

Political Sociology

Objectives

Discussion of the specificity of political approach to social realities: political sociology as a 'certain perspective' on society.

Presentation of the main currents of political philosophy configuring modernity: theories and doctrines; intended consequences and unforeseen effects.

Exposition of the main groups of problems characterizing contemporary political science, making explicit their background assumptions via the confrontation of various conflictive doctrinal currents.

Program lines

- What is politics? What is the possible content of a science of political realities?
- Contractarian ideas and its opponents in the origins of contemporary political thought
- Republic, citizenship, rule of law, democracy, separation of powers: a critical approach aiming at identifying problematic zones behind the apparently obvious assumptions
- Political parties and electoral systems: the justifying doctrines and the history of facts
- Left and right: does all politics need cleavages? Are these always officially 'ideological'?
- Theories of justice as a relevant interface of economic and political theories; democracy and the distribution of wealth
- Post-cold-war panorama: the 'ends of history' and the 'clash of civilizations', globalization and nationalisms, racism, identity-politics and fundamentalisms
- The 'new cold war' period and the possibilities of a post-western world order: a discussion
- What is 'political development' exactly about? Possibilities and limits of a question

Assessment process

The final grade, in a scale of 0-20, is attributed based on a written exam and/or a written report plus discussion. Participation in classes during the semester may also be taken into consideration.

Bibliography

Some recommended bibliography

ANDERSON, Benedict, Nations and Nationalism: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism, London, Verso, 1991

ARENDT, Hannah, The Origins of Totalitarianism, New York, Harvest Books, 1973

BADIE, Bertrand, Le Développement Politique, 4^a ed., Paris, Economica, 1988

BERLIN, Isaiah, Against the Current - Essays in the History of Ideas, London, The Hogarth Press, 1980

DUVERGER, Maurice, Les Partis Politiques, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1981

HIRSCHMAN, Albert Otto, The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy, Harvard University Press, 1991

LIJPHART, Arend, Patterns of Democracy, Yale University Press, 1999

LOSURDO, Domenico, Democrazia o bonapartismo - Trionfo e decadenza del suffragio universale, Bollati Boringhieri, 1993

PARIJS, Philippe van, Qu'est-ce qu'une Société Juste?, Introduction à la Pratique de la Philosophie Politique, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1991

SCHMITT, Carl, The Concept of the Political, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1996