POLI 300B Early Modern Political Thought

Instructor Spring 2022: Gizem Sozen

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

Course description:
Early modern political thought is the study of the basic problems, concepts and arguments advanced by early modern social contract theorists. This course will introduce you to how these ideas shaped modern states, imperial expansion, understandings of citizenship, exclusion and equality, property, labor, colonialism, slavery and gender subordination. In addition to major works by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and J. J. Rousseau, we will read texts written by women and people of color and several revolutionary documents. We will ask the questions: Is political society natural or artificial? What is a legitimate government? What is the relationship 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 relationship between ideas of reason, rule over children and justifications of slavery? What is the relationship between ideas of labour, justifications of private property and colonialism?

Prerequisite: POLI 103 or 202, or permission of the department.

Course outcomes/objectives:
- Through close reading of texts, develop analytical and critical-thinking skills
- Develop written and verbal communication through essay writing and discussion
- Evaluate and criticize theoretical arguments.
- Understand how these influential texts inform current political debates

Topics may include:
State of nature
Social contract
Equality and exclusion

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.