

Intro to Human Sciences- Spring 2023

Political Science Module-Lecture 1

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Intro to Human Sciences

Political Science Module

Lecture 1 : What is Politics?

Lecture 2 : Key Concepts in Political Science

Lecture 3: Indian Political System

Lecture 4: Branches and sub-branches of Political Science



**“Man is by nature a
political animal.”
-Aristotle**

Aristotle- In *Politics*, Aristotle declared that 'man is by nature a political animal', by which he meant that it is only within a political community that human beings can live the 'good life'. According to him, Politics is an ethical activity concerned with creating a 'just society; and that is why Political Science is a master Science.

What is Politics?

Defining Politics

- Politics is an ‘**essentially contested**’ concept, in the sense that the term has a number of acceptable or legitimate meanings.
- Politics can be defined in different ways: as the exercise of power, the science of government, the making of collective decisions, the allocation of limited resources, the practice of deception and manipulation, and so on.
- **Politics, in its broadest sense, is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live.**
- Origin from the Greek word “**Polis**” (city-state: General form of political organisation in ancient Greece)
- Politics is inextricably linked to the phenomena of **conflict and cooperation**.

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as art of government

- **Bismark-** Politics is not a science, its an art. It is the art of government, the exercise of control within society through the making and enforcement of collective decisions.
- **Davis Easton-** Politics can be defined as the ‘authoritative allocation of values.’ Politics encompasses the various processes through which government responds to pressures from the larger society, in particular by allocating benefits, rewards or penalties.
- **Lord Acton-** “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Public Affairs

- There is a distinction between public life and private (or personal) life. According to this perspective, politics does not, and should not, infringe on ‘personal’ affairs and institutions.
- Feminist thinkers in particular have pointed out that this implies that politics effectively stops at the front door; it does not take place in the family, in domestic life, or in personal relationships.

Public	Private
The state: apparatus of government	Civil society: autonomous bodies – businesses, trade unions, clubs, families, and so on
Public	Private
Public realm: politics, commerce, work, art, culture and so on	Personal realm: family and domestic life

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Compromise and Consensus

- This conception of politics relates not to the arena within which politics is conducted but to the way in which decisions are made.
- Specifically, politics is seen as a particular means of resolving conflict: that is, by **compromise, conciliation and negotiation**, rather than through force and naked power.
- Stoker (2006)- ‘Politics is designed to disappoint’; its outcomes are ‘often messy, ambiguous and never final’.

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Power

- **Power as Decision Making-** In *Three Faces of Power* (1989), Keith Boulding distinguished between the use of force or intimidation (the stick), productive exchanges involving mutual gain (the deal), and the creation of obligations, loyalty and commitment (the kiss).
- **Power as Agenda Setting-** The second face of power, as suggested by Bachrach and Baratz (1962), is the ability to prevent decisions being made: that is, in effect, ‘non-decision-making’. This involves the ability to set or control the political agenda, thereby preventing issues or proposals from being aired in the first place.
- **Power as Thought Control-** The third face of power is the ability to influence another by shaping what he or she thinks, wants, or needs. This is power expressed as ideological indoctrination or psycho- logical control.

What is Politics?

Theoretical and Applied Politics

Theoretical Politics	Applied Politics
1. Theory of the State (Origin, nature, development, classification of the forms of government, sovereignty)	1. The State (Actual existing forms of government)
2. Theory of Government (Forms of institutions, executive, developments, province and limits of law)	2. Government (The working of the government and administration etc)
3. Theory of Legislation (Object of Legislation, philosophy of law, interpretation and administration and process of law making)	3. Law and Legislation (Legislative procedure and court of law)
4. Theory of State as an artificial person (Relation to other states and international law)	4. The State Personified (Diplomacy, Peace, War, conferences and other international dealings)

What is Politics?

Approaches to the Study of Politics

- **Philosophical Tradition-** This involved a preoccupation with essentially ethical, prescriptive or normative questions, reflecting a concern with what ‘should’, ‘ought’ or ‘must’ be brought about, rather than with what ‘is’. Plato and Aristotle are usually identified as the founding fathers of this tradition. The normative approach is ‘prescriptive’, in the sense that it makes judgements and offers recommendations.
- **Empirical Tradition-** It is based on observation and experience. The empirical approach to political analysis is characterized by the attempt to offer a dispassionate and impartial account of political reality. The approach is ‘descriptive’, in that it seeks to analyse and explain.

What is Politics?

Should students of politics seek to be objective and politically neutral?

YES	NO
Desire to Explain	Myth of Neutrality
Objective Knowledge	Emancipatory Knowledge
Free- Floating Intellectuals	Competing Relaities