POLI 202
Introduction to Political Theory

Instructor:
Dr. Mara Marin (Fall 2020)

Course description:
This course introduces students to political theory as an essential component of the study of politics. Political theory involves paying close attention to the concepts, language and the basic problems of politics as we try to understand and judge our political institutions and practices. We will read a limited number of classical texts of social and political philosophy with the following questions: What is justice? What is a political community? Is it natural or conventional? Is it compatible with private property? Who is responsible for raising children? Is democracy the best regime? What are the constraints and opportunities of political rulers? How are exclusion, marginalization, subordination, dispossession and slavery justified or effected in modern political thought? What is the relation between politics and the economy? In what forms have we inherited these political ideas? We will discuss concepts such as: justice, virtue, citizenship, happiness and alienation.

Prerequisites: None

Course outcomes/objectives:
• Read and understand complex texts.
• Recognize and reconstruct complex concepts and arguments in these texts.
• Evaluate and criticize theoretical arguments.
• Construct and advance your own arguments.
• Listen to your peers, connect your ideas to theirs, and advance your arguments in dialogue with them.
• Become familiar with central concepts and problems of social and political thought.
• Develop your ability to apply these concepts to new contexts, both current and historical.
• Develop your ability to identify in current events problems central to social and political thought.

Topics may include:
Plato; Machiavelli; Karl Marx
Development of political traditions
Diversity of political thought

Course delivery:
This course will be delivered synchronously.