

Approval: 10th Senate Meeting

Course Number: HS 608

Course Name: Modern Western Social Thought

Credits: 3-0-0-3

Prerequisites: M.A. and Ph.D. students in H&SS

Intended for: Ph.D.

Distribution: Core/Compulsory Course for SHSS Ph.D.

Semester: Odd/Even

Preamble:

Theories in any discipline of knowledge are essential for guiding the path of knowledge production. This course introduces theories of various traditions and enables the students to have an understanding of the evolution of these thoughts. This will further enable them to have an overview of various theoretical orientations and debates about society and develop a critical outlook of the world around them.

Course Outline:

The course seeks to highlight *select themes* informing Western Social Thought over the last couple of centuries. In a sense, it is as much a history of social thought as an examination of its contemporary reflexes. Against the overarching backdrop of major social, political and economic developments of roughly the last two hundred years, the course traces the emergence of not just theories but their attendant methodologies that together amplify the scope of the social sciences in examining the distinct idiom of modernity underlying social phenomena.

Course Modules:

Unit I: Emergence of Modern Society: (10 contact hours)

The Intellectual Break with Tradition – The philosophic underpinnings – The Scientific Revolution - The socio-political conditions: industrialization, urbanization; the birth of ideology – the idea of progress (6 contact hours)

Unit II: Some Approaches to the Study of Modern Society (10 contact hours)

- a. Individual & Community; Church & State; State as Actor in World History (Hegel)
- b. Critique of Political Economy (Marx)
- c. The Protestant work ethic (Weber), Division of Labour (Durkheim)
- d. Urban society (Simmel, Lewis Mumford, Lewis Wirth)
- e. Civilization and its Discontents (Freud)

Unit III: Political Thought (12 contact hours)

- a. Principato civile (Machiavelli); Three Forms of the Modern European State (Minogue)
- b. Primary Social Goods and the Problem of Distributive Justice (Rawls, Dworkin, Nozick); Communitarianism and the “Philosophy of the Common Good” (Sandel, Taylor)

- c. Open Society (Popper, Bergson); Democracy and Citizenship (Habermas: Civic Republicanism); Representation in Politics (Voegelin)
- d. The Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns (Strauss/Cropsey)

Unit IV: Modern Economic System (10 contact hours)

- a. Capitalism and the approaches to understand Modern Economic System
 - Philosophical Foundations of Capitalism (Adam Smith)
 - Critique of Capitalism and the origin of Modern Socialism (Marx and Engels)
 - Capitalism and its Discontents
- b. World System Theory (Immanuel Wallerstein)
- c. Neoliberal Capitalism and Globalisation (Stiglitz/Bhagavati/Friedmann)

Suggested General Reading:

- Barzun, Jacques: *From Dawn to Decadence, 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*, New York (Harper Collins) 2000.
- Bell, Daniel: *The End of Ideology. On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties, With "The Resumption of History in the New Century"*. Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Davies, Norman: *Europe: A History*, New York, OUP, 1996
- Germino, Dante: *Machiavelli to Marx, Modern Western Political Thought*, University of Chicago Press, 1979
- Hayek, Friedrich: *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Hughes, Stuart: *Consciousness and Society, The Re-orientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930*, London, Paladin, 1973.
- Morris, Ian: *The Measure of Civilization, How Social Development Decides the Fate of Nations*, Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Plamenatz, John: *Man and Society: A Critical Examination of Some Important Social and Political Theories from Machiavelli to Marx*, London, Longmans, 1963.
- Sedlacek, Tomas: *Economics of Good and Evil, The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street*, New York, OUP 2011
- Smith, Preserved: *The Origins of Modern Culture*, vols. 1 & 2. (Revised Ed.) Crane Brinton. (Collier) New York 1962.
- Solomon, Robert C. *History and Human Nature. A Philosophical Review of European Philosophy and Culture, 1750-1850*. (Harvester) Brighton 1980.
- Strauss, Leo: *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, Chicago, UCP, 1989.