

History UG

Semester: 7				
Programme : History				
Course : Themes in Western Political Thought: From the Renaissance to Modernity (15th to 20th Centuries)				
Paper code: C4HS230721T			Credits: 6	
Hours/week : 4				
Category: Core/MDC/SEC/VAC : Core (Major)				
Theory / Practical / Composite : Theory				
No of Modules : 2				
<p>Course Overview: This course traces the evolution of Western political and social theory from the Renaissance to the development of modern ideological frameworks. Students will navigate the shift from religious scholasticism to secular humanism, examining how thinkers like Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke redefined statecraft and individual rights. The curriculum explores the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and its revolutionary outcomes, alongside the rise of Liberalism, Hegelian state theory, and the radical critiques of Anarchism and Socialism. Significant attention is paid to the development of Scientific Socialism by Marx and Engels and the parallel evolution of Feminist thought. Ultimately, the course provides an intellectual history of the concepts—such as liberty, equality, and the state—that underpin contemporary political systems.</p>				
Course Outcome:				
1. Identify the key thinkers and central tenets of major intellectual movements, including Renaissance Humanism, the Social Contract, the Enlightenment, and Scientific Socialism.				
2. Explain the transition from Scholasticism to secular statecraft, detailing how shifts in thought influenced the concepts of Absolutism and early Liberalism.				
3. Demonstrate how Enlightenment principles of reason and liberty were applied to the revolutionary movements in Europe and the early advocacy for women's rights.				
4. Differentiate between various models of the "Social Contract" as proposed by Hobbes and Locke, and examine the radical egalitarian alternatives offered by the Levellers and Diggers.				
5. Critique the arguments for and against the state as presented by Hegel, the Anarchists, and the Utilitarians (Bentham and Mill), assessing their impact on modern governance.				
6. Formulate a comparative framework that connects the evolution of Feminist thought from Wollstonecraft to later movements with the broader development of Socialist and Liberal ideologies.				
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	18	CO1	KI,K2,K3,K4.K5,K

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background: From Scholasticism to Renaissance Humanism • Machiavelli and strategies of statecraft • Bodin and Absolutism 		CO2 CO3 CO4 CO5 CO6	6
	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 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: 5 + Mid Sem: 20 + Attendance: 5 =30 Semester Exam: 70
Paper Structure for Theory Semester Exam: Total Marks: 70 Two modules of 35 marks each. (3 questions of 5 marks from 5 options: 3X5=15 2 questions of 10 marks from 3 options: 2X10=20

Course outcomes (COs) and Cognitive Level Mapping

COs	CO Description	Cognitive levels
CO1	Identify the key thinkers and central tenets of major intellectual movements, including Renaissance Humanism, the Social Contract, the Enlightenment, and Scientific Socialism.	K1
CO2	Explain the transition from Scholasticism to secular statecraft, detailing how shifts in thought influenced the concepts of Absolutism and early Liberalism.	K2
CO3	Demonstrate how Enlightenment principles of reason and liberty were applied to the revolutionary movements in Europe and the early advocacy for women's rights.	K3

CO4	Differentiate between various models of the "Social Contract" as proposed by Hobbes and Locke, and examine the radical egalitarian alternatives offered by the Levellers and Diggers.	K4
CO5	Critique the arguments for and against the state as presented by Hegel, the Anarchists, and the Utilitarians (Bentham and Mill), assessing their impact on modern governance.	K5
CO6	Formulate a comparative framework that connects the evolution of Feminist thought from Wollstonecraft to later movements with the broader development of Socialist and Liberal ideologies.	K6