

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department: Communications, Arts and Social Sciences

Programme: Political Science

FHEQ Level: 4

Course Title: Major Political Thinkers

Course Code: PLT 4100

Course Leader: Dr Michael F. Keating

Student Engagement Hours: 120

Lectures: 22.5

Seminar / Tutorials: 22.5

Independent / Guided Learning: 75

Semester: FALL and/or SPRING and/or SUMMER

Credits: 12 UK CATS credits

6 ECTS credits

3 US credits

Course Description:

This course provides students with an introduction to political thought and political philosophy, as it has developed in the Western World. The origins of modern political thought and political ideologies are discovered and explored through the study of a range of major political thinkers, such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Wollstonecraft, Marx, Mill, and Nietzsche.

Pre-requisites: None

Aims and Objectives:

- To provide students with an appreciation of the history and development of political thought and the main thematic debates and conceptual issues being addressed
- To provide students with an appreciation of the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of political thought, and to be able to relate these to both historical and contemporary political life
- To provide an overview of a range of political philosophers, and to place their work in historical and political context
- To encourage students to read original works in political thought
- To provide PS and IR majors with a basis in political theory that will be developed in upper-level major courses, and to provide a foundation for studying contemporary political thought

Programme Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme

outcomes. 4A(ii); 4C(i); 4C(iii); 4D(i); 4D(iii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

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

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates a broad understanding of the history of, and key debates in, political thought
- Completes assigned work with a degree of autonomy, technical competence, clarity, evaluative skills, and critical reading skills appropriate for a 4000-level course

Indicative Content:

- Classical Thinkers (ie. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, St Augustine, St. Aquinas)
- Realist/Mercantilist Thinkers (ie Machiavelli, Hobbes, List)
- Liberal Thinkers (ie Locke, Smith, Ricardo, Paine, the Utilitarians, Mill, Wollstonecraft, Kant, Hegel, Montesquieu, de Tocqueville, the Federalists)
- Critical Thinkers (ie Rousseau, 'Utopian Socialists', Marx, Engels)
- Counter-Enlightenment Thinkers (i.e. Burke, Nietzsche)
- Historical context of thinkers addressed

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely, but must also maintain

respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of

