

Political Theory: East & West

Full Title Course

Political Theory: East & West

Course Catalogue Number

7323A071LY

Credits

12 EC

Entry requirements

Completed the first year and at least 42 ECTS from the second year of the bachelor's degree program in Political Science. Students participating in the Minor Political Theory must be previously admitted to the Minor. For students participating in an exchange program, please see "Recommended Knowledge" for more information.

Instruction language

The seminars will be taught in English.

Time Periods

Block 1 & 2 (September 2023 – December 2023)

Location

See <https://rooster.uva.nl>

Lecturer(s)

Adrian Kreutz	a.p.c.kreutz@uva.nl
---------------	---------------------

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand and engage with the cornerstones of Confucian and Islamic Political Thought, in both their history and conceptuality.
- Critically analyse the difficulties and pitfalls, harms and wrongs, and profits of thinking comparatively about politics.
- Imagine alternatives to the paradigm of comparative thought. Learn how to 'engage' rather than 'compare'.
- Reflect upon their own social position in the respectful engagement with "the other", and how it reflects in theoretical concepts, such as 'subalternity' and 'othering'.
- Write in correct English at an academic level about political theoretical, social scientific and policy texts and issues.

Course Content

This course will address the key questions of comparative political theory: Is political theory 'Western-centric'? And how do we compare different strands of national and regional political thought? We shall focus on the political thought of China and the Middle East. In particular, we will

focus on Islamic and Confucian political thought and the possibility of comparative approaches in the wake of post-colonialism. The first-order issues addressed include the role of political participation in the Arab Spring and the impact of neoliberalism on Confucianism and communism in China, and the multiple trajectories of postcolonialism.

Teaching methods/learning formats

The course consists of 12 weekly seminars of 3 hours each, across Blocks 1 and 2 (Tuesdays, 15 - 18). In Block 1, Week 7, I offer individual supervision for your assignment, and in Week 8 you will write your first paper. And again, in Block 2, Week 7, I offer individual supervision for your assignment, and in Week 8 of the second block you will write your second paper.

The course will be conducted in a seminar-setting, with lively discussion in which all have a voice. Students will be assigned a number of key-readings per class. Students are expected to have done the readings beforehand and to have prepared questions for discussion.

Course Evaluations & Adjustments of the Course

This will be the first time this course is taught.

Personal safety and security

We want students to be assured they have a positive environment and a safe basis for their studies. We firmly hope you'll never experience at the UvA an unsafe situation or undesirable behaviour (e.g., sexual intimidation, aggressive or violent behaviour, bullying, discrimination). Should this nonetheless occur, then please know that there are different individuals and institutions you can turn to.

Please see <https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/social-safety/social-safety.html>

Manner & Form of Assessment and Assessment Requirements & Criteria

Examination takes the following form:

1. First paper of 1000 - max. 2000 words (30%)
Deadline: 27. October 2023
2. Second paper of 1000 - max. 2000 words (30%)
Deadline: 22. December 2023
3. Weekly Questions of max. 500 words (20%)
Deadline: Tuesdays, 14:00
4. In-Class Presentation (20%)
One presentation, in a group, to be determined at the first session

1. First and Second Paper (30% each)

The assignment papers of max. 2000 words (and no less than 1000 words) are due by **23:59 on Friday October 27, 2023**, and **Friday December 22, 2023**. The word limit includes footnotes but excludes the bibliography. The final essay must be written in English. The paper must be submitted via Canvas. Guidelines on how to write a political theory essay can be found on Canvas. You are expected to come up with your own research question. Supervision will be provided in Week 7 of Blocks 1 and 2. Please make use of this opportunity to discuss your essay ideas and think early about suitable topics and approaches.

2. Weekly Essay Questions (20%)

On Tuesdays, Weeks 1 - 6 of Blocks 1 and 2, I expect you to come prepared to class with essay questions answered. Please submit your answers (max. 500 words) by **14:00 on Tuesdays** via email

(a.p.c.kreutz@uva.nl). During classes we will discuss your answers. Please be prepared to present your answers in class and engage in critical discussion.

3. Presentation (20%)

From Week 2, you will be asked to present on a topic of your choice related to the weekly readings. The presentations should cover ca. 20 minutes, followed by feedback and discussion. Presentation groups are to be determined in our first session.

Late assignment/ re-sit policy

Late papers and assignments are not accepted. A resit opportunity exists for the end-of-term paper provided:

1. The initial essay has received a grade of 5 or lower.
2. The grade cannot be higher than a 7.

Inspection of exams/assignments, feedback

Feedback will be given within 2 weeks.

Rules regarding Fraud and Plagiarism

The provisions of the Regulations Governing Fraud and Plagiarism for UvA Students apply in full. Access this regulation at:

<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/plagiarism-and-fraud/plagiarism-and-fraud.html>

Please note that plagiarism includes not only intentional fraud but also sloppy referencing. For instance, according to UvA regulations plagiarism includes: “failing to clearly indicate in the text – for instance by means of quotation marks or a particular layout – that literal or near-literal quotations have been included in the work, even if a correct reference to the sources has been included.” Presenting someone else’s words as your own, even unintentionally, is a form of theft and will be treated as such.

Date Final Grade

The final grade for non-resit students will have been posted on Canvas in **January 2024**.

===== BLOCK 1 =====

Week 1: Comparative Political Theory: Introduction

Key-Readings

- Michael Freeden: “Comparative Political Thought: What Are We Looking At?”, *Comparative Political Theory*, Vol. 1(1), 2021
- Leigh Jenco: “Thinking with the Past: Political Thought In and From the Non-West”, *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 15(4), 2016, pp. 377 - 388
- Sue Laegaard: “Multiculturalism and contextualism: How is context relevant for political theory?”, *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 14(3), 2015

Suggested Readings

- Leigh Jenco (et al.): *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory*, Oxford University Press, Introduction
- Andrew March: “What Is Comparative Political Theory?”, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 71(4), pp. 531 - 565
- J. H. Carens: “A contextual approach to political theory”, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, Vol. 7, 2004

Essay Question

Should political theorists be contextualists or comparativists?

*** **

Week 2: Political Theology: Before and After Schmitt

Key-Readings

- Carl Schmitt: *Political Theology*, University of Chicago Press, 2015 [1922], Chapters 1 and 3
- Mitchell Dean: “What’s left of Carl Schmitt’s Political Theology?”, in Mitchell Dean et al. (eds.) *Political Theology Today*, Bloomsbury, 2023

Suggested Readings

- Hugo Ball: “Carl Schmitt’s Political Theology”, *October*, Vol 146, 2013, pp. 65 - 92
- Aaron Roberts: “Carl Schmitt–Political Theologian?”, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 77(3), 2015, pp. 449 - 474

- Charles Frye: “Carl Schmitt’s Concept of the Political”, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 28(4), 1966, pp. 818-830

Essay Question:

Has “absolute authority” ever NOT been a theological project?

Discuss!

*** **

Week 3: China I: Confucius and the Analects

Key-Readings

- Tongdong Bai: *Against Political Equality: The Confucian Case*, Princeton University Press, 2019, Introduction
- Confucius: *The Analects*, Penguin Classics, 1979, Book I, II, XII
- Stephen Angle: “Social and Political Thought in Chinese Philosophy”, *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 2022

Suggested Readings

- Adrian Kreutz: “Review of Against Political Equality”, *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, Vol. 31(2), 2021, pp. 179-182
- Shaun O-Dwyer: “Confucianism’s Prospects, Perfectionism and Liberalism”, *Comparative Political Theory*, Vol. 1(1), 2021, pp. 105 - 116
- Zhao Tingyang: “All-Under-Heaven and Methodological Relationism: An Old Story and New World Peace”, in Dallmayr, F., Tingyang, Z. (eds.) *Contemporary Chinese Political Thought*, University of Kentucky, 2012

Essay Question

Political equality is NOT the highest political value.
Do you agree with the (Neo)Confucians?

*** **

Week 4: China II: Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi

Key-Readings

- Mencius, Penguin Classics, 1970, Book I(A), IV(A)
- Zhunagzi, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, Hackett Publishing, 2001, Chapter 5
- Stephen Angle: “Social and Political Thought in Chinese Philosophy”, *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 2022

Suggested Readings

- Xiao, Yang: “Agency and Practical Reasoning in The Analects and The Mencius”, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, Vol. 36(4), 2009, pp. 269–241
- Sam Cane: “The Problem of Power in Confucian Political Thought”, *Comparative Political Theory*, Vol. 1(1), 2021, pp. 117-125

Essay Question

Zhuangzi and Mencius have opposing views on the importance of governance.
Who is more convincing, and why?

*** **

Week 5: Islam I: Umma, ‘Adl, and Jihad

Key-Readings

- Gerhard Bowering: *Islamic Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, 2014, Introduction
- Bernard Lewis: *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2000 Years*, Scribner, pp. 141 -143
- Abou El Fadl: *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 2004, Introctution
- The Qur’an, 3:153, 3:158, 18:70, 18:79, 16:34, 42:36, 42:38

Suggested Readings

- Michael Cook: *Muhammad*, Oxford University Press, pp. 51 - 60
- Gerhard Bowering: *Islamic Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, 2014
- Anthony Black: *The History of Islamic Thought*, Edinburgh University Press, 2011

- Peter Adams: *Al-Razi*, Oxford University Press, 2021

Essay Question:

Who should govern in an Islamic polis structured along umma, adl, and jihad?

*** **

Week 6: Islam II: Sharia and Shura

Key-Readings

- Sadakat Kadri: *Heaven on Earth: A Journey Through Sharia Law from the Deserts of Ancient Arabia*, Macmillan, 2012, 120 - 140
- Mashood Baderin: *Islamic Law: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 1 - 26
- The Qur'an, 3:153, 3:158, 18:70, 18:79, 16:34, 42:36, 42:38

Suggested Readings

- Oliver Roy: *The Failure of Political Islam*, Harvard University Press, 1994, pp. 1 - 15
- Gerhard Bowering: *Islamic Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, 2014, 219-237
- Georges Corm: *Arab Political Thought*, Hurst, 2020
- Abdullahi n-Na'im: "Islamic Foundations of Religious Human Rights", in Witte, J, Vyer, J. (eds.) *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective*, Religious Perspective, 1996, pp. 337 - 359

Essay Question

Is there a separation between politics and law in the Islamic tradition?

*** **

Week 7: Supervision

Think of a research question and research design

*** **

Week 8: Essay Writing

Write your essay!

===== BLOCK 2 =====

Week 1: Post-Colonialism I: Empire

Key-Readings

- Michael Adas: *Decolonization: perspectives from now and then*, Routledge, 2004, Chapter “Contested Hegemony”
- Robert Young: *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002, Introduction
- Jean-Paul Sartre: Introduction to Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2001

Suggested Readings

- Albert Memmi: *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Earthscan, 2003, Chapter “The Two Answers of the Colonized
- Neelam Srivastava: “Towards a critique of colonial violence”, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 2010
- Pankaj Mishra: *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia*, Penguin, 2013, Chapter “Asia Subordinated”

Essay Question

How can a comparative approach help us think through issues of postcoloniality?

*** **

Week 2: Post-Colonialism II: Epistemic Limits

Key-Readings

- Jean-Paul Sartre: *Colonialism and Neo-colonialism*, Routledge, 2006, Chapter “Colonialism as a System”
- Hussein Abdulahi Bulhan: *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, Kluwer, 2004, Introduction
- Margaret Kohn: *Political Theories of Decolonization*, Oxford University Press, 2011, Introduction

Suggested Readings

- Aimé Césaire: *Discourse on Colonialism*, Monthly Review Press, 2000
- Frantz Fanon: *A Dying Colonialism*, Grove, 1965
- Elizabeth Buettner: *Europe after Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 2016

Essay Question:

How does postcoloniality shape our ideas of “West” and “East”?

*** **

Week 3: Judaism I: Maimonides, Law and Politics of the Torah

Key-Readings

- Shmuel Trigano: *Philosophy of the Law: The Political in the Torah*, Shalem Press, 2011, Introduction
- Michael Walzer (et al.): *The Jewish Political Tradition*, Yale University Press, 2008, Introduction
- Moses Maimonides: *The Guide for the Perplexed (Moreh Nevukhim)*, Dover, 2000

Suggested Readings

- Yechiel Leiter: “John Locke’s Political Philosophy and the Hebrew Bible”, Cambridge University Press, 2018
- David Myers: *Jewish History: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2017, Chapter 4

Essay Question

What claims to rule have been put forward from the time of the exodus from Egypt to the establishment of the state of Israel?

*** **

Week 4: Judaism II: Zionism, Europe, and Settler Colonialism

Key-Readings

- Theodor Herzl: *The Jewish State*, Penguin Great Ideas, 2010
- Sai Englert: *Settler Colonialism*, Pluto Press, 2021, Introduction

Suggested Readings

- Shlomo Avineri: *Herzl and the Foundation of the Jewish State*, Orion, 2013
- Georgi Plekhanov: *Utopian Socialism in the Nineteenth Century*, 1913, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/plekhanov/1913/utopian-socialism/index.htm>

Essay Question

Is the Jewish State a theological or political invention, or both?

*** **

Week 5: The Latin West I: St Augustine and the City of God

Key-Readings

- Jean Bethke Elshtain: “Augustine”, in Cavanaugh, W., Scott, P. (eds.) *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, 2nd Edition, 2019, pp. 41 - 54
- Ernest L. Fortin: “Augustine’s City of God and the Modern Historical Consciousness”, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 41(3), 1979, pp. 323 - 343
- Herbert Deane: “Classical and Christian Political Thought”, *Political Theory*, Vol. 1(4), 1973, pp. 415 - 425
- St Augustine: *City of God*, Penguin Classics, 2004, Book XI

Suggested Readings

- Frederick Wilhelmsen: *Christianity and Political Philosophy*, Routledge, 2013

Essay Question:

Are the categories “Good/God” and “Bad/Devil” at all applicable to World Politics?

*** **

Week 6: The Latin West II: Al-Farabi and Plato

Key-Readings

- Ishraq Ali, Mingli Qin: “City and Soul in Plato and Alfarabi”, *Axiomathes*, Vol. 30(1), 2020, pp. 91 - 105
- Farouk Sankari: “Plato and Alfarabi: A Comparison of Some Aspects of Their Political Philosophies”, *Vivarium*, Vol. 8(1), 1970, pp 1 - 9

- Therese-Anne Druart: *Al-Farabi*, 2020, Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

Suggested Readings

- Osman Bajar: *AlFarabi: Life, Works and Significance*, Islamic Book Trust, 2018

Essay Question

Has Al-Farabi found a good balance between civic virtue, justice, human happiness and social order?

*** **

Week 7: Supervision

Think of a research question and research design

*** **

Week 8: Essay Writing

Write your essay!