

CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES, SSS, JNU
MA COMPULSORY COURSE
READINGS IN POLITICAL THOUGHT (PO416N)

Credits: 4

Course Requirements: 25% tutorials (assignment+group/class discussion), 25% mid-term exam, 50% End term-exam

Course Schedule: 3 lectures and 1 tutorial/week

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the original writings of great political thinkers whose work has significantly shaped our thinking about the nature of the political, the idea of state, just society and government, and conceptions of the self. The course identifies three political theorists for detailed study and analysis and a careful reading of their writings it will attempt to : (1) develop the skill to read and interpret political ideas through textual reading; (2) critically engage with ideas that have shaped our contemporary understanding of liberal democracy; (3) appreciate the enduring significance of political thinkers and see how ideas get re-contextualised in new and different contexts. J. S. Mill remains the single most important theorist whose conception of the individual, freedom of speech and expression, the rights of women, and punishment has shaped the thinking of contemporary liberal democracies. In the writings of Marx we have the most systematic critique of this understanding of the individual and capitalist society. Aristotle was writing in a pre-modern context. His ideas reflect notions of human self, nature and state that were, on the one hand, challenged by enlightenment, and, on the other, reclaimed to redefine aspects of the modern.

This course is designed to develop a historical and a philosophical way of reading texts; it introduces students to the problems that political theorists deal with and shows how ideas, that emerged in diverse contexts, are revisited and reinterpreted to understand our present predicament.

The students are expected to read the assigned original text, along with some secondary texts, and show familiarity with the chosen text in classroom discussions and examinations.

Aristotle

- Good life: Family and Property
- State (polis) and political community
- Practical wisdom, *phronesis*
- Justice, friendship, virtue

Primary Texts

Politics, Book I,II,III

Nicomachean Ethics , Book I,II, V, X

Supplementary Readings:

- J. L. Ackrill, *Aristotle the Philosopher*, OUP, 1981.
- Barnes, Jonathan (1995) *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, Cambridge University Press.
- Kraut, Richard (2006) *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, U.S.A and U.K.: Blackwell Publishing.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1994) *The Therapy of Desire. Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Ch. 2
- Mathie, William (1987) "Political and Distributive Justice in the Political Science of Aristotle ", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp. 59-84.
- Nussbaum, Martha (1992) Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism, *Political Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May)..
- Burnyeat, M.F., (1980) "Aristotle on Learning to be Good", in Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, University of California Press.
- Salkever, Stephen G., "Freedom, Participation and Happiness, *Political Theory*, 5/3, 1977.
- Mulgan, R. G., (1977) *Aristotle's Political Theory*, Oxford:Clarendon Press

Karl Marx

- Alienation and commodity fetishism
- Capitalism and Surplus Value
- Historical materialism: class and social relations
- Debates in western Marxism: structure, agency, class and revolutionary practice

Primary Texts

- *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Selections)
- *Communist Manifesto*
- *Capital*, Volume I. (selections)

Supplementary Readings

- Ollman, B. (1971), *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.

- Avineri, S. (1968) *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Therborn, Goran (2012), "Class in the 21st Century", NLR 78, Nov-Dec
- Poulantzas, N. & Miliband, R. (1972). The Problem of the Capitalist State. In R. Blackburn (ed.) *Ideology in Social Science: Readings in Critical Social Theory*. NY: Pantheon Books. Pp. 238-262.
- Althusser, Louis and Etienne Balibar (1970) *Reading Capital*, trans Ben Brewster, London: NLB.
- Althusser, Louis (1969) *For Marx*, Allen Lane, Penguin Books.
- Anderson, Perry (1979) *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London: Verso Books.
- Tom Bottomore (1984) *The Frankfurt School and its Critics*, 2nd Edition 2002 by London, USA, Canada: Routledge.
- Thompson, E.P. (1964) *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Pantheon Books
- Habermas, Jurgen (1975) "Towards a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism", *Theory and Society*, Volume 2, No. 3, pp287-300
- Hardy, Simon (2013) *Destruction of Meaning, e-book, Chapter 27: New Left*.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1969) "Epilogue to the new German edition of Marx's 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon", *Radical America* Volume 3-4, July-August, pp 57-59.

John Stuart Mill

- Individualism
- Liberty and Harm Principle
- Representative Government
- Utilitarianism and State Policy

Primary Texts:

On Liberty

Considerations on Representative Government

The Subjection of Women

Supplementary Reading

- Urbinati, N. (Ed.) 2007, *J.S.Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Handcock, W. D. (1947) "What Is Represented in Representative Government?" *Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 82 July, pp. 99-111.
- Krouse, Richard W. (1982) "Two Concepts of Democratic Representation: James and John Stuart Mill", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2 May, pp. 509-537.
- Riley, Jonathan (1998) *The Routledge Philosophy Guide Book to Mill on Liberty*, London and New York: Routledge.

- Warner, Beth E. (2001) "John Stuart Mill's Theory of Bureaucracy within Representative Government: Balancing Competence and Participation", *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Jul. - Aug., 2001), pp. 403-413.
- Brown, D.G. (1972), "Mill on Liberty and Morality", *The Philosophical Review*, 81/2, pp.133-158
- Holtug, Nils (2002), "The Harm Principle", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 5/4, pp. 357-389
- Ten, C.L. (1968) " Mill on Self-regarding Actions", *Philosophy*, 43/163, pp.29-37

Additional Readings:

Skinner, Quentin, 1969. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas ", *History and Theory*, 8/1, pp. 3-53

Mueller-Vollmer, Kurt , (ed.), 1988. *Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, USA: Bloomsbury Publications.