

CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
MONSOON SEMESTER 2021

M.PHIL. OPTIONAL COURSE: PO 630

COURSE TITLE: TEXTS IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

INSTRUCTORS: PROFESSOR GURPREET MAHAJAN

Credits 4

Scheme of Evaluation: Mid-term assignments and an End term examination.

What is a text? How should we read a text? Is it enough to move from sentence to sentence, page by page, from the beginning to the end of a text? How do we arrive at the meaning of the text? Should we focus on the author's intended meaning? Can we arrive at the meaning of a text that was written in a different historical period? What is the purpose of reading texts? What constitutes the text? Does the text have clearly marked boundaries?

Drawing upon the debates in the philosophy of the social sciences, in particular in and around the hermeneutic tradition, the aim of the Course is to - i) introduce students to some of the methodological and philosophical issues involved in reading a text and understanding its meaning;

b) appreciate the complex issues involved in interpreting a text by systematically reading an identified text.

Every year the Course takes up one major text, or selections from major texts, in western or Indian political philosophy. This semester we will be reading selections from the writings of G.W.F. Hegel and H.G. Gadamer. The students would be required to read the prescribed text along with interpretations of the text and debates generated around it.

Each student will be asked to initiate discussion on specific sections of the identified text and submit one Term paper. Evaluation of these would be supplemented by an end term examination where students would be required to write an Essay around the texts that have been collectively read and discussed.

Supplementary Readings

Skinner Quentin, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas", *History and Theory*, 1969.

Skinner, Hans, *Truth and Method*, London: Sheed & Ward, 2nd edition, 1989, Part Two, section II, subsection a) and b)

Ricoeur Paul, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distantiation", in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981

Tully James [ed.], *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980

Bleacher, Josef, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique*, London: Routledge, 1980

Kurt, Mueller-Vollmer, [ed.], *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, Continuum Reprint Edition, 1988

Silverman, Hugh J. *Textualities: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction*, London: Routledge, 1994

Lawrence, K. Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2014

Thisleton, Anthony C. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*, William B. Eerdmans, 2009

Taylor, Charles, *Hegel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975

Pelczynski, Z.A. *Hegel's Political Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971

Pippin, Robert, *Hegel on Self-Consciousness: Death and Desire in the Phenomenology of Spirit*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010

Kojeve, A. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1967

Bernstein, Richard. From Hermeneutics to Praxis, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Jun., 1982), pp. 823-845

Warnke, Georgia, The Hermeneutic Circle versus Dialogue, *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 65, No. 1, pp. 91-112