



UNIVERSITÀ CUSANO

Course Title	History of Political Thought
Main Language of Instruction	Italian
Other Language of Instruction	English
Lecturer / Professor	Alberto Clerici
Degree Course	Political Science and International Relations LM-36
ECTS	8
e-mail	alberto.clerici@unicusano.it
Reference Book	<p>Alan Ryan, <i>On Politics</i>, Penguin books, 2013. Only chapters 2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-15-17-20-21 Book available at the Library "Ferdinando Catapano", Università Niccolò Cusano, Floor -1 Old Building. e-book and Kindle version available at: amazon.com ebooks.com</p>
Evaluation system	Oral. The oral test consists of an interview to ascertain the student's level of preparation. The questions will be based on the Reference Book's contents.
Topics Covered (Syllabus)	
<p>Ancient Political Thought Plato Aristotle Polybius Cicero and Roman law The Middle Ages St. Augustine and early Christians Aquinas Political disputes in the middle ages Humanism and Renaissance Nicholas of Cusa Erasmus, More Machiavelli The Discovery of the New World: political debates The Reformation Luther and Calvin The wars of Religion Bodin Early Modern Natural Law Grotius Hobbes Locke Spinoza The Enlightenment Montesquieu Rousseau The French Revolution Burke The XIXth century</p>	

VIA DON CARLO GNOCCHI, 3 – 00166 ROMA

TEL. 06.45678350 – FAX 06.45678379 – www.unicusano.it - info@unicusano.it

P.IVA 09073721004



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Tocqueville and America
Karl Marx

Course Objectives

The course provides an introduction to the historical development of political ideas, through an contextualized examination of the main texts of the most important western political theorists from Antiquity up to the late XIXth century. The aims and objectives of the course are to:

- provide a contextualized introduction to the great texts of modern political theory
- examine the meaning and justification of important concepts such as sovereignty, freedom, democracy, State, equality and rights
- explore rival theoretical frameworks such as absolutism, constitutionalism, natural law, liberalism, egalitarianism, and Marxism, through the analysis of classic texts set into their historical and cultural development
- Provide a contextualized discussion of the theoretical foundations of international political and legal thought
- develop critical skills necessary to examine and assess complex historical and theoretical arguments and assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Expected Results and Competencies

To get the student acquainted with the “vocabulary” of politics, stressing affinities and differences between past and present political theories. Also, to study the intellectual context of the classic texts and authors of western political thought. At the end of the course, and having completed the course materials and essential reading, you will be able to:

- demonstrate a familiarity with main ideas of the thinkers discussed in the subject guide, as related to their historical and cultural context
- provide an account of the main concepts used by the thinkers covered on the course
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments employed in the theories studied inside the debates of each given historical period.
- Recognize affinities and differences between past and present political thought
- Understand the origins and development of international legal and political thought