

Course title	Western Political Thought
Course Code	GOV207.1
Category (core/elective)	Core
Level	BA in European Law and Governance and LLB in European Law
Duration (semesters)	1
Semester when taught (autumn/spring)	Spring
ECTS	6
Prerequisites	None
Responsible	Professor Kostas Lavdas, Dr. Dora Papadopoulou, Dr. Vasiliki Christou
Course aims and objectives:	
<p>Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with main concepts and prisms in the field of political theory • Follow the main theoretical streams of western political thought • Understand the role of an interdisciplinary approach to the main questions of political thought • Understand the importance of providing connections and trying to bridge different conceptions of the good in the history of political theorizing • Interpret through close reading and critical discussion debates on questions pertaining to the philosophical study of politics • Begin to utilize theoretical concepts and insights in their own enquiries 	
Course Description	
<p>This course presents and discusses some of the major texts and representative schools of thought in the development of Western political thought and political philosophy. We shall raise and explore some of the most crucial and central arguments of political thought from the ancient Greeks and Romans to the present day. Each lecture takes on a</p>	

particular issue or controversy. Lectures focus on questions about the meaning of “state of nature”, “social order”, “justice”, “political power”, “political obligation”, “liberty”, “duties”, “tyranny of majority” etc. We shall be dealing with texts of Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Hobbes about the meaning of “polis” and political community and the transformation of those core issues to what we understand today under the idea of modern state. Later on, we are going to analyze the concepts of Rousseau, Alexis de Tocqueville and Marx about the framing of democracy and its foundations. At the same level, we are going to deal with the perspectives of Mill, Rawls, Nozick and Habermas about the importance of liberty, the distribution of property and the meaning of commitment.

Political theory is to a considerable extent a normative field, aiming to discuss, establish, review and reevaluate norms; it is not merely interested in finding out how things are (as in mainly descriptive enquiries) and what variables may be used in order to explain why they are the way they are (as in mainly analytical enquiries). A political theorist may ask ‘what would be a just or fair distribution of property’, rather than, say, ‘how is property distributed today’. In other words, a political theorist will tackle questions such as, ‘what norms should govern the distribution of goods within society?’, ‘is justice the interest of stronger?’, ‘does political power reflect political wisdom?’ Accordingly, we shall hear such questions echoing throughout the historical development of political theory.

Course Outline

The course is organized around ten (10) lectures and five (5) tutorials:

1. Introduction: Discussing and theorizing politics and governance in the Polis (Prof. K. Lavdas)
2. The State of Nature and the importance of political life (Plato, Aristotle) (Dr.D. Papadopoulou) (plus tutorial)
3. Power, politics and the role of consent (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke) (Dr. D. Papadopoulou)
4. Arguing about the meaning of the State: Who should rule? (Utilitarianism, Rousseau, Representative democracy) (Dr. D. Papadopoulou) (plus tutorial)
5. The place of liberty: Liberty, Justice, Discourse (Mill, Rawls, Nozick, Habermas) (Dr. D. Papadopoulou) (plus tutorial)
6. Individualism and Feminism (Mill, Taylor-Mill) (Dr. D. Papadopoulou)
7. Rawls' Theory of Justice and political liberalism (Dr. D. Papadopoulou)
8. The Capabilities Approach to Human Rights in the Works of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (Dr. V. Christou) (plus tutorial)
9. Hans Kelsen and Carl Schmitt: A Deeply Rooted Theoretical Fight About Democracy and Parliamentarism (Dr. V. Christou) (plus tutorial)
10. Norms are not values: An evolutionary approach to norms in the work of Robert Axelrod, Joseph Lepgold and beyond (Prof. K. Lavdas)

Educational Outcomes

By the end of the course the students are expected to be able to understand the main concepts and the parameters of debate in the material studied and to explore and start

critically analyzing the main arguments used. Furthermore, it is anticipated that students will have been sensitized to the potential of utilizing a number of conceptual tools of political theory in approaching contemporary issues.	
Basic Textbook	Nelson, Brian (2015). <i>Western Political Thought: From Socrates to the Age of Ideology</i> . New edition. USA: Waveland Press Inc.
Basic Bibliography	<p>Arnhart, Larry (2003). <i>Political Questions. Political Philosophy from Plato to Rawls</i>. Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc.</p> <p>Morgan, Michael (2011). <i>Classics of Moral and Political Theory</i>. 5th edition Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company</p> <p>Morrow, John (2005). <i>History of Western Political Thought: A Thematic Introduction</i>. London: Palgrave Macmillan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carter, A. & Stokes, G. (eds) (2002). <i>Democratic Theory Today</i>. Cambridge: Polity Press. - MacKenzie, I. (2009). <i>Politics</i>, London: Continuum. - Laborde, C. & Maynor, J. (eds) (2008). <i>Republicanism and Political Theory</i>, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. - Gaus, G. F. (2000). <i>Political Concepts and Political Theories</i>, Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press. - O'Sullivan, N. (ed) (2000). <i>Political Theory in Transition</i>, London and New York: Routledge.
Additional Bibliography	Additional bibliography will be offered specifically for each class meeting.
Teaching Methodology	<p>Lectures: 10 lectures x 3 hours = 30 hours</p> <p>Tutorials: 5 tutorials x 2 hours = 10 hours</p> <p>Total = 40 hours</p>
Evaluation	<p>Final Exam: 80%</p> <p>Course participation: 20%</p> <p>Total: 100%</p>
Language	English

Traineeship	No
Location	Legraina, Sounio
General note	While the 'Course Objectives' and 'Educational Outcomes' above remain immutable, the 'Course Content' and 'Course Outline' may be altered in order to accommodate students' needs and individual professors' approaches. Bibliography and reading materials may vary accordingly.