



University
of Victoria

POLI 300B Early Modern Political Thought

Instructor Summer 2023: Micheal Ziegler

Course delivery: In the Summer 2023 term, this course will be delivered on campus face-to-face.

Course description:

This course explores some “canonical” texts in European political theory from the “Early Modern” period. We survey works by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Wollstonecraft, focusing on the development of certain key concepts in western political thought. While our focus is on the substantive content of particular works, our philosophic-theoretical quest places the texts within both their historical context and our contemporary moment. To that end, we investigate the origins and development of concepts such as liberalism, sovereignty, and the individual and citizenship—the modern subject. By the end of the course, students are expected to have become acquainted with some of the basic ideas, concepts, and problems underlying modern political thought, to be able to interpret, evaluate, and apply these ideas to the texts they read, and to give articulate expression to their own thinking about these topics rigorously and coherently.

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

Course outcomes/objectives:

- Recognize, articulate and deconstruct central concepts, problems and arguments of the early modern period
- Analyze and criticize theoretical arguments;
- Rigorously and coherently express an argument through critical, close-reading.
- Fully engage with peers by building arguments together through robust and mutually constructive dialogue.
- Understand how these texts still inform current political debates;

Topics may include:

State of nature
Sovereignty
Social contract
Modern subject

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.