



National Research University Higher School of Economics  
School of World Economy and International Affairs

Undergraduate Programme  
in International Relations  
(Parallel Degree from HSE and UoL)

**Philosophy**  
*Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy*

Course Syllabus  
(Winter 2019)

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# Philosophy

## Course Syllabus

**Lecturer:** Alexander Koryagin

**Class teachers:** Alexander Koryagin, Alexei Koryagin

**Level:** first-year course

**Duration:** 8 weeks, 28 classes

### Aims and objectives

This one semester course provides an **Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy** for first year International Relations students. The objective of the course is to familiarise the students with the main ideas and themes of Western Philosophy from the Ancient Greeks to the present day with a special focus on moral, social and political problems. The course also touches upon the ideas in metaphysics, ontology and religious philosophy, but only to extent that these conceptual areas illuminate moral and political issues. The course aims to broaden the students background to help prepare them for more advanced courses, including the second year course *Modern Political Theory* and third year course in *International Political Theory*.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, and having completed the set readings and the activities, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a familiarity with main ideas of the thinkers discussed in the subject guide;
- provide an account of the main concepts used by the thinkers covered on the course;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments employed in the theories studied;
- formulate original interpretations of the thinkers covered using the model exam/essay questions.

### Methods

The methods and forms of study used on this course include lectures, seminars, teachers' consultations and students' own self-study. Each seminar is based on the contents of the preceding lecture. Seminar discussions encourage students to actively engage with the ideas presented in the lectures, a process that should clarify and deepen their understanding of the issues. Students must do a set preparatory reading before participating in a seminar.

The forms of assessment used in the course include a mark for seminar participation, an individual research project consisting of an essay and an oral presentation, and the final written examination.

## **Main Reading**

1. Adams I. and Dyson R., *Fifty Major Political Thinkers, Second Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).
2. Cahn, S., *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts, Third Edition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
3. Boucher, D. and Kelly P. (eds.), *Political Thinkers: From Socrates to the Present, Third Edition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
4. Klosko G., *History of Political Theory, Volume 1*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
5. Klosko G., *History of Political Theory, Volume 2*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
6. Smith, S., *Political Philosophy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

## **Further Reading**

1. Adamson, P., *Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
2. Boucher, D., *Political Theories of International Relations*, (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1998).
3. Brown, C. (ed.), *International Relations in Political Thought: Texts from the Ancient Greeks to the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
4. Callinicos, A., *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction, Second Edition*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).
5. Pangle, T. and Burns, T., *The Key Texts of Political Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
6. Ryan, A. *On Politics: A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present* (New York: Liveright, 2012).
7. Williams, H. (ed.), *A Reader in International Relations and Political Theory*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993).

## **Online Resources**

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP): <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP): <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>
- History of Philosophy without any gaps: <https://historyofphilosophy.net/>

## Grade Determination

The final grade consists of the following components:

- Seminar participation – 30%
- Individual project:
  - Individual essay project – 20%
  - Presentation of the individual essay project – 10%
- Final exam – 40%

Note: in order to get full marks for the seminar participation students need to actively participate in the class discussions, to demonstrate familiarity with assigned readings and lecture material, including being prepared to answer the questions that may be posed by the class teacher.

## Examination Type

The forms of assessment used on the course include an essay, a presentation, a mark for seminar participation, and an end-of-course exam (a three-hour written examination).

## Course Outline

### 1. Overview of Ancient Greek Philosophy

What is philosophy? Classical branches of philosophy (ontology, epistemology, metaphysics) and their relation to moral, political and social philosophy. Mechanistic and Teleological worldviews. Mechanistic approach: Atomists, Sophists, Sceptics and Epicureans. Teleological approach: Platonists, Aristotle, Stoics, Neoplatonists. Elusive position of Socrates and Plato.

*(Klosko, pp. 9-37; Adamson, pp. 24-51, 122-128)*

### 2. Sophists, Sceptics and Hedonists

The Ancient Greek polis. Atomism and Hedonism of Democritus and Epicurus. Ancient Sophists and the problem of relativism. Thucydides and political realism. Sophists and the problem of relativism: Protagoras, Thrasymachus, Antiphon. Ancient Scepticism in the context of pre-Socratic philosophy, Socrates, Plato and Pyrrhonian Scepticism of Sextus Empiricus.

*(Boucher & Kelly, pp. 32-49)*

### 3. Plato's Republic

Was Plato a Sceptic? Socratic paradoxes and *Elenchus*; the trial of Socrates; Socrates and Athenian Democracy; Virtue (Arete). *Hoi nomoi* and *hoi poloi*. Forms and the Good itself; being and becoming. Allegory of the cave; the structure of the Kallipolis, the city and the soul (appetitive, spirited, rational parts), specialisation, philosopher kings, challenge of Thrasymachus and the ring of Gyges, myth of the afterlife, eugenics, censorship, gender, private life and private property, noble lie.

(*Smith, pp. 37-66; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 65-83*)

#### **4. Aristotle's Ethics and Politics**

Aristotle as a critic of Plato. *Episteme, tekhnē and phronesis*; human nature, *zōon politikon*; the Golden mean; *megalopsychos*, virtue ethics and habits; slavery; typology of the six regimes.

(*Smith, pp. 67-88; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 84-102*)

#### **5. Machiavelli, Hobbes and Descartes**

Political realism, *raison d'état, vertu, fortuna*. The new science: solipsism, scepticism, mechanicism, empiricism. *Cogito ergo sum* and the epistemological turn. State of nature, law of nature, right of nature. Absolute sovereignty, social contract. Agency and authorisation; *de facto* authority.

(*Smith, pp. 140-164; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 169-190, 214-230*)

#### **6. Grotius and Locke**

Grotius: natural right, natural law, just war. Locke: natural equality, executive power of the law of nature, express and tacit consent, liberty vs licence, labour-mixing, private property, political vs patriarchal power, religious toleration, right to revolution. Limited government, toleration and the rule of law.

(*Smith, pp. 165-188; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 196-213, 231-247*)

#### **7. Hume and Utilitarianism**

Experience and knowledge: ideas/impressions; facts and values: passions/reason, moral judgement, natural and artificial virtues, justice and conventions; Hume's criticism of the social contract (consent) theories. Was Hume a Utilitarian? Bentham and psychological hedonism, utility, panopticon, representative democracy. Tocqueville on the tyranny of the majority. Mill: higher pleasures, harm principle, critique of natural rights, the subjection of women; defence of free speech.

(*Boucher & Kelly, pp. 248-267, 409-446*)

#### **8. Rousseau and the French revolution**

Montesquieu and the *separation of powers*. Rousseau's critique of Grotius, Hobbes and Locke. Conjectural history, *pitié, perfectibilité, amour de soi-même, amour propre*, general will, the lawgiver, censorship and civic religion.

(*Smith, pp. 189-213; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 286-304*)

#### **9. Kant's moral and political philosophy**

Kant's Copernican Revolution, transcendental idealism, synthetic a priori. The categorical imperative, autonomy of the will. *Was ist Aufklärung?* Rebellion and Revolution. Perpetual peace and the Right of Nations; cosmopolitan right.

(*Boucher & Kelly, pp. 451-466*)

#### **10. Hegel and Hegelianism**

Burke and the value of tradition and prejudice. Historicism, idealism, dialectic; Geist (Weltgeist, Volksgeist); abstract right, morality and ethical life; family, civil society and the state (Rechtsstaat). Master and slave. Left and right wing Hegelianism.

(*Callinicos, pp. 39-56; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 467-487*)

#### **11. Marx and Marxism**

Alienation, Gattungswesen, political and human emancipation, communism. Base and superstructure: forces, relations and modes of production; commodity fetishism. Ideology. Historical (dialectical) materialism. Engel's contribution to Marxism.

*(Callinicos, pp. 78-99; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 488-521)*

### **12. Nietzsche, Freud and Darwin**

The genealogical approach. Good and bad vs good and evil; slave and master morality; bad conscience and the ascetic ideal; Nihilism. Eternal recurrence, the Übermensch, *Ressentiment*, will to power. God is dead.

*(Boucher & Kelly, pp. 522-542; Callinicos, pp. 100-107, 115-122, 187-192)*

### **13. Weber and the Critical theory**

Ideal types; Verstehen; types of action and types of authority; protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism; elective affinity; disenchantment and rationalisation. Culture industry and mass culture, formal and substantive rationality, reification.

*(Callinicos, pp. 146-178, 245-257)*

### **14. Habermas and Post-structuralism**

Communicative rationality and the public use of reason; facts and norms. Foucault: history of systems of thought; discourse and normalising judgement; power/knowledge; panopticon; sovereign, disciplinary and bio-power (governmentality); hermeneutics of the subject and care for the self.

*(Callinicos, pp. 258-283, 284-290; Boucher & Kelly, pp. 587-603, 625-646)*

## **Distribution of hours for topics and types of work**

No	Topic	Total	Lectures	Classes	Self-study
1.	Overview of Ancient Greek Philosophy	8	2	2	4
2.	Sophists, Sceptics and Hedonists	8	2	2	4
3.	Plato's Republic	8	2	2	4
4.	Aristotle's Ethics and Politics	8	2	2	4
5.	Machiavelli, Hobbes and Descartes	8	2	2	4
6.	Grotius and Locke	8	2	2	4
7.	Hume and Utilitarianism	8	2	2	4
8.	Rousseau and the French Revolution	8	2	2	4
9.	Kant's moral and political philosophy	8	2	2	4
10.	Hegel and Hegelianism	8	2	2	4

11.	Marx and Marxism	8	2	2	4
12.	Nietzsche, Freud and Darwin	8	2	2	4
13.	Weber and the Critical Theory	8	2	2	4
14.	Habermas and Post-structuralism	8	2	2	4
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	Total	112	28	28	56
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