

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for POLI 25

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY

Effective: Fall

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

POLI 25 — INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY — 3.00 units

Various theoretical approaches to politics including selected aspects of political thought from ancient times to the present with application of current political thought. Strongly recommended: Political Science 7 and eligibility for English 1A. 3 hours.

3.00 Units Lecture

Prerequisite

POLI 7 - Introduction to American Government
and

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition

Grading Methods:

Optional

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT:

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering the course a student should be able to:

- A. POLI7
- B. ENG1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. explain differences in political constructs as presented by various writers
2. interpret alternate ideologies
3. analyze political issues in an objective, critical manner

V. CONTENT:

- A. Introduction to political theory/philosophy
- B. Ancient philosophers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- C. Medieval philosophers: Augustine, Aquinas and Machiavelli
- D. Concepts of equality, liberty, authority, and justice
- E. The social contract: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Hume
- F. 19th century philosophers: Burke, Bentham, Mill and Marx
- G. 20th century philosophers: Rawls

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** - Informal seminar/lecture method of presentation
- B. **Discussion** - Heavy reliance on student discussion
- C. Innovation in method is recommended
- D. **Audio-visual Activity** -
- E. Student presentations

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading assignments: 1. Reading from Klosko, Vol. I, Chapter 2 – Socrates. Identify at least five main issues presented; prepare not less than five questions (and answers) to serve as the basis of our classroom discussion of the text. 2. Reading from Klosko, Vol. II, Chapters 2 and 3 – Hobbes and Locke. Explain and analyze the significant differences between the “state of nature” as envisioned by Hobbes and Locke. How do these differences contribute to a different “solution” to the question of sovereignty? What influence might the historical setting in which each wrote contribute to the differences in

philosophy?

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Other:
 - a. Examinations: typical questions
 1. Describe and analyze the philosophical arguments of one of the selected authors (short list of three or four names will be given). What were the main contributions of author? Why is the author significant to the study of political science?
 2. Based upon the writings of not less than three political theorists, develop and explain your personal definition of What is Justice
 - b. Student preparation and participation in classroom discussion of issues.

B. **Frequency**

1. Minimum of two significant written assignments of a research and/or valutive/analytical nature;
2. Quizzes on reading assignments as appropriate

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. George Klosko *History of Political Theory, Vol I and Vol II.*, Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993.
2. Garner & Oldenquist, Editors *Society and the Individual: Readings in Political and Social Philosophy.*, Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1990.
3. Ebenstein & Ebenstein *Introduction to Political Thinkers.*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992.
4. Geriant Williams *Political Theory in Retrospect.*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 1991.
5. Robert Brown *Classical Political Theories: From Plato to Marx.*, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1990.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Study guides as prepared by instructor, including original source documents.