

## COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

**Academic School / Department:** Humanities & Social Sciences

**Programme:** Political Science

**FHEQ Level:** 4

**Course Title:** Modern Political Thought

**Course Code:** POLS 4102

**Total Hours:** 160 (Lev 3-5) (4 US Credit)

Timetabled Hours: 45

Guided Learning Hours: 15

Independent Learning Hours: 100

**Credit** 16 UK CATS credits

8 ECTS credits

4 US credits

### **Course Description:**

This course provides students with an introduction to modern political thought as it developed in the Western World. It critically examines concepts at the core of political life, including freedom, equality, power, difference, and the state. The origins of political ideologies are discovered and explored through the study of major authoritarian, liberal, radical and conservative political thinkers from the C15th onwards, such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Wollstonecraft, Marx, J.S. Mill, and Nietzsche.

### **Prerequisites:**

None

**Aims and Objectives:**

- To encourage students to read original works in modern political thought, thereby providing an appreciation of the history and development of political ideas along with key thematic debates and conceptual issues
- To provide students with the analytical tools to critically assess the canonical texts of Western political thought
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business and the media) which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of political thought
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally

**Programme Outcomes:**

4AI; 4CI

A detailed list of the programme outcomes can be found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

**Learning Outcomes:**

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

- Demonstrates broad knowledge and understanding of the core thinkers, theories and methods in modern political thought.
- Demonstrates broad communication skills (including digital literacy) in deploying ideas and information in a range of different formats and media.

**Indicative Content:**

- Origins of political philosophy (i.e., Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, Christine de Pizan)
- Authoritarian/Realist Thinkers (Nicolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes)
- Liberal Thinkers (i.e., John Locke, Thomas Paine, the Utilitarians, J.S. Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel, Charles Montesquieu, Alexis de Tocqueville, the Federalists)
- Feminist Thinkers (i.e. Mary Astell, Mary Wollstonecraft, Olympe de Gouges, J.S. Mill and Harriet Taylor, Charlotte Gilman, Emma Goldman)
- Critical/Radical Thinkers (i.e., J-J. Rousseau, the 'Utopian Socialists', Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Frederick Douglass, Emma Goldman)
- Conservative/Counter-Enlightenment Thinkers (i.e., Martin Luther and John Calvin, Edmund Burke, Friedrich Nietzsche)
- Social Contract Thinkers (i.e. Hobbes/Locke/Rousseau)
- Historical context of modern political thought and contemporary critiques of these ideas

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

**Teaching Methodology:**

This course will be delivered face to face through a combination of lectures and interactive sessions. In addition to classroom activities, there are guided learning elements that are tutor led and arranged through Blackboard. These activities can be asynchronous online sessions, flipped classrooms, set readings with discussion boards or set guest lectures for example. Set activities are monitored by the instructor to ascertain student engagement. Students are encouraged to prepare for class and to play an active part, to raise questions, following-up ideas and interact with a wide range of provided material.

**Indicative Text(s):**

- Boucher, D. and Kelly, P. (2017) *Political Thinkers: From Socrates to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, M. (2018) *Princeton Readings in Political Thought: Essentials Texts from Plato to Populism*. 2nd edn. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Morrow, J. (2019) *History of Western Political Thought*. 3rd edn. Basingstoke, UK: Red Globe Press.
- Ramgotra, M. and Choat, S. (2023) *Rethinking Political Thinkers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

**Change Log for this CSD:**

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
First edition	Nov 2024	