

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code / Title : HA1002 Introduction to Political Theory

Pre-requisites : Nil

No. of AUs. : 3

Contact Hours : 39

Course Aims

This course will aim to provide students with a conceptually based introduction to the study of political theory. The study of politics requires a firm understanding of the philosophical assumptions that inform our various understandings of the nature of human beings and how they relate to one another. The course will present to students various of the fundamental normative claims made throughout the history of political thought, and how these claims structure specific recommendations for the ordering of political life. Through the survey of the thought of key political philosophers such as Confucius, Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Mill and others, the course will ask students to consider important questions about the nature of individual rights, the roots of government authority, the circumstances of legitimate revolution, the justification of religious tolerance, and the meaning of political ideals such as liberty, equality, and justice. We will consider both the specific historical context within which these theorists articulate their positions, as well as their continuing relevance, that is, the ways in which they are able to contribute to shaping and informing our contemporary understanding of human goods and needs, justice, democracy, and so on. An aim of the course will be to understand the strengths and weaknesses of various thinkers and their philosophical approaches in order to gain a critical perspective on our own. In the first part of the course we will examine the key debates that have emerged within the Western political tradition. In the latter part of the course we will turn to the newly developing field of comparative political theory, examining certain non-Western traditions (specifically the Confucian, Indian, and Islamic), in order to reveal their unique contributions to the analysis of political thought and history.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Explain the main features of the tradition of political thought, including the key theoretical frameworks, concepts, and methodologies espoused by this tradition's most important philosophical representatives.
- 2) Articulate the nature of the relationship between the theoretical approaches studied and their historical context.

- 3) Apply the tradition of political thought to the analysis of existing political reality.
- 4) Use your analytic skills to review and critically interpret complex textual material.
- 5) Present your opinions in a coherent and logical way, both orally and in writing.

Course Content

1. Introduction
2. Foundations of the Liberal Conception of Human Being
3. Historical Critiques of the Liberal State of Nature
4. The Social Contract
5. Utilitarian and Other Critiques of the Contract Model
6. The Critique of Democracy
7. Representative vs. Participatory Democracy
8. Varieties of Liberty
9. Distributive Justice
10. Additional Challenges to Liberalism
11. Islamic Political Thought
12. Indian Political Thought
13. Confucian Political Thought

Course Assessment

Class Participation	: 20%
Mid-term Test	: 30%
Final Examination	: 50%
Total	----- 100%