

History PG

Semester: 1	
Programme : History	
Course : Themes in Western Political Thought: From the Renaissance to Modernity (15th to 20th Centuries)	
Paper code:	Credits: 6
Hours/week : 4	
Category: Core/MDC/SEC/VAC : Core (Major)	
Theory / Practical / Composite : Theory	
No of Modules : 2	
<p>Course Overview: This postgraduate course offers an advanced inquiry into the intellectual history of the West, tracing the transformation of political consciousness from the Renaissance to the late 19th century. Students will critically examine the rupture between Scholasticism and Humanism, analyzing how Machiavellian statecraft and the Social Contract theories of Hobbes and Locke laid the groundwork for modern Liberalism. The curriculum investigates the Enlightenment's "Primacy of Reason" and its expansion into diverse ideological currents, including German Idealism, French Liberalism, and radical egalitarianism. Special emphasis is placed on the dialectical development of Scientific Socialism, Anarchism, and the evolution of Feminist thought as systematic critiques of the established order. By synthesizing theory with historical development, scholars will assess how these "varieties of thought" continue to define the structural logic of the contemporary state and its dissenters.</p>	
Course Outcome:	
1. Categorize the evolution of European political doctrines from Renaissance Humanism and early Absolutism through to the radical ideologies of the 19th century, including Scientific Socialism and Anarchism.	
2. Interpret the fundamental shifts in the nature of political authority, explaining the transition from divinely ordained power to secular frameworks of the "Social Contract" and "Reason."	
3. Relate theoretical constructs—such as the "General Will" or "Scientific Socialism"—to their specific historical ruptures, demonstrating how intellectual shifts catalyzed movements like the Levellers or the French Revolution	
4. Deconstruct the internal contradictions and developmental patterns within Liberalism, comparing the Utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill with the aristocratic liberalism of Tocqueville	
5. Critique the Hegelian conception of the State against the radical critiques posed by Utopian and Scientific Socialists, evaluating their respective impacts on modern governance and social hierarchy.	
6. Synthesize the historical trajectory of gender and class-based critiques (from Wollstonecraft to Kropotkin) to formulate an advanced argument on how "marginal" voices contested and reshaped mainstream political thought.	
Prerequisites: <i>Basic knowledge about any prior course</i>	
SYLLABUS	

UNIT/Module	CONTENT	HOURS or NUMBER OF CLASSES	CO Mapping	COGNITIVE LEVEL
I.	Unit 1: Renaissance Thought <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background: From Scholasticism to Renaissance Humanism • Machiavelli and strategies of statecraft • Bodin and Absolutism 	18	CO1 CO2 CO3 CO4 CO5 CO6	K1,K2,K3,K4.K5,K6
	Unit 2: England in the 17th century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hobbes, the Leviathan and the Social Contract • Locke, the social contract and the emergence of early liberalism • Levellers and Diggers – egalitarian and revolutionary ideas 			
	Unit 3: Enlightenment in Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intellectual context of the Enlightenment, the primacy of Reason, the “philosopher king”. • Liberty and Revolution (Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau). • Mary Wollstonecraft and the rights of women 			
II.	Unit 4: Liberal Thought <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentham and John Stuart Mill • French Liberalism from Benjamin Constant to Alexis de Tocqueville 	18	CO1 CO2 CO3 CO4 CO5 CO6	K1,K2,K3,K4.K5,K6
	Unit 5: German Thought <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hegel and the state 			
	Unit 6: Anarchism, Utopian Socialism, Scientific Socialism and Feminism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Godwin to Kropotkin • Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: the development and elaboration of scientific socialism 			

	• Evolution of Feminist Thought			
Text Books				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quentin Skinner, Machiavelli • JR Hale, Machiavelli and Renaissance • Daniel Lee, The Rights of Sovereignty • CB MacPherson, Possessive Individualism • Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down • Robert Darnton, The Business of Enlightenment • Robert Darnton, The Great Cat Massacre • Cambridge History of Political Thought • JP Mayer, Political Thought - The European Tradition • Peter Marshall, Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism 				
Suggested readings				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frank Manuel, Utopian Thought in the Western World • E Wood, N Wood, Trumpet of Sedition: Political Theory and the Rise of Capitalism • Cambridge Companion to Liberalism • J.S. McClelland, A History of Western Political Thought 				
Web Resources				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Evaluation : Theory CIA=30 Semester Exam: 70				
Paper Structure for Theory Semester Exam: End Semester Exam: 70 Two modules of 35 marks each. 2 questions of 15 marks from 4 options: 2X15=30 1 question of 5 marks from 3 options: 5X1= 5				

Course outcomes (COs) and Cognitive Level Mapping

COs	CO Description	Cognitive levels
CO1	Categorize the evolution of European political doctrines from Renaissance Humanism and early Absolutism through to the radical ideologies of the 19th century, including Scientific Socialism and Anarchism.	K1
CO2	Interpret the fundamental shifts in the nature of political authority, explaining the transition from	K2

	divinely ordained power to secular frameworks of the "Social Contract" and "Reason."	
CO3	Relate theoretical constructs—such as the "General Will" or "Scientific Socialism"—to their specific historical ruptures, demonstrating how intellectual shifts catalyzed movements like the Levellers or the French Revolution	K3
CO4	Deconstruct the internal contradictions and developmental patterns within Liberalism, comparing the Utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill with the aristocratic liberalism of Tocqueville	K4
CO5	Critique the Hegelian conception of the State against the radical critiques posed by Utopian and Scientific Socialists, evaluating their respective impacts on modern governance and social hierarchy.	K5
CO6	Synthesize the historical trajectory of gender and class-based critiques (from Wollstonecraft to Kropotkin) to formulate an advanced argument on how "marginal" voices contested and reshaped mainstream political thought.	K6