



University  
of Victoria

# POLI 300B Early Modern Political Thought

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**Instructor Spring 2023:** Dr. Mara Marin

**Course delivery:** POLI 300B will be delivered on campus and face-to-face.

**Prerequisite:** Complete 1 of POLI 103, 202; or permission of the Department

## Course description:

This course explores the concepts and arguments of early modern political thought and examines how these ideas shaped modern states, imperial expansion, understandings of citizenship, exclusion and equality, property, labor, colonialism, slavery and gender subordination. We will read major works by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and J. J. Rousseau, texts written by women and people of color and several revolutionary documents. Questions we consider include: Is political society natural or artificial? What is a legitimate government? What is the relation between human beings and non-human nature? Can land be owned? Are social inequalities based on nature or convention? If all men are equal, is slavery justified? If all men are equal why are women subordinate? What is the relation between ideas of reason, rule over children and justifications of slavery? What is the relation between ideas of labour, justifications of private property and colonialism?

## Course outcomes/objectives:

- Recognize and reconstruct central concepts, problems and arguments of social contract theory;
- 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;
- Apply these concepts to new contexts, both current and historical;
- Identify issues in current events that have motivated social contract theorists and their critics;

## Topics may include:

State of nature  
Social contract  
Equality and exclusion

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