

Political Philosophy and Secular Belief System

Section A: Headline Information	
Module title	Political Philosophy and Secular Belief Systems: From City State to Contractarianism
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	8
Module number/reference	TBC
Module Co-ordinator	Dr Sarah Otten
Parent programme(s)	BA in Social, Political and Community Studies; BA (Honours) in Social, Political and Community Studies
Stage of parent programme	Stage 3
Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)	Semester 1
Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS)	ECTS
Module credit number of units	5
List the teaching and learning modes	Lectures
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)	For entry onto Stage 3, successful completion of the preceding stage of the programme or equivalent is required in accordance with College regulations.
Pre-requisite module titles	N/A
Co-requisite module titles	N/A
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements)	Module co-ordinators, lecturers and tutors must have a minimum Level 9 qualification in the relevant discipline or a closely cognate area.
Maximum number of learners per module	25
Duration of the module	1 Semester: 12 weeks
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week (see * below)	Two hours
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)	Lecture room, white board, computer and projector.
Analysis of required learning effort	
*Effort while in contact with staff	

Classroom and demonstrations		Mentoring and small-group tutoring		Other (specify)		Directed e-learning (hours)	Independent learning (hours)	Other hours (specify)	Work-based learning hours of learning effort	Total effort (hours)
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner					
24	1:5						62 (Directed and self-directed)	39 (Essay prep., writing & continuous assessment)		125 hours
Allocation of marks (within the module)										
				Continuous assessment	Supervised project	Proctored practical examination	Proctored written examination	Total		
Percentage contribution				100%				100%		

Section B: Module Descriptor	
Rationale for Inclusion of the Module in the Programme and its Contribution to the Overall IPLOs	This module introduces learners to the history and concepts of political theory as it has developed in the Western tradition. It focuses on the changing ideas of the appropriate relationship between individual and the political entity. It develops the learners' awareness of the historical situatedness of political concepts and their critical ability to understand abstract theory and texts. This module contributes to the Programme Aims of deepening learners' political, social, and ethical awareness, as well as their ability to critically reflect, analyse and evaluate structures, policies and organisations. It particularly meets IPLOs 1, 3, 5, 8.
Module Aims and Objectives	This module aims to provide the learner with an overview of the central issues within Political Philosophy and Secular Belief Systems through a critical survey of the major theorists in the western political tradition. The key focus of the module is to trace the development of European political philosophy from its early Greek origins through to the defining period of Social Contract theory. The module will present learners with fundamental frameworks by which to analyse social and political phenomena, as well as developing learner capacity for critical and analytical thinking.
Minimum Module Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and summarise primary philosophy texts. (MIPLO 1) 2. Identify and explain political concepts such as relationship between individual and the political entity, property ownership, and legitimate government in the writings of philosophers of this period. (MIPLOs 1, 3) 3. Compare and evaluate theories from the philosophers we have studied on the module. (MIPLOs 1, 5, 8) 4. Critique the political theory of individual philosophers from this period. (MIPLOs 1, 3, 5, 8)
Information Provided to Learners about the Module	<p>College Prospectus specifies module name, stage and ECTS.</p> <p>College website and programme handbook to contain (in addition to above) short description of module content, module learning outcomes, prerequisite modules, and assessment mechanisms.</p> <p>Module handbook to contain (in addition to above) schedule of classes and topics, detailed assessment information with titles and submission dates, full bibliography and list of learning resources.</p> <p>Diploma Supplement contains module name, code, stage and ECTS.</p>
Module Content, Organisation and Structure	<p>Content covered:</p> <p>Nature of political philosophy, vocabulary, fundamental concepts and themes.</p> <p>Plato's <i>Republic</i>, structure and aims, assumptions about human nature, education, the Philosopher-King, knowledge, Forms and legitimacy. Popper's critique and a response.</p> <p>Social Contract theories – Hobbes and Locke. The state of nature, human nature and natural rights. The basis for legitimate sovereignty. Property. Marxist analysis of Hobbes, post-colonial critique of Locke. Feminist critique of the Social Contract.</p> <p>Freedom and duty – Rousseau. The Social Contract, the General Will, his notion of freedom vs Hobbes and Locke's view.</p> <p>The structure of this module allows learners to chronologically understand assess the development of European political thought on concepts such as legitimacy, proper relation of the individual to the state and ownership of property. Learning is delivered weekly in a two-hour lecture over a twelve week period.</p>
Module Teaching and Learning Strategy	<p>The content of this module is delivered in lectures. The lecturer models the skills of exposition, analysis and critique in delivering the content and draws attention to the process. At this higher level, learners will contribute to discussion in a structured fashion.</p>
Work-Based Learning and Practice-Placement	N/A
E-Learning	N/A
Specifications for Module Staffing Requirements	One lecturer.

<p>Module Summative and Formative Assessment Strategy</p>	<p>Assessment will be by continuous assessment comprising of in-class quizzes (20%), review questions and a written essay (80%).</p> <p>There are two in-class quizzes (10% each). They will be formative and summative in that they will encourage memorisation of relevant information and will feed into the final grade. (MLOs 1, 2)</p> <p>The review questions are a formative form of assessment. Learners are asked to verbally explain a concept from the previous lecture at the beginning of each lecture. (MLOs 1, 2, 3)</p> <p>The essay (2,000 – 2,500 words) is both a formative and summative form of assessment. It assesses knowledge, ability to analyse and evaluate, and the ability to form an argument and develops research skills. (See Humanities Band Descriptors for marking criteria). Each learner receives extensive feedback on their essay. (MLOs 2, 3, 4)</p>
<p>Sample Assessment Materials</p>	<p>Sample pop quiz questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List two rights Locke believes we hold in the State of Nature. 2. What gives us entitlement to own a particular thing, according to Locke? 3. List Locke’s two original limitations on property ownership. <p>Sample review questions:</p> <p>How did Rousseau describe human nature in the State of Nature? Why do humans need to leave the State of Nature, according to Rousseau?</p> <p>Sample essay topic:</p> <p>Analyse one or more of the political theories we have studied in Term One under either of the following headings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Feminism – provide a feminist analysis of the theories you have chosen and assess the value of the theory for producing a woman friendly state. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) Application to a scenario – analyse a current or historical scenario where the legitimacy of a government was in question. Determine what one or more of the theorists we have studied might say about the situation. <p><i>Your essay should display familiarity with the primary texts and use at least four references in the bibliography.</i></p>
<p>Reading Lists and Other Information Resources</p>	<p>Essential Reading:</p> <p>Hobbes, T. (1968). <i>Leviathan</i>. London: Penguin.</p> <p>Locke, (1960, 1967, 1988) <i>The Two Treatises of Government</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Plato (1955, 1974, 1987). <i>The Republic</i>. London: Penguin.</p> <p>Rousseau (1969, 1970, 1972). <i>The Social Contract</i>. London: Penguin.</p> <p>Other Reading:</p>

	<p>MacPherson, C.B. (1964, 1985). <i>The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press</p> <p>Morris, C. (1999). <i>The Social Contract Theorists: Critical Essays on Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau</i>. Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 1999.</p> <p>Pateman, C. (1988). <i>The Sexual Contract</i>. Cambridge: Polity.</p> <p>Popper, K. (2002). <i>The Open Society and its Enemies</i>, vol.1. London: Routledge.</p>
Module Physical Resource Requirements	Lecture hall, white board, computer and projector.