

# Exercices de théorie politique

## Lecturers

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## Course mnemonic

POLI-D202

## ECTS credits

5 credits

## Language(s) of instruction

French

## Course period

Second term

## Campus

Solbosch

## Course content

Political life is - inevitably - made of conflicts. Conflicts cannot be reduced simply to power struggles or to negotiations between divergent interests. They are also formulated as opposing ideas. In the crucible of political life, radically different visions of the world confront each other and a whole range of conceptions of living together are developed. Political actors construct theories and put forward concepts both to justify their claim to power and to criticize the domination to which they are subjected. All these representations and theorizations constitute what we could call, in a broad sense, political thought.

Since this thought is inseparable from the political contexts in which it emerges, it has a history. Our concepts of today bear, inscribed in their contemporary uses and applications, the traces of their genealogy. Understanding where they come from and what led to their invention, tracing the multiplicity of their uses through time and observing the plasticity of their content allows for a finer and more critical knowledge of their meaning and their contemporary uses. It is to this work of critical and historical return on concepts and theories that mark contemporary political thought that this teaching unit is devoted.

The teaching will take the form of interactive seminars, in small groups, under the responsibility of a lecturer or an assistant. For example, past seminars have focused on "Cosmopolitanism and its Critics", "Male Domination", "Capitalism and Social Justice", and "Totalitarianism".

## Objectives (and/or specific learning outcomes)

The objective of this seminar is to take the time to read in detail important texts from the history of political thought and to see how they can still be fruitful for our contemporary reflection. Putting the texts in their historical context will only be a prerequisite for their proper interpretation and will always aim

at discussing the issues and ideas they raise in light of the current context. The evaluation mechanisms are designed to encourage both reading, active critical examination, and assimilation of the texts in order to write a paper that echoes the themes discussed throughout the seminar.

## Pre-requisites and co-requisites

### Required knowledge and skills

There is no prerequisite knowledge or skill for this course. However, having previously taken the course "History of Political Thought (1)" will facilitate participation in the course.

## Teaching method and learning activities

This seminar is based on an active pedagogy and requires the participation of the students. The teacher of each seminar will apply his or her own pedagogical approach. However, they will all have in common the objective of involving the students as much as possible in the discussion of the texts and authors dealt with in the course.

Prior reading of the texts to be discussed during the session is essential to the success of the seminar. This is a seminar and not an ex-cathedra course. The goal is therefore to take the time to read the text in detail and in depth, and to discuss it during the sessions in order to acquire all the concepts necessary to write a rigorous and personal work.

Attendance at the seminar is mandatory. One unexcused absence is tolerated. Beyond this one absence, any unjustified absence will be penalized by a penalty of one point on the final grade. In the event of a foreseeable and justifiable absence, students are encouraged to contact the professor to notify him/her.

In addition to attendance, students will be expected to participate (in varying ways depending on the course instructor) in the exploration, explanation, and discussion of political theories and concepts specific to their topic.

## Contribution to the teaching profile

At the end of this seminar, the student will have acquired:

- > an analytical and academic approach based on methodological rigor
- > advanced writing and oral presentation skills in French
- > linguistic skills essential to the professional world;
- > an openness to the world.

## References, bibliography and recommended reading

The bibliography will be different in each seminar group. A complete and detailed bibliography of required readings will be provided by the seminar instructor at the beginning of the semester.

## Course notes

Université virtuelle

## Other information

### Place(s) of teaching

Solbosch

### Contact(s)

For questions related to the content or organization of a particular seminar group, please contact the instructor of that seminar group directly.

For questions related to the administration and organization of the course, its evaluation or in case of particular difficulties, please contact :

justine.lacroix@ulb.be

## Evaluation method(s)

Oral examination, Oral presentation, Personal work and Other

### Evaluation method(s) (additional information)

evaluation of the students is divided into two parts: a written assignment out of 12 points and a mark out of 8 for participation. This type of evaluation aims to recognize both individual work (readings and the final written assignment) and participation in the group during the seminar (oral presentation, interactions on the forum and participation).

#### A) Participation (8 points - 40% of final grade)

By participation, we mean

- individual preparation before the seminar (reading texts, forum, preparation of questions, ability to mobilize textual resources in exchanges, etc.)
- active participation during the seminar (the texts will be discussed, you will have to explain and argue your point of view and insert it into the group's discussions, or enlighten them with contextual points).
- the ability to synthesize and present research on a given theme in preparation for the reading of a text by the rest of the group.

precise means of evaluating participation will be specified for each group.

#### B) Final paper (12 points - 60% of the final grade)

The final work aims to develop a problematic proposed by the professor or freely chosen but related to the group's theme and previously discussed with the professor. The work must be between 8 and 10 pages long (1.5 line spacing, Times New Roman 12, normal margins). The problem identified must be presented, developed and, above all, explored. To do this, the student will propose a coherent and supported argument based on secondary literature texts in order to propose an answer to the question he/she has proposed to explore. An assignment that merely paraphrases the opinions of other authors will be deemed insufficient for success. The goal is to learn how to identify an

issue, analyze the positions surrounding the issue, define one's own position, and construct an argument to support it using various academic resources.

The student will have to hand in a presentation sheet (1 page) of his/her project by **March 31** at the latest. This sheet must include the topic of the work, an exploratory bibliography, a research question and a plan showing that the student has already explored the literature and thought about the structure of his or her work.

Formal requirements for the assignment are available in the "Methodology Guide", which can be accessed through the virtual university. Students are expected to submit work that is correct in spelling, form and syntax. Similarly, students are expected to be able to reference (in the text and in the bibliography) the texts they cite or from which they borrow ideas.

**The final paper is due on Monday, May 22.** A "walk-through" of the submitted work will be arranged before the end of June.

**An absence or a grade for attendance ("note de présence") for either part (participation or written assignment) will result in an absence or a grade for attendance for the overall grade.**

**In case of a second session**, three cases may arise.

1. student has passed the participation part and failed the written assignment. In this case, the student simply submits a new assignment. The 8 points for the participation remain and the 12 points for the assignment are put back into play.

2. student failed the participation but passed the assignment. In this case, the grade of the assignment is retained, but the student retakes an oral exam on the material covered during the seminar (8 points for participation)

3. student has failed the assignment and the participation. In this case, he/she submits a new paper on a new topic in the second session, and makes an appointment for the oral exam which will cover the material seen in the course.

The second session assignment is due by **August 11**. For the oral exam, the instructor of each seminar group will schedule a date with the students concerned in his or her group.

An absence or failing grade for either part (participation or work) in the second session will result in an absence or failing grade for the overall grade.

### Determination of the mark (including the weighting of partial marks)

Participation: 8 points out of 20, i.e. 40% of the total score

Written essay : 12 points out of 20, i.e. 60% of the overall score

An absence or a grade for attendance ("note de présence") in one of the two parts - that is, participation or written essay - will result in an absence or a grade for attendance for the overall grade.

### Main language(s) of evaluation

English

## Programmes

### Programmes proposing this course at the faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences

BA-POLI | Bachelor in Political Sciences : General | unit 2