

Candidate Name.....



St Swithun's  
WINCHESTER

## Politics

Sixth Form Academic Assessment

Sample paper

Time allowed: 1 hour

### Instructions to Candidates

1. Read the extract and answer **all** of the questions.
2. The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
3. You will be assessed on your ability to organise and present information, ideas, descriptions and arguments clearly and logically, taking into account your use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
4. Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
5. Keep an eye on the time.
6. Check your answers if you have time at the end.

## **Identity politics is killing off healthy debate**

**Adapted from a Times newspaper article 2019**

As politics turns into a culture war, universities are finding themselves on the front line, under fire from left and right. On one side academics are accused of pro- European bias, on the other they are criticised over their attitudes to gender and race. Trevor Phillips, former chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission said at the weekend that the hounding of Nigel Biggar, the Oxford University professor who suggested there were some good elements to the British empire, showed a worrying slide towards 'Stalinism'. The feminist writer Germaine Greer and gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell have both been no platformed by student groups over their supposedly transphobic views. ....Perhaps not surprisingly there has also been a rise in silent seminars where students refuse to express an opinion on controversial issues for fear of causing offence...Frank Furedi, professor of sociology at Kent university, says young people are self censoring because, unable to differentiate between critiquing an argument and criticising a person, they believe that disagreeing with someone is a cultural crime. ...Instead of encouraging diversity of thought, the education system seems to be narrowing the scope of acceptable opinions.

The bitter row over the appointment of Brett Kavanaugh as a Supreme Court justice in the US is symptomatic of a wider trend on both sides of the Atlantic. Politics is about whose side you are on rather than what you believe...

From Trump to Brexit, Scottish independence to climate change, politics is increasingly polarised along identity rather than partisan lines. Margaret Thatcher used to talk of cabinet ministers approvingly as ‘one of us’ and now social media divides everyone into tribes. Virtue signalling to friends is combined with vicious denunciations of enemies. The language of ‘mutineers’ and ‘saboteurs’ on the right is matched by attacks on ‘traitors’ and ‘melts’ on the left. MPs who refuse to conform face deselection or even death threats. There is a lack of civility that derives from the fact that people are playing the man and not the ball. If politics is no longer about persuasion but personal identity, then it is much harder for anyone to change their mind. But a liberal democracy depends on rational debate rather than emotional allegiance. It is based on constantly questioning, challenging and testing ideas. The ‘will of the people’ should be an expression of these freedoms, not an excuse to divide and rule.

## Questions

*Use the source and your own knowledge*

1. What does Trevor Phillips mean when he talks about a worrying slide towards ‘Stalinism.’ **line 9** (5 marks)
2. What should be the purpose of education in a democratic society? (10 marks)
3. Evaluate the ways in which democracy could be enhanced in the UK. (35 marks)