Classical Political Thought

First year module

Lecturer: **Dr Christopher Finlay (/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/finlay-christopher.aspx)**

The course is an introduction to the development of Western political philosophy from Plato to Rousseau. It is concerned with an examination of the most important ideas and theories concerning the relationship between man, state and society in the political thought of the Ancient Greeks, the early Christians, the later Middle Ages, and the early modern state.

The course is text based. It is expected that students will become familiar with the key texts of political thought. Topics covered will be selected from the following: the nature of political society and of political activity; the relationship between moral, religious and political ideas; the nature of the state, government and authority; justice, liberty and equality; human nature and politics; law and politics; political argument and political deliberation.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module the student should be able to:

- Know and be able to discuss the central themes, concepts and ideas in the early development of the central tradition of Western Political thought (from Plato to Rousseau);
- Understand and assess the structure and significance of particular texts produced within this tradition and be able to illustrate problems involved in their interpretation;
- Be aware and illustrate the complexity, difficulty and contention associated with the activity of theorising.
- Be able to address a number of key questions in political theory with reference to texts and arguments introduced in the course.

Assessment

- Term One: 1 essay x 2,000 word assessed work (50%)
- Term Three: 2 hour examination (50%)

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