

Prep for final Exam

Format

- 2 hours
- 8 short questions:
 - 4 questions are compulsory
 - 4 have to be chosen among 6

Tips

- 2 hours / 8 questions: spend 10 to 15 minutes to each
- Length: between 1/2 and 1 page
- Be sharp and clear:

Go straight to the point

Keep sentences short (no bullets, but try to give one argument per sentence).

(Try) to cover several arguments

Give a clear answer

Do not discuss off-topic arguments

Many questions have sub-question: answer simply to each of them

Example of questions

Poverty and income inequality are higher in Hong Kong than in many developed countries

- 1.Briefly describe the decisions the government has made over the past 10 years to address the problem.
- 2.Would you say that these policies were successful? (How poverty and inequalities evolved during the last decade?)
- 3.Why the public policies aiming at fighting poverty and inequalities are not more ambitious?

Example of questions

1. HK government has launched several anti-poverty policies since the early 2010s. An official poverty line was defined in 2013, the Old age living allowance was created in 2013, and the low income working family allowance in 2016. Public spending on social welfare increased from about HKD 40 billion in 2010 to HKD 58 billion in 2016. However, the share of social welfare spending in total public spending remained more or less the same.
2. Yes and no. Inequality and poverty have not decreased significantly during the 2010s. However, the growth of inequality (measured by the Gini index) has slowed, and the poverty rate has diminished a (little) bit. In other words, anti-poverty policies have not significantly reduced inequality and not even started to eradicate poverty. But they have nevertheless helped to limit the worsening of the problem in a global context where these problems are (in many places) growing rapidly.
3. There is a lack of ambition. The official reason is the fear that more pro-poor policies and a more redistributive tax system will have a negative impact on Hong Kong's attractiveness and economic growth. But the main reason may be the lack of popular support for these policies. Surveys indicate that a majority of Hong Kong citizens (many more than in most countries in the world) do not believe that it is the government's responsibility to reduce social inequalities.

December 2017 exam

Dec. 2017 exam - 1

Hong Kong's history has long been summarized as "growth from fishing village to international financial center".

1. Why did British government and Chinese government both accept this historical summary before and after 1997?
2. Do you agree or disagree with this summary? Please elaborate on your argument with evidence.

Answers:

- Both British and Chinese governments adopt this rhetoric to maintain political legitimacy. Britain uses economic success to justify the colonial rule, while China uses the continued prosperity to show the correctness of handover and the governing capacity of Chinese Communist Party.
- Students can either agree or disagree. If they disagree, they could argue Hong Kong was not merely fishing village when British arrived.

Dec. 2017 exam - 2

According to Article 5, the Basic Law of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, "the socialist system and policies shall not be practiced in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years.

1. What are the meaning and intension of the Article 5?
2. Does "the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years" contradict the decolonization of Hong Kong? Please elaborate on your argument.

Answers:

- According to the lecture, the meaning and intension is to separate socialism in mainland China and capitalism in Hong Kong. The law tried to deep freeze the Hong Kong society in the 1980s for 50 years.
- Capitalist system and way of life refer to economic and social system. But the political, public administration and legal system could be changed in accordance with decolonization process. This contradiction results in unfinished decolonization in Hong Kong. It not a complete retrocession nor an independence

Dec. 2017 exam - 3

The notion of “positive non-interventionism” was to articulate British Hong Kong’s governance ideology. In 1992, Chris Patten decided to increase recurrent spending on social welfare by 26% before 1997.

1.What is the meaning of “positive non-interventionism”?

2.Do you think the significant growth of social expenditure contradict the notion of positive non-interventionism? Please elaborate on your argument.

Answers:

- The selective intervention is the heart of positive non-interventionism (elaborate)
- There is no contradiction. Because, firstly, social welfare is important for maintaining political legitimacy; secondly, the colonial government was facing governance crisis before handover. It needed to maintain HK people’s confidence in HK’s future and HK specific economic system.

Dec. 2017 exam - 4

Hong Kong has a vibrant civil society. Civil society associations facilitate civil activism and promote social cohesion. According to the Report on Charities of Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong, at present, there is no formal, established registration system for charitable organisations in Hong Kong and no specific Government authority has overall responsibility in this area.

1. Please list out all four main registration types of Hong Kong civil society associations.
2. Please provide examples to illustrate two different forms of civil activism through civil society associations

Answers:

- A trust body; A society established under the Societies Ordinance; A corporate registered under the Companies Ordinance; An organisation established under a statute;
- Civic activism refers to the social norms, organisations, and practices which facilitate greater citizen involvement in public policies and decisions. So examples could include: membership of a civil society association; volunteering through a civil society association; policy advocacy through a civil society association.

Dec. 2017 exam - 5

On "The Practice of the 'One Country, Two Systems' Policy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (HKSAR), Chinese government articulates "the central government exercises overall jurisdiction over the HKSAR".

1. What is the official meaning of "overall jurisdiction" by the central government?
2. Why does the central government propose the notion of "overall jurisdiction"?

Answers:

- In China's unitary system of government, "overall jurisdiction" including the powers directly exercised by the central government, and the powers delegated to the HKSAR by the central government to enable it to exercise a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the law.
- The intention is to maintain central government's authority in Hong Kong, and to integrate Hong Kong into a part of China's nation-state.

Dec. 2017 exam - 6

To what extent can we say that the fact that Hong Kong was colonized by the British rather than by another colonial power was a stroke of luck?

Various academic studies (e.g. Robin Grier, 1999) suggest that former British colonies performed better (in terms of economic development) than, says, French or Spanish ones.

The reasons for this is that the British crown gave more political autonomy to its colonies, invested more in education of native inhabitants, and introduced pro-business institutions (including a civil law legal system).

The latter point has been certainly important in the case of Hong Kong. Civil law system suits better for small developing countries and is more favorable to the expansion of finance and international trade.

Dec. 2017 exam - 7

Jardine Matheson & Co is an important company born in Hong Kong.

- 1.What role did this company played in the establishment of the British colony in Hong Kong?
- 2.How the history of this company questions the “laissez-faire” (or so-called “positive non-intervention”) doctrine which dominates economic debates in Hong Kong?

Answer:

- William Jardine played an explicit role in the establishment of a British colony in Hong Kong. Jardine provided to the British Foreign office a comprehensive plan along with detailed maps and strategies, estimation of the number of troops and warship needed for the Opium war (the “Jardine Paper”).
- The colonization of Hong Kong was done under the influence and in the interests of a private enterprise. This is clearly at odd with “laissez faire” principles. More fundamentally, the British took Hong Kong in order to have a base for the development of trade in South East Asia (and China). Jardine Matheson & co may be viewed as an example of a colonial system, which main aim was to provide support to few big semi-monopolistic companies.

Dec. 2017 exam - 8

About social inequalities:

- 1.Explain the two general mechanisms explaining the increase of income inequalities in developed countries since the 1980s (put forward respectively by Thomas Piketty and David Autor).
 2. Why do you think social inequalities are so large in Hong Kong?
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- According to Piketty, inequality increases when economic growth is weak. When growth is lower than the rate of return on capital, the income of capital holders increases faster than that of workers. Autor points to the role of de-industrialization. Growth in the share of services in developed countries contributes to the destruction of middle-class jobs. The polarization of the labor market contributes to increasing inequalities.
 - These two mechanisms have contributed to increase inequalities in Hong Kong. But other, more specific factors also played a role. The most important could be the weakness of social policies in Hong Kong, supported by a fairly high public tolerance for social inequality.

Dec. 2017 exam - 9

About Hong Kong population

1. Would you say that Hong Kong has a cosmopolitan population?
 2. Would you say that Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city?
- 39% of Hong Kong population is foreign-born. This is a fairly high ratio compared to most countries in the world. However, more than 80% of the foreign-born are Chinese (from mainland, Taiwan or Macao). As a result, more than 90% of the Hong Kong population is Chinese. On the basis of these figures, we can hardly say that Hong Kong has a really cosmopolitan population.
- Despite the fact that Hong Kong is - to a large extent - a Chinese city, its history has been profoundly marked by both immigration and emigration flows. This story, unique in its kind, has contributed to the formation of Hong Kong's identity, where international openness is much greater than elsewhere. In that sense, yes, Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city.

Dec. 2017 exam - 10

About Hong Kong economy

1. List the four main pillars of Hong Kong economy today
2. Would you say that Hong Kong follow the same pattern of economic development from the 1950s' to the 2000s' than the three other "Asian Tigers" (i.e. South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore)?
 - Trade and logistics, Financial services, Professional and producer services and tourism.
 - Like the other Tigers, Hong Kong experienced rapid industrialization in the 1950s, followed by a process of de-industrialization started in the 1980s and 2000. The Hong Kong case, however, is different in many respects. In particular, the process was much faster in Hong Kong and the recent de-industrialization was much more profound.

Dec. 2017 exam - 5