



Indraprastha College for Women University of Delhi

Work Plan for ODD SEMESTER – 2026

Course Name:	B.A. (Hons.) Political Science
Paper Title:	Western Political Philosophy - I (DSC-13)
Unique Paper Code:	DSC-13
Semester:	V
Faculty:	Swati Pal
Year:	2026

Work Plan			
Unit No.	Learning Objective	Lecture No.	Topics to be Covered
I	Understand the nature of political philosophy and the importance of interpreting classic political texts.	1-2	Introduction to Western political philosophy; political questions, concepts and normative reasoning; why study classic texts?
I	Develop the ability to read historically written texts and distinguish text, context and interpretation.	3-5	Text and Interpretation: approaches to the history of political thought; T. Ball on history and interpretation; J. Rawls on the history of political philosophy.
I	Critically understand meaning, intention and historical context in interpretation.	6-8	Quentin Skinner: meaning and understanding in the history of ideas; contextual interpretation; relevance of classics to contemporary political questions.
II	Introduce Plato's relationship between philosophy and politics and his conception of virtue.	9-11	Plato: philosophy and politics; virtue and the ethical foundations of political life; <u>background to the Republic</u> .
II	Examine Plato's theory of justice and its relationship to the ideal political order.	12-14	Plato on justice: justice in the individual and the state; classes and functions; harmony and the just polity.
II	Understand Plato's conception of political rule and philosophic education.	15-17	Philosopher King/Queen; knowledge and political authority; philosophic education; the Form of the Good.
II	Critically analyse Plato's communism and his arguments concerning women and guardianship.	18-19	Communism of property and family among guardians; women and guardianship; equality, education and political responsibility.
II	Evaluate Plato's critique of democracy and connect his political philosophy with contemporary debates.	20-22	Plato on democracy; degeneration of regimes; freedom, equality and political competence; critical assessment of Plato.
II	Understand Aristotle's conception of the human being as a political animal and the relation between household and state.	23-25	Aristotle: man as zoon politikon; natural character of the polis; state and household; <u>purposes of political association</u> .
II	Analyse Aristotle's ideas of citizenship, justice and virtue.	26-28	Citizenship and participation; distributive and corrective justice; virtue and the good life; relationship between ethics and politics.
II	Examine Aristotle's classification and evaluation of political regimes.	29-30	Regimes and constitutions; rule of one, few and many; correct and deviant forms; <u>polity and stability; comparison with Plato</u> .
III	Understand Machiavelli's break with classical political morality and his distinctive conception of political action.	31-32	Machiavelli: historical context; vice and virtue; virtù, necessity and fortune; <u>autonomy of politics</u> .

III	Analyse Machiavelli's treatment of power, political ethics, religion and morality.	33-35	Power and political ethics; means and ends; religion and morality in political life; the ruler and political necessity.
III	Examine Machiavelli's republicanism and contribution to modern statecraft.	36-38	Republicanism; civic virtue; conflict and liberty; statecraft; Machiavelli's legacy in modern political thought.
IV	Understand possessive individualism and Hobbes's account of human nature and the state of nature.	39-40	Possessive Individualism: introduction; Hobbes on human nature, equality, competition, diffidence and glory; state of nature.
IV	Analyse Hobbes's social contract, consent, state and sovereignty.	41-42	Social contract and role of consent; institution of the Commonwealth; absolute sovereignty; liberty, obligation and political order.
IV	Understand Locke's natural law framework, natural rights and consent.	43	Locke: laws of nature; state of nature; natural rights to life, liberty and property; consent and limited government.
IV	Critically examine Locke's theory of property, right to resist and toleration.	44	Justification of property; labour and appropriation; limits to political authority; right to resist; toleration.
I-IV	Consolidate the major themes of the course and develop comparative and analytical answer-writing skills.	45	Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke in comparison; continuity and change in Western political philosophy; revision and examination-oriented discussion.

Unit	Contents/Syllabus
I	Unit I - Text and Interpretation (8 Hours): history and interpretation; reading and decoding classics; meaning, context and understanding in the history of political ideas.
II	Unit II - Antiquity (14 Hours): Plato - philosophy and politics, virtues, justice, philosopher king/queen, communism, democracy, women and guardianship, philosophical education and Good. Aristotle - zoon politikon, state and household, citizenship, justice, virtue and regimes.
III-IV	Unit III - Interlude (8 Hours): Machiavelli - vice and virtue, power, political ethics, religion and morality, republicanism and statecraft. Unit IV - Possessive Individualism (15 Hours): Hobbes - human nature, state of nature, social contract and consent, state and sovereignty; Locke - laws of nature, natural rights, consent, property, right to resist and toleration.

S. No.	Name of Authors/Books/Publishers
1.	Ball, T. (2004), "History and Interpretation"; Rawls, J., Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy; Skinner, Q. (2002), Visions of Politics, Vol. I.
2.	Plato, Republic; Kraut, R. (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Plato; Reeve, C. (2009), "Plato"; Aristotle, Politics; Burns, T. (2009), "Aristotle"; Taylor, C. (1995), "Politics".
3.	Machiavelli, Republic; Skinner, Q. (2000), "The Adviser to Princes"; Femia, J. (2009), "Machiavelli"; Skoble, A. & Machan, T. (2007), Political Philosophy: Essential Selections.
4.	Hobbes, T., Leviathan; Locke, J., Two Treatises of Government; Macpherson, C. (1962), The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke; Rawls, J., Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy.

Paper Components			
Credits	Lecture (L)	Tutorial (T)	Practical (P)
4	3	1	0
Assessment Scheme			
S.No.	Component	Marking Scheme	Total Marks
1	Internal Assessment - Assignment - Class Test - Attendance	Assignment: 12	30
		Class Test: 12	
		Attendance: 6	
2.	Continuous Assessment (Tutorial) - Activity 1 - Activity 2 - Attendance		40
		Activity 1: 15	
		Activity 2: 20	
		Attendance: 05	
3.	Practical - Continuous Assessment - End Term Written/Practical Exam - Viva	Not Applicable	0
4.	End Semester Examination		90

