POLI 202 Introduction to Political Theory

Instructor Spring 2022: Dr. Mara Marin

Course delivery: In the Spring 2022 term, this course will be delivered on campus and face-to-face.

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 texts of social and political philosophy with the following questions: What is justice? What is a political community? Is it natural or conventional? Who is included, who is excluded and why? 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? What is colonialism? What is the relation between politics and the economy? In what forms have we inherited these political ideas?

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 and identify these in current events.
- Develop your ability to apply these concepts to new contexts, both current and historical.

Topics may include:
Plato; Machiavelli; Marx; Baldwin
Development of political traditions
Diversity of political thought
The history of political though as a debate over time

This summary provides an overall sense of the course and is not considered an official course outline. Detailed course outlines will be available for all registered students on the first day of class.