

Exam Pattern at a Glance

Feature	Details
Paper	Paper II (Subject-Specific)
Total Questions	100 MCQs
Total Marks	200 Marks (2 marks each)
Duration	3 Hours (combined with Paper I)
Negative Marking	None
Qualifying Marks (Gen)	40% overall
Qualifying Marks (OBC/PwD/SC/ST)	35% overall
Units	10 Units (Paper II)
Conducted By	NTA (National Testing Agency)

MASTER STUDY PLAN & TIME FRAMEWORK

The syllabus is divided into 10 units. A 6-month preparation plan is recommended for serious aspirants. The plan below accounts for both conceptual depth and regular revision.

6-Month Preparation Timeline

Month	Phase	Focus Areas	Daily Hours
Month 1	Foundation Building	Units 1, 2 — Political Theory & Western Thought	3–4 hrs
Month 2	Core Theory	Units 3, 4 — Indian Thought & Comparative Politics	3–4 hrs
Month 3	International Studies	Units 5, 6 — IR & India's Foreign Policy	4–5 hrs
Month 4	Indian Politics	Units 7, 8 — Political Institutions & Processes	4–5 hrs
Month 5	Administration & Governance	Units 9, 10 — Public Admin & Governance	3–4 hrs

Month	Phase	Focus Areas	Daily Hours
Month 6	Revision & Mock Tests	Full Syllabus Revision + PYQs + Mock Papers	5–6 hrs

Weekly Schedule Template

Day	Activity	Duration
Mon – Wed	New topic reading + concept notes	3–4 hours
Thursday	Thinker/Theorist deep-dive + comparison	3 hours
Friday	PYQ practice (unit-wise) + error analysis	2–3 hours
Saturday	Full mock test (100 Qs) under timed conditions	3 hours
Sunday	Weekly revision + mind maps + current affairs	2 hours

UNIT 1: POLITICAL THEORY

Estimated Time: 3–4 weeks | **Weightage:** ~10–12 questions | **Priority:** **VERY HIGH**

1.1 Core Concepts

Master these foundational concepts first — they form the scaffolding for every other unit.

Liberty

- Negative Liberty — Freedom from interference (Isaiah Berlin, J.S. Mill)
- Positive Liberty — Freedom to achieve one's potential (T.H. Green, Rousseau)
- Republican Liberty — Non-domination; freedom from arbitrary power (Philip Pettit)
- Key Debates: Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty (1958); MacCallum's triadic formula

Equality

- Formal Equality — Equal treatment under law
- Equality of Opportunity — Fair competition for positions
- Equality of Outcome — Reducing actual disparities (socialist ideal)
- Rawlsian Equality — Difference Principle: inequalities allowed only if they benefit the least advantaged
- Key Thinkers: Rawls, Nozick (against patterned equality), Dworkin (equality of resources)

Justice

- Distributive Justice — How goods are allocated in society (Rawls, Nozick, Marx)
- Retributive Justice — Punishment proportionate to wrongdoing
- Restorative Justice — Repairing harm, reconciliation
- Social Justice — Structural approach addressing systemic inequalities
- Key: Rawls' Veil of Ignorance; Nozick's Entitlement Theory

Rights

- Natural Rights — Pre-political, held by virtue of humanity (Locke: life, liberty, property)
- Negative Rights — Duties of non-interference (civil and political rights)
- Positive Rights — Duties to provide (social, economic, cultural rights)
- Human Rights — Universal; codified in UDHR (1948)
- Group Rights — Rights of communities and minorities (Kymlicka)

Democracy

- Direct Democracy — Citizens decide directly (Athenian model)
- Representative Democracy — Elected representatives govern
- Liberal Democracy — Combines popular rule + constitutional rights
- Deliberative Democracy — Rational public discourse as legitimacy (Habermas)
- Participatory Democracy — Maximising citizen involvement (Pateman, Barber)

Power

- Power Over — Coercive domination (Dahl's pluralist model: A makes B do what B wouldn't)
- Power To — Capacity to act (Hannah Arendt: power as collective action)
- Three Faces/Dimensions of Power: Lukes — decision-making, non-decision-making, agenda-setting
- Foucaultian Power — Diffuse, relational, embedded in knowledge/discourse

Citizenship

- Marshall's Three Dimensions: Civil (18th c.) → Political (19th c.) → Social (20th c.)
- Liberal Citizenship — Rights-based, passive
- Republican Citizenship — Active duty-based participation
- Multicultural Citizenship — Group-differentiated rights (Kymlicka)
- Cosmopolitan Citizenship — Global citizenship beyond nation-state

1.2 Political Traditions (Ideologies)

These are directly mentioned in the official syllabus. Expect 5–7 questions from this section alone.

Liberalism

- Core values: Individualism, Liberty, Tolerance, Rule of Law, Limited Government, Pluralism
- Classical Liberalism: Locke, Mill, Smith — minimal state, free markets, negative liberty
- Modern/Social Liberalism: Rawls, Keynes, T.H. Green — welfare state, positive liberty
- Neoliberalism: Hayek, Friedman — revival of market fundamentalism, critique of welfare state
- Key critique: ignores economic power; atomistic individualism

Conservatism

- Core values: Tradition, Organic change, Social order, Hierarchy, Continuity

- Edmund Burke — Society as partnership between generations; against radical revolution
- Social Conservatism — Traditional family, religion, national identity
- Fiscal Conservatism — Free markets, minimal state expenditure
- Neoconservatism — Market economics + aggressive foreign policy (US context)
- One-Nation Conservatism (Disraeli) — Social reform to preserve hierarchy

Socialism

- Core values: Equality, Solidarity, Collective ownership, Meeting human needs
- Democratic Socialism — Parliamentary path to socialism (Bernstein, Fabian Society)
- Revolutionary Socialism — Overthrow of capitalism (Lenin)
- Market Socialism — Worker-owned firms with price mechanisms
- Utopian Socialism — Owen, Saint-Simon, Fourier
- Key critique of liberalism: economic inequality undermines political freedom

Marxism

- Historical Materialism — Economic base determines political/cultural superstructure
- Class Struggle — Bourgeoisie vs Proletariat as engine of history
- Dialectical Materialism — Thesis → Antithesis → Synthesis (Hegel + Marx)
- Alienation — Worker estranged from product, process, species-being, other humans
- Ideology — Ruling class ideas presented as universal (false consciousness)
- Variants: Leninism (vanguard party), Trotskyism (permanent revolution), Gramsci (hegemony), Frankfurt School

Feminism

- Liberal Feminism — Equal rights within existing structures (Wollstonecraft, NOW)
- Radical Feminism — Patriarchy as root oppression; personal is political
- Socialist Feminism — Intersection of capitalism and patriarchy (Juliet Mitchell)
- Intersectional Feminism — Gender × race × class × sexuality (Kimberlé Crenshaw)
- Postmodern/Queer Feminism — Gender as performance, not essence (Judith Butler)
- Eco-Feminism — Link between domination of women and nature

Ecologism

- Shallow Ecology / Environmentalism — Manage nature for human benefit
- Deep Ecology — Nature has intrinsic value; anthropocentrism is wrong (Naess)
- Eco-Socialism — Environmental destruction rooted in capitalism
- Eco-Feminism — Parallel domination of women and nature
- Sustainability — Meeting present needs without compromising future generations (Brundtland)
- Climate Justice — Who bears burden of ecological crisis (Global South perspective)

Multiculturalism

- Descriptive: Modern societies contain diverse cultural communities
- Normative: State should recognise and accommodate cultural diversity
- Will Kymlicka — Minority group rights protect 'societal cultures'

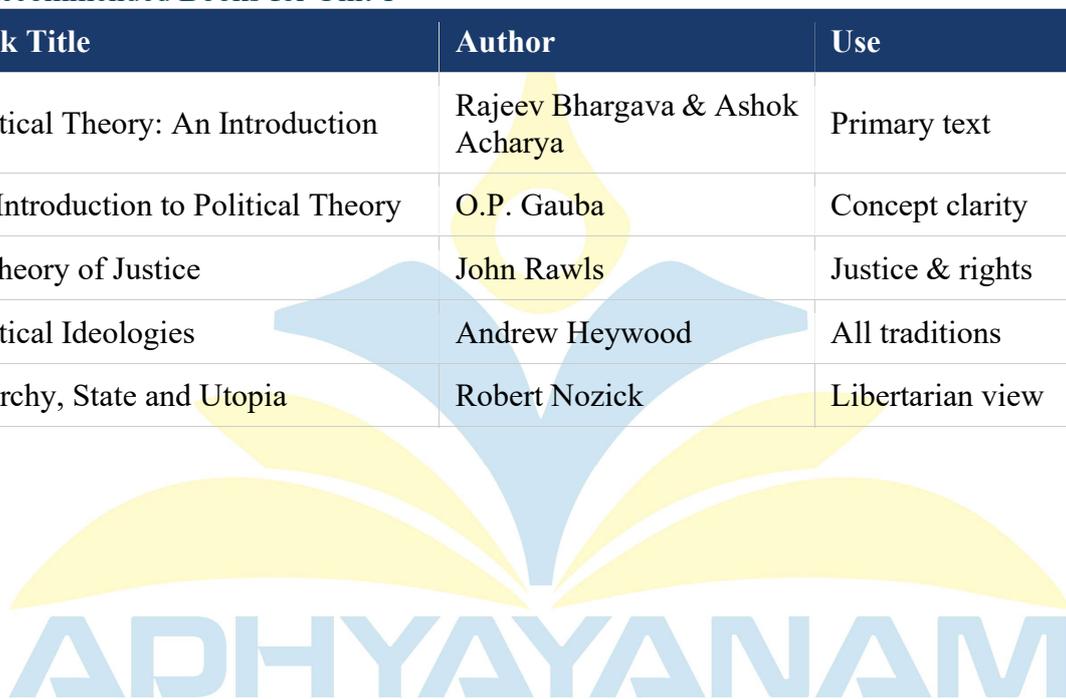
- Types: Liberal multiculturalism, communitarian multiculturalism
- Interculturalism — Dialogue and integration model (alternative to multiculturalism)
- Critiques: Left — fragments class solidarity; Right — undermines national cohesion

Postmodernism

- Skepticism of grand narratives — Lyotard: rejection of meta-narratives (Enlightenment, Marxism)
- Foucault — Power/Knowledge nexus; genealogy of institutions
- Derrida — Deconstruction; logocentrism; difference
- Baudrillard — Simulacra; hyperreality; signs replace reality
- Political implications: Emphasis on difference, plurality, local resistance
- Critique: Undermines foundations for emancipatory politics

1.3 Recommended Books for Unit 1

Book Title	Author	Use
Political Theory: An Introduction	Rajeev Bhargava & Ashok Acharya	Primary text
An Introduction to Political Theory	O.P. Gauba	Concept clarity
A Theory of Justice	John Rawls	Justice & rights
Political Ideologies	Andrew Heywood	All traditions
Anarchy, State and Utopia	Robert Nozick	Libertarian view



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