C-ID Descriptor
Introduction to Political Theory and Thought

Descriptor Details

- **Descriptor Title**: Introduction to Political Theory and Thought
- **C-ID Number**: 120
- **Units**: 3.0
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General Description

Examination of various theoretical approaches to politics and of basic political problems and proposed solutions. Analysis of selected political theories and of the relevance of theory to contemporary problems.

Prerequisites

Non

Corequisites

None

Advisories

None

Content

1. The nature and tradition of political inquiry.
2. Classical theorists.
3. Modern theorists.
4. Contemporary theorists (i.e. critical race theorists and feminist theorists).
5. Basic theoretical debates such as, but not limited to, power, justice, equality, ideal government.
6. Application of theoretical debates to the contemporary world.

*Course may be organized thematically or chronologically

Lab Activities

N/A

Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Evaluate the study of political theory, based on original texts and other sources, as a means for understanding important political phenomena.
2. Analyze political theory and theoretical texts and explain how they are relevant to contemporary issues.
3. Assess the historical and social context surrounding the generation of political theories.
4. Compare and contrast the defining elements of each political theory.
5. Analyze the different assumptions and values about "human nature" and "reality" embedded in each political theory and examine the way these starting premises shape the questions asked and conclusions reached.
6. Evaluate the contribution of each political theory towards a comprehensive understanding of political life and political institutions.

Evaluation Methods

May include as appropriate:

In-class or take-home examinations
Research papers or projects

Written assignments
Analytical papers
Simulations
Oral presentations
Participation in class discussions and debates

Textbooks

Primary sources such as, but not limited to:

Anzaldúa. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Arendt. *The Human Condition*

Aristotle. *Politics*

Brown*. In the Ruins of Neoliberalism or Manhood and Politics*

Davis*. Women, Race, and Class*

Hobbes. Leviathan

Locke. *Two Treatises on Government*

Machiavelli. *The Prince, The Discourses*

Marx. *Selected Writings*

Plato. *The Republic*

Rawls. *A Theory of Justice*

Rousseau. *The Social Contract, Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*
de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*

West*. Race Matters*

Anthologies and/or college-level introduction to political theory or political philosophy textbook such as, but not limited to

Ball and Dagger. *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader*

Cahn. *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*

Dallmayr. *Comparative Political Theory: An Introduction*

Deutsch and Fornieri. *An Invitation to Political Thought*

Dolbeare and Cummings. *American Political Thought*

Tannenbaum. *Inventors of Ideas: An Introduction to Western Political Philosophy*