



University
of Victoria

POLI 202 Introduction to Political Theory

Instructor Summer 2023: David Miller

Course delivery: In Summer 2023, this course will be delivered online using a blend of synchronous and asynchronous sessions.

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 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.

Course outcomes/objectives:

- Read and understand complex texts and recognize and reconstruct complex concepts and arguments in these texts
- Become familiar with central concepts and problems of social and political thought and develop your ability to apply these concepts to new contexts, both current and historical
- Build critical thinking skills including the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret and evaluate ideas, information, situations and texts
- Develop and practice academic writing skills
- Develop and practice research skills related to the discipline of political science

Topics may include:

Plato; Machiavelli; Karl Marx
Development of political traditions
Diversity of political thought

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.