

## 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.

#### Other credits in programs

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