

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

POLITICAL SCIENCE 150 – INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

A comparative and conceptual analysis of the principal ideological and philosophical approaches to government. This course surveys the important political ideas and alternatives which have been suggested from ancient to modern times. A major emphasis of the course will be to introduce and clarify for the student the basic aspects of nationalism, democracy, Orthodox Marxism, anarchism, philosophical conservatism, New Left thought and fascism.

Prerequisite

None

Recommended Preparation

“C” grade or higher or “Pass” in POSC 120 or equivalent

Course Content

- 1) Unit I - The Ancients
 - a. The beginning unit is more extensive than others which follow in that it must not only introduce the early writers but also it must set the scene for the origin of political philosophy itself. While several cultures are discussed, the prime object of discussion for the first unit centers upon the Ancient Greeks. Readings cover excerpts from Plato's Republic, and Aristotle's Politics, and Plato's Dialogues (Euthyphro, Crito, and Apology) in their entirety.
- 2) Unit II - The Christians
 - a. The second unit begins with the rise and fall of Divine Right as a major political belief system in western civilization. Reading's cover excerpts from St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Thomas More.
- 3) Unit III - The Contract Theorists
 - a. A third unit focuses upon the transitional period where the old systems of Divine Right were in retreat and the new ideas of Liberalism and philosophical democracy were growing. Beginning with Machiavelli and Hobbes as intermediate figures, this unit concentrates upon the arguments of the "contractual" theorists of government. Readings include excerpts from Machiavelli's Prince, Hobbes' Leviathan, Locke's Second Treatise, and Rousseau's Social Contract.
- 4) Unit VI - The Anarchists and Utopian Socialists
 - a. As a backlash to the onslaught to the Industrial Revolution, a number of lessor, but interesting, political beliefs emerged in the 19th century. These thoughts are discussed (Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Malatesta in the main), but there is no formal reading assignment. This unit is also important to set the stage for the next unit.
- 5) Unit V - Orthodox Marxism
 - a. The fifth unit deals with the writings of Karl Marx in three separate ways. First, the lecturer develops the Zeitgeist or spirit of the times of the mid-eighteenth century in Europe. Following a biographical sketch, the economic arguments of Marx are presented drawing from his later writings generally known as the empirical critique of capitalism. And finally, the

philosophical/humanist side of his writings (drawn from the younger Marx) are outlined known as the normative critique of capitalism. Readings include the entire Manifesto and parts of the Critique of Political Economy and Grundrisse.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) To survey the elements of the major political ideas in such a way that the beginning student can:
 - a. Express in oral and written form where and why these beliefs have appeared in time.
 - b. Discuss the fundamental arguments and assertions of the original political thinkers so the student may relate competing political ideas to his or her own culture.
 - c. Review the rich and varied nature of political philosophy and ideology from the past to the present.
 - d. Examine critically the major isms of today, along with their origins and assumptions.

Method of Evaluation

- 1) Students will be evaluated on the basis of their understanding of the subject matter presented in the required reading, lectures, class discussion and reports, and on their ability to apply this knowledge with insight to modern national and international problems.
- 2) Quizzes and examinations, including a final exam; these will contain analytical essay questions.
- 3) A written and/or oral report, stressing analysis and evaluation, and including an internet research component on topics such as comparing political theorists, ideology's relationship to theory or the individual and society.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

- 1) Standard classroom.
- 2) Audiovisual equipment – television, video clips, overhead projector, projection screen, digital processing presenter, computer with data projector monitor and internet access.

Method of Instruction

- 1) Socratic discussions.
- 2) Lecture based upon the reading of individual works from Marx, Plato, and others.
- 3) Writing of individual critical essays.

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Textbook reading
- 2) Conducting research for oral and/or written reports on topics such as comparing political theorists, from theory to ideology, the individual and society.

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. Deutsch, Kenneth L., and Joseph Fornieri. *An Invitation to Political Thought*. Beverly, MA: Wadsworth, 2008.
 - b. Cahn, Steven M. *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 2) Supplemental:
 - a. Grube, G. M. A., (trans.), John M. Cooper editor. *Plato: Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., 2002.
 - b. Connell, William J. (trans.), Niccolo Machiavelli. *The Prince*. Boston, MA: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2005.
 - c. Mendel, Arthur. *The Essential Works of Marxism* New York, New York: Bantam Books, 2000.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Compare and contrast the various approaches to political theory by major political thinkers.
- 2) Assess the factors underpinning various ideologies and how these drive current political movements.
- 3) Critically evaluate different conceptualizations of the appropriate relationship between the individual and society.