Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences

SPOL2208   Political philosophy

[30h] 3 credits

Teacher(s):   Axel Gosseries
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

- To encourage critical reflection on political action and decision-making.
- Because of the type of person that the course is aimed at, it will not focus on a particular question; while remaining close to current experiences and situations, it will seek to throw light on the key issues of political life.

Content and teaching methods

Content
This course outline presents the content without prejudging the plan.
1. Political power (different conceptions, and the nature and basis of political power); the relationship with authority and force; legality-legitimacy; consensus-obedience; power and justice; and deformations and abuse of power.
2. The state and political institutions (various conceptions); the nation and the state; the organisation of political society (the common good and law); limitations of the power of the state; democracy (participation and subsidiarity); the separation of powers; subversion of the state.
3. Sovereignty, and the ambiguity of this idea; absolutism, security and national interest; and towards totalitarianism.
4. International society (the emergence of a globalist world); east-west and north-south cleavages; war and peace; development and sub-development; and imperialism, its forms and instruments.
5. The person and the citizen (individuals, persons and citizens); reciprocity; freedom and equality; alienation of the person; and the manipulative state.
6. Political decision-making (freedom and uncertainty); experimentation and the future; and the role of the law.
7. The church and political society; a critique of civil religion, Caesarpapism and theocracy; universalism; the autonomy of politics; and the prophetic reserve of the church.
8. Political choice (power or freedom) ; the perversions of democracy; and the political project and human finiteness.
Methodology
For each theme, it will be necessary to produce:
a) a historical introduction that will provide an opportunity to talk about the classics of political philosophy;
b) a systematic development on the theme;
c) a case study demonstrating the practical and useful nature of philosophical reflection for the examination of a given substantive problem or situation.

Programmes in which this activity is taught

ANTR3DS   Diplôme d'études spécialisées en anthropologie
ETES9CE   Certificat universitaire en éthique économique et sociale
ISP20   Licence à durée réduite en philosophie
ISP20/A   Licence à durée réduite en philosophie (A)

Other credits in programs

ANTR3DS	Diplôme d'études spécialisées en anthropologie	(3 credits)	
COMU22/RP	Deuxième licence en information et communication (Relations publiques et communication d'organisation)	(3 credits)	
ETES9CE	Certificat universitaire en éthique économique et sociale	(3 credits)	Mandatory
GERM21/BN	Première licence en langues et littératures germaniques (Anglais et Néerlandais)	(4 credits)	
ISP21	Première licence en philosophie	(3 credits)	
ISP22	Deuxième licence en philosophie	(3 credits)	
POL21/AP	Première licence en sciences politiques (Affaires publiques)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
POL21/RI	Première licence en sciences politiques (Relations internationales)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
ROM21	Première licence en langues et littératures romanes	(3 credits)	