



INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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INTENDED AUDIENCE : UG and PG students of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sciences, and Engineering

COURSE OUTLINE :

One of the major objectives of this course is to introduce the students to the key debates and ideas in Western political thought. It is hoped that familiarity with the ideas or concepts of some major western political thinkers will help the students to understand different perspectives and approaches to state, politics, government, sovereignty, citizenship and so on. It is also hoped that this course will enable the student to make sense of and interpret the major developments and key debates in the political debates and discussions in any contemporary society and polity.

ABOUT INSTRUCTOR :

Prof. Mithilesh Kumar Jha teaches Political Science in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. His research interests are - political thought in comparative perspective particularly Indian and Western political thought, political theory, Indian politics especially language and related issues of state formations in modern India. His important publications are Language Politics and Public Sphere in North India: Making of the Maithili Movement, Oxford University Press, New Delhi (2018); Glimpses of Mithila and Maithili: The Correspondence of George Abraham Grierson, Kalyani Foundation: Darbhanga (2013).

COURSE PLAN :

Week 1: Introduction: General Outline and Method; Text and Context

Week 2: Plato: Justice; Philosopher king; Communism; State

Week 3: Aristotle: Politics, Virtue

Week 4: Aristotle: State; Citizenship & Machiavelli: Virtue

Week 5: Machiavelli: Religion and Republicanism

Week 6: Hobbes: Human Nature; Political Obligation; Sovereignty

Week 7: Locke: Natural Rights; Limited government, Dissent

Week 8: Rousseau: Social Contract; General Will

Week 9: Kant: Enlightenment; Morality, autonomy and freedom

Week 10: Hegel: Freedom; Rights; State

Week 11: Marx: Historical Materialism; State; Class

Week 12: Mill: Utilitarianism and on Liberty