

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Political Philosophy

Academic year 2025- 2026

1. Programme-related data

1.1. Higher Education Institution	Babeş-Bolyai University
1.2. Faculty	History and Philosophy
1.3. Department	International Studies and Contemporary History
1.4. Field	Security Studies
1.5. Level of study	Bachelor's Degree
1.6. Degree programme / Qualification	Security Studies
1.7. Form of education	IF

2. Course-related data

2.1. Course title	Political Philosophy			Course code	HLR3208
2.2. Course coordinator	Lect. Dr. POPA Paul				
2.3. Seminar coordinator	Lect. Dr. POPA Paul				
2.4. Year of study		2.5. Semester		2.6. Type of assessment	Exam
2.7. Course status	Compulsory		2.8. Course type	Core subject	

3. Total estimated time (hours per semester of teaching activities)

3.1. Number of hours per week	4	of which: 3.2. course	2	3.3. seminar/ laboratory/ project	2
3.4. Total of hours in the curriculum	56	of which: 3.5. course	28	3.6. seminar/ laboratory	28
Time allocation for individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)					hours
Learning from textbooks, course materials, bibliography, and notes (IS)					21
Additional research in the library, on subject-specific electronic platforms, and on-site					15
Preparing seminars/ laboratories/ projects, assignments, reports, portfolios, and essays (greater than or equal to the total number of hours specified in the course calendar for evaluation tasks)					25
Tutoring (professional guidance)					3
Examinations					5
Other activities [i.e.: two-way communication with the course coordinator/tutor]					0
3.7. Total hours of individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)				69	
3.8. Total hours per semester				125	
3.9. Number of credits				5	

4. Prerequisites (where applicable)

4.1. curriculum-related	Not the case
4.2 skills-related	Not the case

5. Specific conditions (where applicable)

5.1. course-related	Not the case
5.2. seminar/laboratory-related	Not the case

6.1. Competencies resulting from the completion of the degree programme (as referred to in the curriculum)¹

Professional competencies	
Competency code	Competency
PC1	Knowledge of the main concepts and sources for the development of scientific productions (articles, studies, conferences) on political philosophy
PC4	The ability to provide expert justification on issues of maximum generality in politics
PC5	The ability to analyze politics by appealing to a vast political culture
Transversal competencies	
Competency code	Competency
TC2	Managing information specific to solving complex tasks in context (receiving, transmitting, processing, storing information in profile documents), including through the advanced use of an international language and, at an intermediate or advanced level, a second foreign language.
TC3	Objective self-assessment of the need for professional training for the purpose of insertion and adaptability to the requirements of the labor market.

6.2. Learning outcomes relevant to the degree programme (as referred to in the curriculum)²

Learning outcomes targeted by the subject		
Competency code	Knowledge and comprehension	Specific academic skills
PC1	The student describes key ideas, theories and authors in political philosophy; explains fundamental normative concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, authority, legitimacy and power; recognises tensions between competing political values.	The student is able to construct and defend an argument; compare major traditions of political thought; apply a normative concept to a contemporary political or security-related case.

¹ The professional and/or transversal skills targeted by the subject for which the course description is prepared will be copied from the curriculum of the degree programme. For each competency, the complete entry, including the competency code, will be copied with the exact wording that appears in the curriculum, without any changes. If no competency is copied from either of the two categories, the row corresponding to that category is deleted from the table.

² The learning outcomes relevant for the degree programme and targeted by the subject for which the course description is prepared will be listed. The entries, copied without any changes from the Curriculum by subject type (Core Subject/Specialisation Subject/Complementary Subject), are listed under the corresponding competency.

PC4	The student understands the normative foundations of political authority, state coercion, obedience, rights and political obligation; explains the relationship between security, liberty and democratic legitimacy.	The student is able to critically assess political and security policies from an ethical and normative perspective; maintain argumentative rigor; respond constructively to criticism; revise a position on the basis of stronger arguments; avoid moralising simplifications.
PC5	The student understands the relevance of political philosophy for analysing contemporary security dilemmas, including emergency powers, surveillance, war, political violence, migration, human rights and the protection of democratic institutions.	The student is able to identify the normative assumptions underlying security decisions; evaluate competing policy options in terms of justice, proportionality, rights and legitimacy; formulate reasoned judgments on controversial security issues.
TC2	The student understands the importance of ethical responsibility, intellectual honesty, respect for pluralism and sensitivity to competing viewpoints in academic and professional contexts.	The student is able to participate in structured debate; communicate arguments clearly and respectfully; work collaboratively in analysing controversial political issues; distinguish reasoned disagreement from unsupported opinion.
TC3	The student understands the need for autonomous learning, critical self-reflection and the continuous development of analytical judgment in the study of political and security phenomena.	The student is able to independently read and interpret philosophical texts; identify relevant academic sources; prepare coherent written and oral analyses; reflect critically on their own assumptions and improve their argumentation.

7. Subject-specific learning outcomes (referred to by each subject coordinator across the range of competencies and learning outcomes at the level of the degree programme)

Knowledge and comprehension
· The student identifies and explains the main concepts of political philosophy, including justice, liberty, equality, authority, legitimacy, rights, power and political obligation.

· The student describes the central ideas of major authors and traditions in political philosophy, such as classical political thought, liberalism, conservatism, socialism, republicanism and contemporary theories of justice.
· The student understands the normative foundations of the state and political authority, as well as the tensions between individual freedom, collective security, democratic legitimacy and the exercise of coercive power.
· The student explains the relevance of political philosophy for contemporary security issues, including surveillance, emergency powers, political violence, war, migration, human rights and the protection of democratic institutions.
Specific academic skills
· The student applies concepts and arguments from political philosophy to the critical analysis of contemporary political and security-related cases.
· The student compares competing philosophical perspectives and constructs coherent, evidence-based arguments concerning justice, liberty, authority, legitimacy and security.
· The student critically evaluates security policies and political decisions from a normative perspective, taking into account rights, proportionality, democratic accountability and the ethical consequences of public action.

8. Contents

8.1. Course	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks ³
Introduction to Political Philosophy; Defining Political Science	Lecture, explanation, guided argumentation, conceptual clarification	
The Origins of Political Philosophy	Lecture, explanation, guided argumentation, discussion of classical texts	
Political Ideologies: Philosophical Sources and Social Impact	Lecture, comparative analysis, guided argumentation, debate	
Authority and Power	Lecture, conceptual analysis, guided argumentation, case discussion	
The State: Theories of Its Foundation and Role	Lecture, explanation, comparative analysis, guided argumentation	
The State: Forms of Government	Lecture, typological analysis, guided argumentation, discussion	
Liberty: Philosophical and Political Dimensions	Lecture, conceptual analysis, guided argumentation, debate	
Justice: The Relationship between Morality and Politics	Lecture, explanation, guided argumentation, comparative analysis	
Equality	Lecture, explanation, guided argumentation, debate	

³ For example, organisational aspects, recommendations for students, specific aspects relating to the course/seminar, such as inviting experts in the field, etc.

Abuses of Power: Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism, Tyranny and Dictatorship	Lecture, comparative analysis, guided argumentation, case discussion	
Civil Society: Its Role under Different Political Regimes	Lecture, explanation, guided argumentation, comparative discussion	
Philosophical Reflection on International Politics: War and Peace	Lecture, conceptual analysis, guided argumentation, debate	
Globalization and Multiculturalism	Lecture, comparative analysis, guided argumentation, debate	

Bibliography

- Berlin, I. (1969). *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford University Press.
- Hobbes, T. (1996). *Leviathan*. Cambridge University Press.
- Locke, J. (1988). *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rawls, J. (1999). *A Theory of Justice* (Rev. ed.). Harvard University Press.
- Walzer, M. (2015). *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (5th ed.). Basic Books.
- Arendt, H. (1970). *On Violence*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

8.2. Seminar/ laboratory	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks
Normative questions in political and security studies	Textual analysis, guided discussion, debate	Clarifying the distinction between political philosophy, political theory and political science; identifying normative questions in the study of security
Plato, Aristotle, justice and political order	Textual analysis, guided discussion, debate	Discussion of selected excerpts from Plato and Aristotle; the relationship between justice, order and the political community
Liberalism, conservatism, socialism and nationalism	Textual analysis, comparative debate, group discussion	Comparative analysis of liberalism, conservatism, socialism and nationalism; their influence on political mobilisation and conflict
Power, legitimacy, obedience and coercion	Textual analysis, guided discussion, case-based debate	Distinguishing power, authority, legitimacy and coercion; application to contemporary political institutions
Social contract and the security-providing role of the state	Textual analysis, comparative debate, argument mapping	Discussion of social contract theories; the legitimacy of the state as provider of order and security

Democracy, non-democratic regimes and accountability	Textual analysis, comparative discussion, debate	Comparison of democratic and non-democratic forms of government; implications for rights, accountability and security
Individual liberty and security measures	Textual analysis, case-based debate, group discussion	Negative and positive liberty; discussion of the tension between individual freedoms and security measures
Principles of justice and political responsibility	Textual analysis, guided discussion, comparative debate	Comparing principles of justice; discussing whether political decisions can be separated from moral evaluation
Human rights, civil liberties and emergency restrictions	Textual analysis, comparative case discussion, debate	Human rights and civil liberties; discussion of rights limitations during emergencies or security crises
Political equality, legal equality and social stability	Textual analysis, guided discussion, comparative debate	Equality before the law, political equality and equality of opportunity; relevance for inclusion and social stability
Repression, control and threats to democratic institutions	Textual analysis, guided discussion, comparative debate	Identifying mechanisms of political repression and control; discussion of threats to democratic institutions and individual security
Participation, trust and democratic resilience	Textual analysis, guided discussion, case-based debate	Civil society, civic participation and democratic resilience; the role of public trust and social mobilisation
Just war theory, peace and international security	Textual analysis, guided discussion, case-based debate	Just war theory, pacifism and political realism; moral evaluation of armed conflict and humanitarian intervention
Migration, identity, diversity and global justice	Textual analysis, guided discussion, case-based debate	Global justice, cultural diversity, migration and identity; challenges for democratic cohesion and international security

Bibliography

- Plato. *Republic*. Selected excerpts on justice and political order.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. Selected excerpts on the state and forms of government.
- Hobbes, T. *Leviathan*. Selected excerpts on the state of nature, authority and security.
- Locke, J. *Second Treatise of Government*. Selected excerpts on rights and legitimate government.
- Mill, J. S. *On Liberty*. Selected excerpts on liberty and the limits of authority.

- Berlin, I. *Two Concepts of Liberty*. Selected excerpts on negative and positive liberty.
- Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice*. Selected excerpts on justice as fairness.
- Arendt, H. *On Violence*. Selected excerpts on power and violence.
- Walzer, M. *Just and Unjust Wars*. Selected excerpts on the moral evaluation of war.

9. Evaluation

Type of activity	9.1 Evaluation criteria ⁴	9.2 Evaluation methods ⁵	9.3 Percentage in the final grade
9.4. Course	Knowledge and understanding of the main concepts of political philosophy and the ability to critically interpret them in relation to relevant case studies. Ability to synthesise and correlate data and information from different sources. Capacity for analysis and critical thinking.	Written exam	50%
9.5. Seminar/ laboratory	Preparation of a paper, essay or project on a topic relevant to political philosophy and security studies. Active and well-argued participation in seminar discussions and debates. Ability to apply philosophical concepts to contemporary political and security-related issues.	In-class presentation of the paper / essay / project; assessment of participation in seminar discussions	50%
9.6 Minimum standard for passing			
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⁴ The evaluation criteria must directly reflect the learning outcomes targeted at the level of the degree programme respectively at the level of the subject. More specifically, the learning outcomes set out in the expected learning outcomes are assessed.

⁵ Both final evaluation methods and ongoing evaluation strategies should be established.

10. SDG labels (Sustainable Development Goals)⁶

		Sustainable Development Generic Label						
								
								
								

Date of entry:

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Signature of course coordinator

Lect. Dr POPA Paul

Signature of seminar coordinator

Lect. Dr POPA Paul

Date of approval in the department:

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Signature of the head of department

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⁶ Select a single label which, according to the [Implementation of SDG labels in the academic process](#), best matches the subject. If the subject addresses sustainable development in a generic manner (i.e. by presenting/introducing the general framework of sustainable development, etc.), then the Sustainable Development generic label may be applied. If none of the labels describe the subject, select the last option: "No label applies."