

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for POLI 25

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY

Effective: Fall 2013

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.

3.00 Units Lecture

Strongly Recommended

- Eligibility for ENG 1A -

POLI 7 - Introduction to American Government

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

- A. -Eligibility for ENG 1A
- B. POLI7

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

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

1. A. critically analyze the American political, social, and economic environment in determining why we do what we do, how/why we react in certain ways, the impact of power, norms, and values that underlie our decision making process both collectively and individually. B. explain the differences in political constructs as presented by various authors C. interpret alternate ideologies and their application to American politics D. recognize, through various theoretical frameworks in our political history, how current affairs are understood, acted upon, and critiqued. E. create their own "cognitive map" to understanding how pieces of political theory have filtered down through the ages into our thinking, our governmental, social, and economic processes, and ultimately into our daily lives.

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, justice, good, courage, virtue, piety,
- E. The social contract: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison
- F. Religion and Politics: Luther, Calvin, Confucius
- G. 19th century philosophers: Burke, Bentham, Mill and Marx
- H. 20th century philosophers: Sartre, Nietzsche, Rawls

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** - Informal seminar/lecture method of presentation
- B. **Discussion** - Heavy reliance on student discussion
- C. **Student Presentations** - These are short (15 minute) presentations of their research papers at semester end. Must be able to handle questions and answers segment from other students regarding their research paper.
- D. Innovation in method is recommended
- E. **Audio-visual Activity** - Occasionally, there are political interviews, newsworthy items, current events that complement class discussions.
- F. Student presentations

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading assignments: 1. Building a Foundation: Socrates (Tannebaum & Schultz, Chp 2), Antigone: Questions of Virtue, Morality, and Rationality (reader), Phillips, Six Questions of Socrates: What is Virtue? (chp 1). Is Morality Nature (reader), Stephen Colbert & Philosophy: Is Stephen Colbert America's Socrates? (reader), South Part & Philosophy: You Know, I Learned Something Today(reader) Writing Assignment: Write a reflection paper on Virtue

2. Reading Assignments: Women Philosophers (Tannenbaum & Shultz, chp 3); Harry Potter & Philosophy:Feminism, Hermione & the Women of Hogwarts (reader), Twilight & Philosophy:Vampire Love: The Second Sex Negotiates the 21st Century (reader); Seinfeld & Philosophy: Elaine Benes: Feminist Icon or Just One of the Boys (reader); South Part & Philosophy: Raisins, Whores, and Boys (reader)

3. Writing Assignment: Write a reflection paper on Wollstonecraft & Elaine, Bella, or Hermione. What would Wollstonecraft think about these women--What would Elaine, Ella or Hermione think about Wollstonecraft? What would feminists today think about all of them?

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Research Projects
3. Papers
4. Oral Presentation
5. Class Participation

B. **Frequency**

1. Analytical critiques on reading assignments, 2.5 pages, 7-9 essays in total throughout semester.
2. One culminating independent research paper on a Founding Father, a political theorist (8-10 pages).
3. Class participation: every class meeting
4. Student-led discussion: 1-2 times per semester
5. Exam(s): as determined by instructor at beginning of semester

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Tannenbaum, Donald (2012). *Inventors of Ideas:Introduction to Western Political Philosophy* (3rd ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth.
2. Phillips, Christopher (2004). *Six Questions of Socrates*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton .
3. Love, Nancy (2010). *Dogmas & Dreams: A Reader in Modern Political Ideologies* (4 ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.
4. Law, Steven (2003). *The Philosophy Gym*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
5. Irwin, William, edt (2012). *Inception and Philosophy*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
6. Schiller, Aaron Allen (2009). *Steven Colbert & Philosophy: I Am Philosophy (and So Can You)*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing.
7. Ellis, Joseph (1998). *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*. , New York: Random House Pub.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: