

Course description

Course abbreviation:	KFR/MHIPP	Page:	1 / 4
Course name:	History of Political Philosophy		
Academic Year:	2024/2025	Printed:	30.05.2024 06:46

Department/Unit /	KFR / MHIPP			Academic Year	2024/2025
Title	History of Political Philosophy			Type of completion	Examination
Accredited/Credits	Yes, 7 Cred.			Type of completion	Combined
Number of hours	Lecture 2 [HRS/WEEK] Seminar 2 [HRS/WEEK]			Course credit prior to	YES
Occ/max	Status A	Status B	Status C	Counted into average	YES
Summer semester	0 / -	0 / -	0 / -	Min. (B+C) students	not determined
Winter semester	0 / 10	0 / 0	0 / 20	Repeated registration	NO
Timetable	Yes			Semester taught	Winter semester
Language of instruction	English			Internship duration	0
Optional course	Yes			Ev. sc. – cred.	S/N
Evaluation scale	A B C D E F				
No. of hours of on-premise	0				
Auto acc. of credit	No				
Periodicity	K				
Substituted course	None				
Preclusive courses	N/A				
Prerequisite courses	N/A				
Informally recommended courses	N/A				
Courses depending on this Course	N/A				

Course objectives:

The course is conceived as an interpretation of basic political-philosophical positions from antiquity to the present. The lectures should introduce students to the major figures in the history of political thought and show that their theories are not merely historically contingent concepts but attempts to solve political problems still relevant today. The course will be divided into two parts, the ancient (Mondays) and modern (Thursdays).

Ancient:

How did ancient philosophers and intellectuals understand politics, the political community, and civic virtue? What were their ideas about good and flawed rulers, laws, and regimes? In this course we will study and discuss some of the main issues and themes in ancient political philosophy (roughly from the 5th until the 1st c. BCE) by reading selections from key texts in translation. Rather than taking our cue from some central problems in the history of political philosophy (equality, sovereignty, legitimacy, obligation, etc.), this course takes a 'bottom up' approach, starting from the ancient texts themselves. The emphasis will be on the ways in which the analysis of 'political' questions for ancient authors was deeply integrated with ethics, ways of life, and social and economic issues, and on the particularities of the many viewpoints reflected in the texts.

Themes that will be discussed include: ancient thinking on democracy (Protagoras, Aristotle), ancient thinking on monarchy and kingship, challenges to moral and political thought in the form of immoralist arguments, distinctions between regimes, ideas about law, utopia, the ideal city, and civic virtue. In the last session, we will look at the reception of ancient ideas about kingship in an Italian Renaissance philosopher, who, though largely unknown today, deserves to be on a par with Machiavelli (as was recently argued by James Hankins in his 2023 book on Francesco Patrizi of Siena).

The classes will consist of discussion of the course material. Students are expected to read carefully the texts in preparation for each class. For each class (with exception of the first class of 25.09), they will prepare (a) one question (to be discussed during class) and (b) one proposition (that they are prepared to argue for).

Requirements on student

EXAMINATION ANCIENT:

The final grade (expressed numerically) will consist of two weighed parts:

- preparation and participation in discussions: 30%
- written essay at the end of the course: 70%.

Since participation is part of the final mark, a maximum of 2 absences is allowed. In case of absence, please inform the instructor in advance).

For their final essay students will be able to choose from three essay questions the one that suits them best. The questions will be directly related to the course readings and discussions. A mid-term essay will have to be submitted on November 20th (essay questions to be circulated during the term). These essays will be discussed the week after (Nov. 27th). This mid-term essay will not be part of the final grade, but is a good way to practice for writing the final essay.

EXAMINATION MODERN

Students will choose one of the texts discussed at the seminar for an oral examination. Students should be able to present the structure of the text as well as the logic of its arguments and be able to engage in a critical discussion.

Content

SYLLABUS ANCIENT

1. [25.09] Introduction (Bartels and Sklenář)
2. [2.10] Protagoras: early democratic theorist? Plato, Protagoras 320c-328d (the 'Protagoras-myth')
3. [9.10] The immoralists on justice: Plato, Republic 2, 357a-368e
4. [16.10] The degeneration of constitutions: Plato, Republic 8
5. [23.10] Platonic critique and reform of law: Plato, Statesman 291d-311c; Laws 4
6. [30.10] Thinking about monarchy: Cyrus, King of Persia: Xenophon, Cyropaedia 8; Laws 3, 693d-699e
7. [6.11] Man is a 'political animal': Aristotle, Politics 1
8. [13.11] Thinking about democracy: Aristotle, Politics 4, §§1-4; 6, §§1-5
9. [20.11] The ideal city; mid-term essay submission: Aristotle, Politics 7
10. [27.11] Hellenistic utopias: Euhemerus of Messene (Diodorus Siculus, Biblioteca historica 5, §§41-46; VI, 1)
11. [4.12] Libertas and freedom: Cicero, On the commonwealth 3
12. [11.12] Republican virtues: Cicero, On duties 1
13. [18.12] Francesco Patrizi of Siena, De regno: chapter by James Hankins

SYLLABUS MODERN

1. [28.9.] National holiday.
2. [5.10.] Introductory lesson.
3. [12.10.] Machiavelli - the relation of politics and morals.
4. [19.10.] Hobbes on the state of nature and political society.
5. [26.10.] Locke on the state of nature and political society.
6. [2.11.] Rousseau and the modern idea of freedom.
7. [9.11.] Hegel - State as the actuality of ethical Idea
8. [16.11.] A. de Tocqueville: Value of democracy and the tyranny of the majority
9. [23.11.] C. Schmitt - The concept of the political and the politics of exception
10. [30.11.] Herbert Marcuse and the politics of the Frankfurt school
11. [7.12.] R. Nozick and the libertarian utopia
12. [14.12.] J. Rawls - Justice and the idea of overlapping consensus
13. [21.12.] M. Sandel - Communitarianism and the crisis of liberalism

Prerequisites - other information about course preconditions

Knowledge of English.

Competences acquired

- a familiarity with some of the main texts in the history of ancient political philosophy;
- a firm knowledge of key concepts and discourse from ancient political thought in their historical contexts (city (polis); regime

- (politeia); justice; democracy; monarchy; law (nomos); libertas; civic virtue);
- a firm knowledge of the sorts of concerns and issues discussed in ancient political philosophy;
 - an awareness of the difference between understanding an author in his own terms (the historically informed reconstruction of what an author was doing in saying what he said), and a philosophical critique of the validity of argument and the methodological implications of this difference;
 - the ability to reflect meaningfully on cross-textual and cross-historical comparisons between different texts and arguments, taking into account the specifics and particularities of the texts (genre, literary characteristics) and contexts concerned;
 - the ability to develop a clearly structured and articulated argument and convey that in a lucidly written essay.
 - active, constructive participation and preparation: the student demonstrates involvement in the topic by asking well-informed and pertinent questions that advance the discussion and collective progress.

Fields of study

Guarantors and lecturers

- **Guarantors:** Dr. Myrthe Laura Bartels
- **Lecturer:** Dr. Myrthe Laura Bartels (100%), Mgr. Matej Cívik, Ph.D. (100%)
- **Seminar lecturer:** Mgr. Matej Cívik, Ph.D. (100%), Mgr. Václav Sklenář, Ph.D. (100%)

Literature

Teaching methods

Dialogic (discussion, interview, brainstorming)

Assessment methods

Written examination
Student performance assessment

Course is included in study programmes:

Study Programme	Type of	Form of	Branch	Stage	St. plan v.	Year	Block	Status	R.year	R.
Ethics and Political Philosophy	Follow-up study	Full-time	Ethics and Political Philosophy	1	2024	2024	Compulsory Courses	A	1	ZS
Ethics and Political Philosophy	Follow-up study	Full-time	Ethics and Political Philosophy	1	2022	2024	Compulsory Courses	A	1	ZS
Ethics and Political Philosophy	Follow-up study	Full-time	Ethics and Political Philosophy	1	2023	2024	Compulsory Courses	A	1	ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Gendery History	1	2024	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Gendery History	1	2023	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Gendery History	1	2022	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Gendery History	1	2021	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Dějiny literární kultury	1	2021	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Dějiny literární kultury	1	2023	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Dějiny literární kultury	1	2022	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Dějiny literární kultury	1	2024	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Kulturně historická studia	1	2022	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS

Study Programme	Type of	Form of	Branch	Stage	St. plan v.	Year	Block	Status	R.year	R.
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Kulturně historická studia	1	2024	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Kulturně historická studia	1	2023	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Kulturně historická studia	1	2021	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Kulturně historická studia slovanských zemí	1	2024	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Kulturně historická studia slovanských zemí	1	2023	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Péče o kulturní dědictví	1	2024	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Péče o kulturní dědictví	1	2023	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Soudobé dějiny	1	2024	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Soudobé dějiny	1	2023	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS
History	Follow-up study	Full-time	Historie - Soudobé dějiny	1	2022	2024	Optional Courses	C		ZS