

POLITICAL ANALYSIS


Emma Taylor – she/her

Teacher at the Jewish Community Secondary School
Head of Politics and Scholars' Programme Coordinator





Objective of this course


- The objective of this course is to help you analyse political concepts with those of other subjects.
 - I will ask you to share your own analysis of how your chosen subjects interact with Politics in the final session (30th March).
 - This is Assessment Objective 2 in both the Edexcel and AQA mark schemes for Politics A Level.
 - In personal statements and interviews with universities, it is important to show that you can analyse beyond the requirements of your A Levels.
 - No previous knowledge is required to complete this course.
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What is Analysis?

The definition of analysis is **the process of breaking down something into its parts to learn what they do and how they relate to one another.**

Examples of such relationships include:

- A causes B
 - A is similar to B
 - A contrasts to B
 - A is an example of B
 - A is advocated by the theory B
 - A is an obstacle for B
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What is Politics?

- To distinguish Politics from other subjects, I will ask you to find a non-political object near you. We will then contrast that to political objects to find the difference.
- You now have 2 minutes to find a non-political object.

End




Defining Politics

- Politics involves decisions about how we should organise society, such as the distribution of resources, power or status.
- Is there anything that isn't affected by politics?





Lesson 1 - Philosophy

- According to the Philosophy Foundation, Philosophy is a way of thinking to deepen our understanding about subjects such as ethics, thought, existence, time, meaning and value.
 - That 'way of thinking' involves 4 Rs: responsiveness, reflection, reason and re-evaluation.
 - Examples of philosophical questions are: "What is human nature?" and "What is justice?"
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Political ideologies

- In both AQA and Edexcel Politics A Levels, there are political ideologies/ ideas/theories including Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, Feminism, Nationalism, Anarchism and Multi-culturalism.
- They vary partly because of their different philosophical views on human nature.
- For instance, anarchists are optimistic about the rationality of human nature, so they don't believe a state is necessary. Whereas conservatives believe human nature is irrational, which implies the need for hierarchy and order.



Philosophical thought experiments

- John Rawls: we should decide the principles of justice from the imagined perspective in which we don't know our own position in society – the 'veil of ignorance'.
- Imagine you wake up in hospital with no memory of your previous life and your body is covered in bandages. You don't know your sex, age, race, class, nationality, religion...
- From this perspective, which laws would you regard as just?
- Thought experiment «VEIL OF IGNORANCE» (English) #filosofix - YouTube

The Difference Principle

- Rawls argued that the veil of ignorance yields the 'difference principle'. This is a limit on inequality in society such that any social or economic differences in the social contract* should help those who are the worst off.
- *The social contract is an agreement, either implicit or explicit, governing the behaviour of individuals and organizations within a certain context such as a culture or a nation.
- In break out rooms discuss:
 1. Do you agree with Rawls that this is a convincing conclusion from this thought experiment?
 2. Do you agree with Rawls that this thought experiment is the best way to decide just laws?

End

How does this relate to Politics?








- If we agree with Rawls that the difference principle is an objectively just law, then should it be entrenched into our constitution? In other words, should we give the judiciary the power to prevent politicians from changing this law?

Those of you that agreed with the difference principle, do you think this should be an entrenched law? Why/why not?



Home learning

- POLITICAL THEORY – YouTube
- Using the Political Theory playlist on the School of Life YouTube channel, note another way that Politics and Philosophy interact that we have not covered in this session.

1	 A portrait of John Maynard Keynes with the text 'JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES' and a duration of '11:18'.	POLITICAL THEORY - John Maynard Keynes The School of Life
2	 A portrait of Henry David Thoreau with the text 'THOREAU AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE' and a duration of '5:29'.	Thoreau and Civil Disobedience The School of Life
3	 A portrait of Friedrich Hayek with the text 'FRIEDRICH HAYEK' and a duration of '11:50'.	POLITICAL THEORY – Friedrich Hayek The School of Life
4	 A portrait of John Locke with the text 'JOHN LOCKE' and a duration of '9:14'.	POLITICAL THEORY - John Locke The School of Life
5	 A portrait of Jean-Jacques Rousseau with the text 'JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU' and a duration of '7:47'.	POLITICAL THEORY – Jean-Jacques Rousseau The School of Life
6	 A portrait of Thomas Hobbes with the text 'THOMAS HOBBS' and a duration of '6:46'.	POLITICAL THEORY - Thomas Hobbes The School of Life
7	 A portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli with the text 'NICCOLÒ MACHIABELLI' and a duration of '6:53'.	POLITICAL THEORY - Niccolò Machiavelli The School of Life