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Contemporary Political Theory

Third year module

Lecturer: **Richard North (/staff/profiles/government-society/north-richard.aspx)**

The aim of this module is to examine some of the fundamental issues discussed by contemporary political theorists. We shall approach this by focusing on some of the most pressing political problems facing western societies at present, including: the nature and justification of justice, law and rights; the role of the modern state and citizen; the political significance of religion and multiculturalism; democracy and participation; welfarism, markets and the distribution of wealth; the importance of community, tradition and civic virtue. An examination of these issues through the texts of a number of important political theorists writing over the last thirty years or so will help us to understand and assess many of the complex debates in contemporary political theory as well providing insight into how political theory can clarify important policy issues.

Learning outcomes

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

- Develop capacities for critical reflection upon moral and political problems
- Handle theoretical material with confidence.
- Understand and critically analyse key bodies of thought, to address challenging questions of method
- Develop a deeper grasp of the theoretical issues raised by contemporary politics.

Assessment

- 4000 word assessed essay (50%)
- presentation (10%)
- 2 hour examination (40%)

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