

Politics & International Relations

COURSE SUMMARY

The course will be divided in two parts. The first week will be devoted to the study of two central concepts: democracy and liberalism. The second part will focus on a much-debated question nowadays: the relationship between politics and religion. Prior to each tutorial, you will be asked to read some excerpts from a selection of key texts, plus some secondary literature (comments on the texts) and some newspaper articles.

COURSE AIMS

- To help students understand the meaning of key political concepts, e.g. democracy, liberalism, religious toleration.
- To give students a sense of how these concepts are not fixed, but on the contrary evolved over time, and received different interpretations in the writings of major political thinkers like Locke, Rousseau or John Stuart Mill.
- To encourage students to develop their ability to critically assess the arguments of these thinkers, and discern how these still pervade political debates today.

READING LIST

- D. Miller, *Political Philosophy. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2003

SET WORK

- Essay question: "What can we learn from past political thinkers today?"
- Essay writing: Select *one* of the authors we discussed in the past two weeks, and critically assess what are his views on a *specific issue* that we explored together. (e.g. What are Tocqueville's views on religion and democracy?)

COURSE OUTLINE

	Day	Type of tutorial	Time	Topic	Areas of Discussion (including activities)	Possible Preparatory Reading	Homework (if different to preparatory reading)
WEEK 1	Monday	Preliminary group tutorial	09:15-10:45	Introduction to Political Theory	Round of Presentation What is Political Theory? Why is Political Theory Still Relevant Today? Introduction to Key Concepts: Sovereignty, Democracy, Liberalism	D. Miller, <i>Political Philosophy. A Very Short Introduction</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2003.	
	Tuesday	Group tutorial	09:15-10:45	Rousseau and the General Will	The Social Contract Tradition	J.-J. Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , ed. S. Dunn, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 2002. (selection of chapters)	

					<p>Rousseau's General Will</p> <p>Direct Democracy</p> <p>Case study: the Brexit Referendum</p>	<p>Wokler, R. <i>Rousseau, a Very Short Introduction</i>, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2001, chapters 3 and 4.</p> <p>D. Van Reybroek, "Why elections are bad for democracy", <i>The Guardian</i>, 26 June 2016, (access via http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/29/why-elections-are-bad-for-democracy)</p>	
Wednesday	Group tutorial	09:15-10:45	Benjamin Constant and Liberalism	<p>Two Types of Liberty</p> <p>Negative liberty: protecting the private sphere</p> <p>Positive liberty: engaging the public sphere</p> <p>Case Study: Political Participation in the 21st Century</p>	<p>B. Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of The Moderns", in <i>Political Writings</i>, ed. B. Fontana, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1988, pp. 309-328. (Access via: http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/constant-the-liberty-of-ancients-compared-with-that-of-moderns-1819)</p> <p>J. Jennings, "Constant's Idea of Modern Liberty" in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Constant</i>, ed. H. Rosenblatt, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 69-91.</p> <p>S. Hessel, <i>Time for Outrage</i>, (2010). (Access via: https://iatrogenico.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/indignez-vous-time-for-outrage-stc3a9phane-hessel-english.pdf)</p> <p>L. Wadham, "French take to the barricade to defend their way of life", <i>The Guardian</i>, 15 May 2016 (access via: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/14/france-paris-nuit-debout-protests-may-1968)</p>		

	Friday	Group Tutorial	09:15-10:45	Tocqueville and Democracy	Democracy and Equality The advantages and disadvantages of Democracy Democratic Despotism Case Study: Contemporary Threats to Democracy	<p>A. de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i>, transl. and ed. H. C. Mansfield and D. Windthrop, (Chicago: Chicago University Press), 2000. (selection of chapters)</p> <p>H. Mansfield, <i>Tocqueville: a Very Short Introduction</i>, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2010, chapters 2, 3 and 4.</p> <p>M. Eiermann, "How Donald Trump fits in the History of American Populism", <i>The World Post</i>, 2 March 2016, (access via http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/donald-trump-american-populism_b_9368030)</p> <p>I. Buruma, "Are we Watching the Death Throes of American Liberal Democracies?", <i>The Globe and Mail</i>, 11 February 2016. (Access via http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/are-we-watching-the-death-throes-of-american-liberal-democracy/article28705123/)</p>	
	Saturday	1-2-1 Tutorials	30 mins per student	Assignment: Essay question: "What can we learn from past political thinkers today?" Answer this question in a 2 page long essay, drawing on the authors and materials explored throughout the week			SET WORK* 1
		Subject-specific afternoon		MUN debate with International			

				Development students			
	Sunday	Group tutorial	09:15-10:45	Introduction : Politics and Religion	Introduction to issues arising at the crossroads of politics and religion Secularism and Secularization	A. Sharma, "The Religious and the Secular in the Modern World", <i>The Huffington Post</i> , 2 August 2012, (access via: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arvind-sharma/the-religious-and-the-secular_b_1245386.html) J. Fox, "Secularism or Secularization? The Secular-Religious Competition Perspective and Beyond", in <i>Political Secularism, Religion and the State. A Time Series Analysis of Worldwide Data</i> , (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2015, pp. 16-38. C. Callaway, "Politics and Religion", <i>Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy</i> , (access via: http://www.iep.utm.edu/rel-poli/#H6)	
WEEK 2	Monday	Group tutorial	09:15-10:45	Religious Tolerance: Locke and Rousseau	Introduction to the arguments in favour of religious toleration Church-State Separation Religious Toleration in the French Republican and Anglo-Saxon Liberal Traditions	J.-J. Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , ed. S. Dunn, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 2002. (selection of chapters) J. Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration", in <i>Two Treatises of Governement and A Letter Concernign Toleration</i> , ed. I. Shapiro, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 2003. E. Winkler, "Is it time for France to abandon laïcité?", <i>The New Republic</i> , 7 January 2016 (access via https://newrepublic.com/article/127179/time-france-abandon-laicite)	

					Case study: French "laïcité"		
Tuesday	Group tutorial	09:15-10:45	Religion and Freedom: Tocqueville	Is religion a threat or a support to freedom? The Contribution of Religion to the Public Debate Case study: the influence of religion on American Politics	<p>A. de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i>, transl. and ed. H. C. Mansfield and D. Windthrop, (Chicago: Chicago University Press), 2000. (selection of chapters)</p> <p>N. A. Graebner, "Christianity and Democracy : Tocqueville's views on Religion in America", <i>The Journal of Religion</i>, 56, 3, 1976, pp. 263-273.</p> <p>N. Barber, "Why Religion Rules American Politics", <i>The Huffington Post</i>, 12 September 2012 (access via http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nigel-barber/why-religion-rules-american-politics)</p> <p>C. Holloway, "Tocqueville on Christianity and American Democracy", <i>The Heritage Foundation</i>, 7 March 2016, (access via: http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/03/tocqueville-on-christianity-and-american-democracy)</p> <p>Supplementary readings: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/jun/26/religion-politics-britain-public</p>		
Wednesday	Group tutorial	09:15-10:45	Religion and Utility: J. S. Mill	Do liberal democracies produce new forms of religiosity?	<p>J.S. Mill, "Utility of Religion", in <i>Three Essays on Religion</i>.</p> <p>R. Beiner, "John Stuart Mill's Project to turn Atheism into a Religion", in <i>Civil Religion: A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy</i>, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2010, pp. 259-267.</p> <p>http://religionnews.com/2015/06/29/atheists-politicians-might-be-rare-now-but-not-for-long/</p>		

				Do personal beliefs of politicians matter in politics?	http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2010/09/28/3023727.htm “Can religion be replaced?” https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jun/19/religion-philosophy	
Friday	1-2-1 Tutorials	30 mins per student	Assignment: Essay writing: Select <i>one</i> of the authors we discussed in the past two weeks, and critically assess what are his views on a <i>specific issue</i> that we explored together. (e.g. What are Tocqueville’s views on religion and democracy? Are they coherent? Do his insights still hold true today?)			SET WORK* 2