the use of conditionality and sanctions in labour activation to the Irish Parliament's Joint Committee on Employment Affairs and Social Protection. He has also co-authored the report *The 'High Road' Back to Work: Developing a Public Employment Eco System for a Post-Covid Recovery* (with Mary Murphy, Nuala Whelan and Michael McGann).

**Please take note of the following schedule of important dates:**

Monday Sept 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	First semester lectures commence.
Thursday, 1 <sup>st</sup> October at 10am until 12 noon on Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Use MOODLE site of PO152 to sign up for a tutorial for the first <i>and</i> second semester [your sign up group for PO152 remains the same for the second semester PO151]
Monday Oct 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	Third week of semester. Tutorials begin and run for eight consecutive weeks.
Monday Oct 26 <sup>th</sup> – Friday Oct 30 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Study week- NO CLASSES
Thursday November 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2020  [This date may be subject to change]	First semester essay due for PO152
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	Semester One tutorial programme ends
Friday December 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2020  A special essay clinic will be scheduled this week affording students the opportunity for feedback on their essays.	End of first semester classes
Jan 2021	Semester 1 Assessments conclude
Monday February 1st, 2021	Second semester lectures commence
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> February, 2021	Third week of semester. Tutorials for PO151 begin and run for eight consecutive weeks
Monday March 15 <sup>th</sup> – Friday March 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	Study week NO CLASSES
Monday April 5 <sup>th</sup> – Friday April 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	EASTER VACATION
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2021	Semester Two tutorial programme <i>ends</i>
Dates to be confirmed in second semester	Second semester essay due for PO151

Friday May 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2021  A special essay clinic will be scheduled this week affording students the opportunity for feedback on their essays.	Conclusion of second semester
May 2021	Examinations commence (if there are examinations)
Late July/Early August (TBC)	Deadline for repeat candidates to submit continuous assessment work

**Please ensure prior to the examination periods that you are correctly registered in the modules for which you wish to obtain credits.**

### **About Politics and Sociology at Maynooth University**

The Centre for the Study of Politics at the Sociology Department at Maynooth University is committed to the pursuit of excellence in our teaching and our research. Over the years we have guided many students who have grown to love the discipline of Sociology, and to value the sociological perspective. We hope that you too will share this positive experience during your years at Maynooth University. The Department of Sociology at Maynooth University currently has 19 full-time teaching staff, a team of tutors, and 3 Executive Assistants.

We cater for approximately up to a thousand students across our undergraduate programme, and approximately twenty students who are engaged in postgraduate studies in the Department. We offer three different Taught M.A. degrees, two of which are taught on an inter-disciplinary basis. We also supervise students completing M.Litt and Ph.D degrees. For more details on these programmes check out our website: [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/academic/sociology](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/academic/sociology).

The subject matter of politics and sociology is diverse, and our programme at Maynooth University reflects the varied interests of the members of the Department which are listed below:

**Dr Barry Cannon** joined Maynooth in 2013 and specializes in democratization and development, particularly in conflict areas in the Latin America region. Since graduating with a PhD from DCU in

2003 he worked for Irish development cooperation NGO, Comhlámh, on an Irish Aid funded project on international volunteering. From 2007 he worked in DCU on an Irish Aid-funded project working with civil society organizations and universities in Central America (Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras) and researched with Dr. Mo Hume of the University of Glasgow on democratization in the three project countries. From 2010-2013 he worked on an Irish Research Council (IRC) funded project reviewing the right in Latin America, focusing on Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela. He has published widely including *Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Populism and Democracy in a Globalised Age* (MUP, 2009), *Civil Society and the State in Left-led Latin America: Challenges and Limitations to Democratization* (Zed: 2012), co-edited with Prof. Peadar Kirby and *The Right in Latin America* (Routledge, 2016), and in academic journals, including *Democratization*, *Development in Practice*, *Irish Political Studies*, *Latin American Politics and Society*, and *Third World Quarterly*.

**Prof John O'Brennan:** is Jean Monnet Professor of European Integration. His research interests are divided between the process and politics of EU enlargement and EU foreign policy on the one hand, and Ireland's relationship with the European Union on the other. He has published a number of books and journal articles on EU enlargement including *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union* (Routledge, 2006) and *National Parliaments within the Enlarged European Union* (Routledge, 2007). His articles have appeared in the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, the *Dublin Review of Books*, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, *European Political Science*, *Global Society*, the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, and the *Journal of European Integration* amongst others. He is a frequent contributor to both the national and international media on EU issues. He is also a member of the Irish government's Brexit Stakeholder Advisory group which advises the Minister for Foreign Affairs on Brexit's impact on Ireland.

#### **Dr. Pauline Cullen**

Research interests include political sociology; gender inequality, social movements; civil society and state relations; nongovernmental organisations; social policy and European Integration; coalitions between diverse constituencies; activism on social rights beyond national settings.

#### **Professor Colin Coulter**

Research interests include development studies, global politics, Marxism, ethnicity and nationalism, popular culture and in particular popular music and Northern Irish politics and society.

#### **Dr. Laurence Cox**

Research interests include social movement research (movement waves, alterglobalization and anti-austerity movements, European social movements, movement theorising, protest

policing, knowledge and learning production in social movements, activist sustainability); Buddhist Studies (Buddhism and Ireland, early western Buddhists in Asia); new religious movements; sociology of knowledge and culture (history of ideas, sociology of intellectuals, counter culture); working-class studies (community organising, oral history); social theory (western Marxism, socialist feminism); and methodology (participatory action research, community research).

### **Professor Seán Ó Riain**

Research interests are in the sociology of work, economic sociology, comparative and global political economy and social inequality. Specific areas of interest include work organisation and workplace regimes; developmental states; the global knowledge economy; economic liberalism; changing European societies.

### **Dr. Mary Benson**

My research interests all come under the broad heading of urban sociology. I am particularly interested in changing cityscapes; gentrification; place/ public space; urban exploration; qualitative methods and visual representations. These fields of interest intersect with other topics of interest such as consumption, identity, social class and inequality.

### **Dr. Delma Byrne**

Research interests include social stratification in education and the labour market spanning the primary, second-level and higher education sectors as well as post-secondary education and training; transitions between education and the labour market and the evaluation of educational interventions.

### **Dr. Brian Conway**

Research interests include sociology of religion; collective memory; history of Irish sociology. Current research focuses on examining Catholic public discourses and institutional arrangements, trends and patterns in the Catholic workforce, and religious institutional responses to scandal, all in comparative perspective.

### **Professor Mary P. Corcoran**

Research interests include the Irish migratory experience, urban transformation and change, public culture. She is particularly interested in the fate of the public realm in the face of privatization and monetization trends. Professor Corcoran is currently working at the interface of sociology and art and has collaborated with artist Mary Burke on a number of community engaged projects.

**Dr. Eoin Flaherty**

I am interested in how patterns of inequality are formed and maintained, and how they change over time. I study these processes with a particular focus on income inequality during the late 20th/early 21st century, and instances of famine during the 19th century (mainly Ireland). I am also interested in how human societies have formed systems of cooperation and managed resources collectively, and whether such systems were resilient to environmental stress. I am also interested in: Top incomes and the 'super-rich', labour's share of national income, time series and pooled time series cross-section analysis. Financialisation, rentiers, and power resources. Famine, common-pool resource systems, primitive communism, and nineteenth-century Ireland. Complexity theory, human ecology, and environmental sociology.

**Professor G. Honor Fagan**

Research interests include Human Security, Gender and Development Governance, and Social Sustainability.

**Prof. Jane Gray**

Research and teaching interests include families and households, comparative-historical sociology, life history analysis. Her current research focuses on: life histories and social change in twentieth century Ireland; family and community, gender, household economies and social change.

**Professor Aphra Kerr**

Research interests focus on technology, media and emergent digital research methods. Current research explores: gender and diversity in digital media; inequality and algorithmic decision making on online platforms; digital citizenship and internet cultures; new forms of virtual work and production. Recent projects have explored digital games production and policy, online community management work, broadcasting and diversity.

**Dr. Rebecca King Ó Riain**

Research and teaching interests include: globalization, emotions and technology; racial/ethnic beauty pageants; critical race theory; qualitative methods; interracial marriage and multiracial people. Her current research explores globalized interpersonal and interactive forms of bodily culture through skin altering practices in Asia and Europe, beauty pageants, and Asian popular culture (Korean and Japanese dramas).

### **Dr. Paul Ryan**

Research interests revolve around the sociology of personal life specifically the study of the family, sexual citizenship, sex work, gay and lesbian studies, social movements and qualitative research methods.

### **Dr. Eamonn Slater**

Research interests include the structure of modernity, the heritage industry (including tourism), the social construction of landscape and the environment, visual sociology and historical sociology. All of these sociological areas are investigated with a special emphasis on Irish society.

### ***Consultation***

It is vital that we are made aware, as soon as possible of any difficulties you may have in relation to your work or with any aspect of the first year programme. If you have a problem or question which relates generally to the first year programme, or to your participation in it, please contact Prof. John O' Brennan, the Politics co-ordinator in the first instance (see contact details p.3).

If you have a query in relation to a particular lecture course, please contact the lecturer who is giving that course. Staff members are available for consultation at various hours during each week of term. It is difficult to hold regular in person office hours during these times but staff will post contact times on the module Moodle sites. Alternatively, you may make an appointment by email or by contacting Áine Edmonds or Trish Connerty, Sociology Department, Room 1.5, The Auxilia Building, Tel: 708-3659.

In addition to consulting with individual lecturers or the Politics coordinator, students may communicate with the Sociology Department through the Staff Student Consultative Committee. The purpose of this body is to provide a forum where the concerns and interests of students can be raised. The committee consists of the staff year co-ordinators and student representatives of the various years who will be elected by students after the beginning of term.

Should you wish to raise a matter at the Staff-Student Consultative Committee you can do so in the following ways:

1. Talk to the staff member who has administrative responsibility for second year (Prof. John O' Brennan)
2. Talk to your first year student representatives after they are elected.

For more information on contacting staff in the department and university, please go to:  
<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology/blendedlearninghub>

And click on the *Who Should I Contact?* tab

## **Communications**

It is assumed that you will 'attend' your module in some form on a consistent basis, whether that is in person or online (and this will vary from module to module). It is also assumed that you will check the relevant departmental webpages once every two or three days.

You are responsible for familiarising yourself with announcements or notices provided during periods of time that are absent from class or from campus. It is assumed that you check your MUMAIL email account every two to three days (even if you primarily use another email account) and that you check module Moodle sites regularly.

All Lecturer and Department announcements go to your Maynooth University email account only. Please make sure that you check your Maynooth University email account every two to three days (even if you primarily use another email account). Please also enable your Moodle account to receive messages from the Centre for the Study of Politics at the sociology department and check your module Moodle sites regularly.

You are responsible for keeping up to date with announcements or notices provided during periods of time that you are absent from class or from campus.

In the next section of this handbook we provide some guidelines on essay submission and some notes on plagiarism. It is vital that you acquaint yourself with this information in advance of preparing and submitting work to the Department of Sociology. Additional support for essay writing will be made available through the Tutorial programme and through initiatives developed by the Teaching and Learning Centre at Maynooth University and the Library. Many students check their work for plagiarism through the Turnitin computer programme. The Department of Sociology reserves the right to request that students submit their essays through the Turnitin programme.

## **Assessing Essays**

The main criteria in assessing an essay are:

- level of understanding of the issue
- range and extent of readings and the use made of those readings
- logical development of the discussion

- awareness and discussion of alternative arguments or viewpoints
- clarity of the writing style

In general, a first class essay or paper will

- show an excellent understanding of the issue under discussion
- demonstrate an ability to use analytical reasoning
- draw on a good range of readings in developing the argument
- will be written in a clear and concise style.

An essay will fail if it does not address the question; reveals a fundamental lack of understanding of the issue; or is based on far too limited a range of readings.

### **Statement on plagiarism**

Plagiarism involves an attempt to use an element of another person's work, without appropriate acknowledgement in order to gain academic credit. It may include the unacknowledged verbatim reproduction of material, unsanctioned collusion, but is not limited to these matters; it may also include the unacknowledged adoption of an argumentative structure, or the unacknowledged use of a source or of research materials.

For example, when you directly copy another person's text without placing it in quotation marks and without acknowledging the source, you are plagiarising. The same is true when you present someone else's original idea, research or argument as though it were your own.

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. It reveals an unwillingness to think for oneself and is both unethical and illegal under copyright laws. Please do not make the mistake of assuming that we will not recognise plagiarised material. It is almost always possible to identify text that has been professionally copy-edited, or is different in style from your own. The direct copying of passages (including illustrations) from a book, an article or the Internet without adequate references is a serious breach of academic trust and practice. Submitting essays or projects written by anyone other than yourself will also result in heavy penalties. As your final assessment is partly based on written assignments, plagiarism is equivalent to cheating at examinations.

Maynooth University considers plagiarism to be a serious academic misconduct, deserving of academic penalties. This document sets out the procedures for dealing with cases of plagiarism or suspected plagiarism in taught programmes of the University.

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/node/414657>

The Department of Sociology operates an “early warning” system. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the student is required to meet with the appropriate lecturer to discuss the problem. If this is a first instance, the student will receive a warning but will be allowed to resubmit their work.

Second and subsequent instances of this kind will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Maynooth University Policy on Plagiarism.

The Maynooth University guidelines on plagiarism are available at:

[https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Plagiarism%20Sept%202015\\_0.pdf](https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Plagiarism%20Sept%202015_0.pdf)

### **Guidelines for citation**

Books and articles read by you and referred to in your essay must be cited both in the essay itself and in the list of references at the end. **Only include in your list of references material you have read yourself and have referred to in your essay.** The usual procedure in sociology is to integrate references into the text itself.

The Department has prepared specific guidelines for citation please see here

[https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/ASA%20Referencing%20Guide%20for%20MU%20Studentsfinal\\_0.pdf](https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/ASA%20Referencing%20Guide%20for%20MU%20Studentsfinal_0.pdf)

### **Penalties for Late Work**

We understand that students will face multiple challenges this year and we will do whatever we can to facilitate your completion of all your work and your programme as a whole. However, our approach is to work to the programme deadlines, more or less as usual, and then provide accommodations and supports as needed. Otherwise it will become very difficult to manage all the competing demands on your studies. We encourage you to manage your schedule of assessment, as well as of teaching and learning, very carefully. We will provide resources at the Blended Learning Hub to help you do this.

Our overall policy is as follows.

Where applicable, the following penalties apply. If coursework is submitted late, 10 marks will be deducted. No coursework will be accepted 14 calendar days after the deadline. Please

provide a medical certificate covering the relevant period or explain the other extenuating circumstances. These should generally be communicated to, and accepted by, the lecturer/tutor prior to, or immediately after, the relevant deadline. Please note that work submitted after the deadline may not receive individual feedback from the lecturer concerned.

### **Requirements for Autumn Supplemental Examination**

Details of Autumn resit assessment will be provided during the year, depending on the changing circumstances. However, the basic principles will remain that assessment completed during the year can be carried forward towards the resits.

### **Programme Advisory Office:**

The Programme Advisory Office, within the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning, is available to advise you on any choices you might have to make related to your programme including subject choice. The Programme Advisory Office acts as a guide to students as you navigate your own way through your programme options. The Programme Advisory Office consists of the Programme Advisor, Caitriona McGrattan, who is supported by a team of PG students during peak times.

Incoming first year students are briefed by the Programme Advisor during Welcome Week about the programme choices you will be asked to make during your academic journey at Maynooth University. The Programme Advisory Team are available in person to answer any follow up questions students may have: details of times and location are available on the PAO website. Continuing second year students may also avail of the service if you are unsure about your programme options for example if you have any questions about the difference in major/minor pathways or whether or not to choose to take an Elective.

The Programme Advisory Office can be contacted via

Email: [programme.choices@mu.ie](mailto:programme.choices@mu.ie)

Telephone: 01 474 7428

In person: please see their website for information about meeting a member of the Programme Advisory Team: [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/programme-advisory-office](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/programme-advisory-office)

**The library offers guides and tutorials which will be beneficial to you as a student and you should check these out on the library website.**

**The Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Writing Centre also offer workshops and tutorials <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/centre-teaching-and-learning>**

**The Experiential Learning Office contact details:**

Email: [Aisling.Flynn@mu.ie](mailto:Aisling.Flynn@mu.ie)

Tel: 01 474 7760

Website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/experiential-learning-office>

Location: Room1.18, ground floor Rowan House

Why not experience more from your degree programme by opting to take an experiential learning module\*, such as Professional Development and Employability (involving employer-led sessions) or MU SPUR (paid six week summer research placement) where you will be learning by doing and reflecting, and have the opportunity to connect classroom content with real-world experience.

\*The availability of experiential learning modules is limited, timetable dependent and may require an application process.

### **Professional Development and Employability**

Experiential learning professional development and employability modules are available to eligible second year students. The key purpose of these modules, involving a number of employers, is to facilitate students in their academic, personal and professional career

development, so that they will be well equipped to secure internships and to successfully enter the graduate labour market.

See Skills for Success EX201 and EX202 for more details

### **MU SPUR (Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research)**

An active research based and paid experiential learning programme for successful undergraduate pre-final year student applicants who wish to learn more about the postgraduate experience, by working closely with faculty mentors on research projects across a range of disciplines.

### **Community Based Service Learning**

Community Based Service Learning presents a credit-bearing academic experience that empowers students to engage with their surrounding communities, which often results in enhancing student's academic, civic, social and personal development, whilst they contribute to the common good. The experiential learning office facilitates academic staff in offering community based service learning experiences with their students.

**You may also find the library helpful in finding, using and citing sociological resources. They also have printers, laptops and other helpful resources on avoiding plagiarism.**

#### **USEFUL LINKS:**

Library homepage: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library>

Sociology library guide: <http://nuim.libguides.com/sociology>

LIST online: <http://nuim.libguides.com/list-online>

Undergraduate library contact: Áine Carey, [aine.carey@mu.ie](mailto:aine.carey@mu.ie) & Niall O'Brien