

MASTER OF ARTS EXAMINATION, 2018  
Second Year, Third Semester  
ENGLISH  
Renaissance Political Thought

Answer any *three* questions with special reference to the relevant texts in your course.

All carry equal marks.

1. "Both Bartolus and Marsiglio, in different ways, reflect the shift away from earlier power structures". Does this comment seem accurate in understanding the rise of Italian city-states in the 12th and 13th centuries? Discuss.
2. Do you agree that Florentine civic humanism inaugurates a project of modernity? Discuss with reference to the texts that you have studied.
3. Do you think that Ottaviano's discussion of the political role of the courtier is related to the earlier prescriptions about courtly behaviour? Give reasons.
4. Isaiah Berlin wrote: "the central strain which runs through both (*The Prince* and *The Discourses*) is one and the same. ... Political judgments, attitudes toward individuals or states, toward Fortuna and *necessità*, evaluation of methods, degree of optimism, the fundamental mood—these vary between one work and another, perhaps within the same exposition." Discuss.
5. It is often said that Guicciardini's *Maxims* reflect his belief that experience is a more reliable guide to political action than either abstract speculation or examples drawn from ancient history. Do you agree? Give reasons.
6. What are the implications of Bodin's description of sovereignty as being perpetual and absolute?
7. "Luther's savage rejection of the possibility of popular resistance to constituted authority is utterly reversed in the writings of his successors". Does this change reflect the needs of political expediency? Discuss.
8. Comment on the principal differences between the private law and constitutional defences of political resistance. You can refer to two or more of the texts that you have studied.
9. Comment on Milton's defence of tyrannicide in the *Tenure*. How would you assess the political arguments that the writer gives?
10. Discuss Hobbes' view of sovereign power in *Leviathan*. Would you agree with the view that it is based primarily upon fear? Give reasons.
11. "To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what estate all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of Nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man" (*Two Treatises*, 2.1.1). Comment on the idea of freedom indicated in this sentence.