UNIVERSIDADE LUSÍADA
LISBOA

Course Unit Program
Political Thought of the Western World

Academic Year 2025/2026

1. Organic Unit

Faculty of Law

2. Course

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

3. Cycle

1st

4. Course Unit

Political Thought of the Western World (07404)

5. Scientific Area

6. Curricular Year

1st

7. Type of Curricular Unit / Semester

2nd Semester

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8. Class type and workload (work time)

Theoretical classes:	
Practical classes:	
Theoretical-Practical Classes	30,00
Tutorial Guidance:	20,00

9. ECTS Credits

6,00

10. Scientific Area Coordinator

11. Regent

Prof. Doutor MANUEL FERNANDO DA SILVA MONTEIRO

12. Assistants

13. Teaching Language

Portuguese

14. General Objectives

1. Understand the importance of POLITICAL IDEAS and their history in defining models of community and society.

2. Relate POLITICAL IDEAS and their foundations to the meanings of Justice, Freedom, and Security.

3. Recognize that the purpose of political action should always presuppose the existence of principles, without which human life is devoid of meaning and foundation.

4. Understand Political Ideas in the context of competition among national and international political actors.

15. Specific Objectives

1. Understand the evolution of political thought in the West, from Ancient Greece to the present, in order to grasp the identity matrix of the Western world.

2. Contribute to a solid human education based on the development of critical thinking and the perception and acceptance of different Ideas, an essential condition for embracing a just world with freedom and peace.

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16. Skills to be acquired

- Identification and understanding of the main currents of political thought in the Western world .
- Appreciation of the diversity of Political Ideas as a distinctive and unifying element of the Western world.
- Developing a culture of debate that is able to distinguish between the foundations of political thought, thus enabling us to understand the difference between Politics as a polis and public policies.

17. Teaching Methodology

The teaching of this discipline comprises:
- Theoretical-Practical classes, for the transmission of content and the illustration of specific situations related to those contents.
- Tutorial Orientation classes aimed at helping students with proper bibliographic research and a correct understanding of the topics covered.
- Critical discussion of the political ideas presented, with a view to contextualising them in the current era.

18. Course Unit Program

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PART I

Political Ideas in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Chapter I

The Emergence of Political Ideas

1. What are political ideas?
2. A possible distinction between the concept of Political Ideas, Political Doctrines, Political Ideologies and Political Conceptions.

Chapter II

Political Ideas in Ancient Greece

1. Solon and the "rule of law".
2. Pericles and the defence of Democracy
3. Plato, the government of the wise and society according to individual abilities.
4. Aristotle, the natural sense of the polis and the first defence of the ?constitutional regime?.

Chapter III

Politics and power in Christian thought in the Middle Ages

1) Jesus Christ, human dignity and equal respect for men and women: a new conception of the origin and exercise of political power.
2. St Augustine:
a) A pessimist about human nature?
b) The origin, transmission and exercise of political power.
c) The justification of the "just war".
3) St Thomas Aquinas:
a) Faith and Reason.
b) The origin of power and the people as its primary recipient.
c) The good and bad exercise of power: can the people rebel against a bad king?

II PART

Political Ideas in the Modern Age: the historical period of all contrasts

Chapter I

Power as an end and as a means

1. Machiavelli:
a) Is "The Prince" a hymn to the theory of evil or an exaltation of realism?
b) Power as an end.
c) The replacement of the polis and the republic by the state.
2. Thomas Morus (patron saint of Catholic politicians) and the so-called first utopian socialism.
3. Erasmus and power as a means to an end.

Chapter II

From the absolute state to limited government

1. Jean Bodin and the new concept of Sovereignty
2. Thomas Hobbes, political contractualism and the new political science:
a) Freedom in natural society and security in civil society.
b) The State as a non-dispensable necessity.

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3) J. Locke, the defence of individual liberty and the consequent need for limited government:
a) Civil society as the guarantor of freedom in natural society.
b) The first steps towards consolidating the idea of the separation of powers and representative democracy.
4) Montesquieu, the rule of law and the separation of powers
a) Civil rights and political rights: the structuring foundations of the future liberal regime.
b) The independence of the judiciary as a fundamental guarantee of the rule of law.
5. Rousseau, the theory of the ?good savage? and the defence of a new social and political contract.

III PART
The Liberal Revolutions, the birth of the Contemporary Age and the affirmation of Ideologies
Chapter I
The 3 Liberal Revolutions
1. The realisation of the ideas of Aristotle, J. Locke and Montesquieu.
2. The English Revolution as the first liberal revolution.
3. The American Revolution.
4. The French Revolution and its distinction from previous revolutions.
Chapter II
Marxism and Christian Democracy
1. The Communist Manifesto
2. Rerum Novarum
Chapter III
Totalitarianism and Democracy
1. Totalitarianism in the 20th century.
2. Democracies.
Chapter IV
The end of history or the return of history?
1. Is the liberal model at risk?
2. Are political ideas still essential to political debate?

19. Assessment Methods

1. Continuous assessment follows the current Regulations and may be subject to modification according to University guidelines.

2. Continuous assessment will depend on:
a. Attendance and participation in classes.
b. Positive performance in two written tests.

3. Optionally, there may be a written assignment with an oral presentation.

4. Attendance and participation in extracurricular activities (optional) will also be valued according to the weight defined by the University Regulations

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20. Didactic Resources

- News articles taken from newspapers, magazines, and audiovisual media.
- Media library
- Computer facilities with internet connection

21. Sustainability Objectives

Assuming that sustainable education goes beyond the mere presentation of curriculum content, we define here three main objectives:

1. Promotion of critical analytical thinking

2. Continuous distinction between mere information and education

3. Education aimed at the free determination of future choices

22. Keywords

- Ideas
- Ideologies
- City
- State
- Politics
- Power
- Sovereignty
- Humanism

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23. Main Bibliography

Author(s):	MONTEIRO, Manuel		
Title:	Tópicos sobre As Ideias Políticas no Ocidente e a sua História		
Edition:	1ª, 3ª reimp.	Year:	2022
Local:	Lisboa		
Publisher:	Universidade Lusíada Editora		

Author(s):	AMARAL, Diogo Freitas do,		
Title:	História do Pensamento Político Ocidental		
Edition:	Reimpressão da	Year:	2018
Local:	Coimbra		
Publisher:	Almedina		

Author(s):	BANOND, Isabel		
Title:	História das Ideias Políticas		
Edition:	1ª	Year:	2014
Local:	Parede		
Publisher:	Principia		

24. Complementary Bibliography

Author(s):	SABINE, George H.,		
Title:	Historia de la teoria politica		
Edition:	3ª em espanhol	Year:	2011
Local:	Mexico		
Publisher:	Fondo de Cultura Económica		

Author(s):	PRÉLOT, Marcel, LESCUYER, Georges		
Title:	História das Ideias Políticas (2vols.)		
Edition:	1ª	Year:	2001
Local:	Lisboa		
Publisher:	Presença		

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