

DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

Name of the subject in Hungarian:	Introduction to Political Theory
Name of the subject in English:	Introduction to Political Theory
Credit value of the subject:	3
The code of the subject in the electronic study system:	BN-INPOTH-03-EA
Classification of the subject:	Obligatory
Language of instruction (in case of non-Hungarian courses):	English
Institute or department responsible for the subject:	Institute of Social Sciences and International Studies
Course type and number of contact hours:	Lecture, class per week: 2, class per semester: 0
Mode of study: (Full-time / Part-time):	Full-time training
The semester in which the subject is open for registration:	2022/2023 1st semester
Prerequisite(s):	-

THE PURPOSE OF THE SUBJECT, LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course presents the fundamental concepts, doctrines, and gives an insight into the contemporary issues and debates in political science, which can be relevant for students with International Relations major. Emphasis will be put on the primary sources of the Western intellectual tradition whose ideas have shaped the contemporary debates in both political science and the “political world.” The main objective is to provide students with a general literacy of the conceptual tools utilized today by political scientists and political actors to understand and explain the major dynamics of politics. The learning result is basically twofold. First, to make students familiar with the conceptions and the agents generating debates in politics: 1) To acquire a conceptual framework that serves as guidance of getting a line on political issues, and 2) how to use it to interpret those issues and to prepare them how to apply it in deductive-analytic research design. Second, the capability of fitting for identifying and applying the different modern approaches to politics and for plural but critical attitude toward political phenomena.

SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT OF THE SUBJECT

Exploring both classical and contemporary formulations, the course focuses on the most important theories and doctrines of political science, introducing the basic concepts, typologies, and ideas necessary for the analysis of public life. It takes into account the evergreen, big questions of politics: To what extent does human nature determine politics and our political attitude? When do governments deserve our loyalty and when should we refuse them? How does modernity affect political institutions and what challenges does it pose? Where do human rights come from and how universal are they? The last part of the course deals with the nature of, and justifications for, democratic politics, and their relations to Enlightenment and Anti-Enlightenment political thinking.

STUDENT’S TASKS AND PLANNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

The goal of the course is that the students are aware of the modern trends, contemporary issues, and debates in political science, and the intellectual origin of these ideas. That’s why the course combines the frontal teaching method and active student works in the class. Each new topic begins by posing a very specific problem, presenting case studies or current social debates, and students are required to think them over, find out the crucial points, and debate some details. The applied methods are diverse, so the student’s activity can be multiple, and we can avoid monotonous work. After the discussions, the class collectively attempts to draw conclusions before the instructor presents the academic positions to the students. At the end of the semester, the student takes a written exam at exam period.

EVALUATION OF THE SUBJECT:

The evaluation is based on three achievements. First, the students actively participate in the class. The aim of active participation is twofold: 1) to activate the theoretic framework and ideas, how they appear and how to apply them in real-life practice; 2) to a continuous way of training in learning and reasoning.

Second, the short essay paper submitted together with the final exam paper at the exam. The instructor will distribute the questions for composing the essay in the middle of the term. The questions are attached to the discussed topics and a text by a classic author is also given as a square one for further discussion. Although the paper assignment does not require external reading beyond the selected texts, the students are led to reflect on the topic related to their chosen question.

Third, students write a final exam during the exam period, which contains some questions covering the whole subject of the course. The questions are more than true/false questions or a multiple-choice test. To answer them, it requires a comprehensive view of the course and a bit of creativity. Students always need to write up arguments, that is, not just statements of opinion but developed reasoning that is intended to lend support to the reply.

Grade totals:

1. Attendance: 5%
2. Essay Paper: 45%
3. Final Exam: 50%

Offered grade can be given: No.

OBLIGATORY READING LIST:

- Goodwin, Barbara: *Using political ideas.* , 2014
- Catriona McKinnon (ed.): *Issues in Political Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2019

RECOMMENDED READING LIST:

- Heywood, Andrew: *Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013
- John Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning(ed.): *21th Century Political Science. (Vol. 2.)*. , Sage Publisher, 2011