

**Demonstrative version and guidelines  
for the area «Political science»**

**Profile:**  
**«Politics. Economics. Philosophy»**

**DEMONSTRATIVE VERSION**

**You have 180 min to complete this task.**

**1. Write an academic essay in English on one of the following topics.**

Essay topics:

1) Lord Acton is known for his phrase “*Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely*” (1887). Can political science, economics, or philosophy validate this statement? Explain your answer.

2) What factors determined the successes in modernization of authoritarian regimes? Compare specific cases of such regimes.

3) Why are concepts and criteria of justice elaborated many hundred years ago still relevant for current discussions?

4) Assess the following arguments (based on the US case) aiming to refute the theory of political business cycles. “*The public is too wise to attach importance to what party rules the economy. Both Democrats and Republicans prefer prosperous economy and low inflation. Both parties have best economists at their service. Why should one believe that the economy would be better off under the power of one party rather than the other?*”

5) The debt crisis in Greece appeared to be a challenge for both experts and politicians. Should the bankruptcy of a country be treated in the same way as the bankruptcy of an individual firm? What is common for these two situations? What are the differences between them?

**2. Read the following fragment and answer in English the questions given below:**

“The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent soever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men. This maxim is true in general; though I cannot forbear thinking, that it may possibly admit of exceptions, and that we often establish it with too little reserve and limitation. There may be some circumstances, where the commerce and riches and luxury of individuals, instead of adding strength to the public, will serve only to thin its armies, and diminish its authority among the neighbouring nations”.

- 1) Present and explain your hypothesis about the author of this fragment, and the epoch when it was written.
- 2) Give your interpretation of factors and circumstances, due to which commerce might enhance “the greatness of a state”, as well as of factors and circumstances, due to which commerce might “diminish the authority of a state among the neighbouring nations”.
- 3) Express your opinion about the relevance of the author’s idea for contemporary world: is it more valid, or less valid, or equally valid now as compared with author’s time? Why?

## METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

### Assessment criteria

The maximal grades are:

- ◆ for the essay – 65 points;
- ◆ for text interpretation – 35 points.

Preliminary assessment criteria (with maximal points for each):

#### Essays (section 1):

- ◆ correct use of key scientific concepts related to the topic of the essay (up to 15 points);
- ◆ knowledge of key sources and authors, ability to identify and analyze alternative approaches and viewpoints related to the topic of the essay (up to 25 points);
- ◆ ability to draw ideas and concepts from neighboring scientific disciplines (up to 10 points);
- ◆ writing ability (text structuring, logical thinking, clarity of arguments) (up to 15 points).

#### Text interpretation (section 2):

The grade for the text interpretation exercise is a sum total of grades for each answer. The share of each answer in the final grade depends on the assessment of the quality of understanding and ability to interpret the text, as well as on the level of language proficiency.

### Topic areas for Olympiad tasks

Essay topics and text interpretation tasks could correspond to the following areas of political science and economics:

- I. History of political and economic thought;
- II. Theory of economic policy;
- III. Comparative political studies;
- IV. Political philosophy;
- V. Political relations and political process in contemporary Russia;
- VI. Political analysis and forecasting;
- VII. Political economics and public choice theory;
- VIII. Methods and methodology of the social sciences.

### Recommended literature:

1. *Macroeconomics*. By Andrew B. Abel, Ben S. Bernanke. Boston Addison-Wesley (var. eds)
2. *Macroeconomics*. By Rudiger Dornbusch and Stanley Fischer. [McGraw-Hill](#) (var. eds)
3. *History of Economic Thought*. By H. Landreth and David Colander. Houghton Mifflin (var. eds)
4. Kymlicka, Will. *Contemporary Political Philosophy. An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford University Press. 2002.
5. Manin, Bernard. *The Principles of Representative Government*. Cambridge University Press. 2002.
6. Muller, Dennis. *Public Choice – III*. 3d ed. Cambridge University Press. 2003.
7. North, D.C. J.J. Wallis, and B.R. Weingast. *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*. Cambridge University Press. 2009.

8. Olson, Mancur. *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1982.
9. Stiglitz, Joseph, Amartya Sen, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi. *Mis-measuring Our Lives. Why GDP Doesn't Add Up*. NY: The New Press. 2010.
10. Tilly, Charles. *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650-2000*. Cambridge University Press. 2004.
11. Elster, Jon. *Explaining Social Behavior. More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press. 2007.
12. *Companion to the History of Economic Thought*. Ed. by W. Samuels, J. Biddle and J. Davis. Oxford: Blackwell. 2003.  
[http://is.vsfs.cz/el/6410/zima2012/BA\\_ETD/um/3872546/Blackwell-ACompaniontotheHistoryofEconomicThought.pdf](http://is.vsfs.cz/el/6410/zima2012/BA_ETD/um/3872546/Blackwell-ACompaniontotheHistoryofEconomicThought.pdf)
13. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. – Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
14. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. – Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
15. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*. – Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.