



COURSE DESCRIPTION

History of Political Ideas

Academic year 2025-2026

1. Programme-related data

1.1. Higher Education Institution	Babeş-Bolyai University
1.2. Faculty	Faculty of History and Philosophy
1.3. Department	Doctoral School of Philosophy
1.4. Field	Philosophy
1.5. Level of study	Doctoral
1.6. Degree programme / Qualification	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (Level 8 CNC/EQF)
1.7. Form of education	Full-time, Part-time

2. Course-related data

2.1. Course title	History of Political Ideas			Course code	SDF08
2.2. Course coordinator	Attila M. Demeter, full professor, PhD				
2.3. Seminar coordinator	Attila M. Demeter, full professor, PhD				
2.4. Year of study		2.5. Semester		2.6. Type of assessment	Exam
2.7. Course status	Optional			2.8. Course type	Specialisation subject

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

3.1. Number of hours per week	3	of which: 3.2. course	2	3.3. seminar/ laboratory/ project	1
3.4. Total of hours in the curriculum	36	of which: 3.5. course	24	3.6. seminar/ laboratory	12
Time allocation for individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)					hours
Learning from textbooks, course materials, bibliography, and notes (IS)					70
Additional research in the library, on subject-specific electronic platforms, and on-site					60
Preparing seminars/ laboratories/ projects, assignments, reports, portfolios, and essays					40
Tutoring (professional guidance)					30
Examinations					6
Other activities					8
3.7. Total hours of individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)				214	
3.8. Total hours per semester				250	
3.9. Number of credits				10	

4. Prerequisites (where applicable)

4.1. curriculum-related	
4.2. skills-related	

5. Specific conditions (where applicable)

5.1. course-related	Mandatory attendance at 70% of the total number of class hours.
5.2. seminar/laboratory-related	Active participation in the process of interpreting texts.



6.1. Competencies resulting from the completion of the degree programme

Professional competencies	
Competency code	Competency
PC1	a) advanced knowledge in the field of Philosophy; b) the ability to identify, formulate, and solve research problems in a creative manner; c) mastery of advanced research methods and techniques in Philosophy;
PC3	f) skills in documenting and promoting scientific works; g) ability to write scientific papers and other academic materials at an advanced level, in a style appropriate to the field of Philosophy and in compliance with its specific requirements at national and international level;
PC4	i) academic-level language skills in internationally used languages necessary for documenting and writing scientific papers.
Transversal competencies	
Competency code	Competency
TC1	a) written and oral communication skills in the field of science and culture; b) advanced language skills in international languages, including the ability to express and formulate ideas in multicultural and multilingual contexts;
TC3	h) knowledge of critical thinking, including the ability to analyse, interpret, or formulate arguments in different contexts; i) knowledge of the use of intellectual property rights legislation.

6.2. Learning outcomes relevant to the degree programme

Learning outcomes targeted by the subject		
Competency code	Knowledge and comprehension	Specific academic skills
PC1	1. The doctoral student demonstrates knowledge at the most advanced level in the field of Philosophy.	1. The doctoral student possesses and applies the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including the ability to synthesize and evaluate, necessary for solving critical research problems in Philosophy.
PC2	2. The doctoral student demonstrates advanced knowledge at the intersection of various social sciences and humanities fields.	2. The doctoral student possesses and applies innovative skills to expand and redefine existing knowledge or professional practices in the social sciences and humanities.
TC1	1. (Responsibility and autonomy) The doctoral student demonstrates a high level of authority, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional integrity.	1. (Responsibility and autonomy) The doctoral student demonstrates a sustained commitment to developing new ideas or processes at the forefront of a work or study situation, including research.

7. Subject-specific learning outcomes

Knowledge and comprehension
1. The doctoral student demonstrates knowledge at the most advanced level in the field of political philosophy and, at the same time, the history of political ideas.
2. The doctoral student demonstrates advanced knowledge at the intersection of various social sciences and humanities: political philosophy, political science, historiography.
3. (Responsibility and autonomy) The doctoral student demonstrates a high level of authority, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional integrity.
Specific academic skills
1. The doctoral student possesses and applies the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques necessary for research in the field of political thought history.
2. The doctoral student possesses and applies innovative skills to expand and redefine existing knowledge or professional practices in the field of history of political ideas.
3. The doctoral student demonstrates a sustained commitment to developing new ideas or processes at the forefront of a field of study, including research.

8. Contents

8.1. Course	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks ¹
What is the history of ideas? The historicity of political thought	presentation, discussion	
Research methods specific to the field of history of political ideas	presentation, discussion	
The beginnings of modern political thought	presentation, discussion	
Machiavelli and his political “realism”	presentation, discussion	
The concept of sovereignty: Jean Bodin	presentation, discussion	
The concept of state: Thomas Hobbes	presentation, discussion	
The idea of constitutional government: Locke and Montesquieu	presentation, discussion	
The idea of national sovereignty: Rousseau and Sieyès	presentation, discussion	
Critique of national sovereignty: Benjamin Constant	presentation, discussion	
Immanuel Kant’s political philosophy	presentation, discussion	
American Constitution: James Madison	presentation, discussion	
American democracy: Alexis de Tocqueville	presentation, discussion	
Bibliography		
<p>1. Leo Strauss: An Introduction to Political Philosophy, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1989. 2. Preston King (ed.): The History of Ideas. An Introduction to Method, Barnes and Noble, London – New Jersey, 1983. 3. Quentin Skinner: Machiavelli, Atlantisz Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1996. 4. Maurizio Viroli: Machiavelli, Oxford University Press, Oxford – New York, 1998. 5. Leo Strauss: The Political Philosophy of Hobbes. Its Basis and Its Genesis, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1996. 6. John Dunn: Locke, Atlantisz Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1992. 7. Judith N. Shklar: Montesquieu, Atlantisz Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1994. 8. Maurizio Viroli: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the ‘well-ordered society’, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York, 1988. 9. Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès: Political Writings, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis/Cambridge, 2003. 10. Tzvetan Todorov: Benjamin Constant. A Passion for Democracy, Algora Publishing, New York, 1999. 11. : Hannah Arendt: Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy (ed. by Ronald Beiner), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, 7-77. 12. Pierre Manent: Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Maryland, 1996.</p> <p><i>Bibliography for acquiring the necessary philosophical knowledge for doctoral students who have not completed fundamental studies in philosophy at the bachelor’s level:</i></p> <p>1. Isaiah Berlin: Against the Current. Essays in the History of Ideas, The Viking Press, New York, 1980. 2. Leo Strauss és Joseph Cropsey: A politikai filozófia története II., Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1994. 3. Pierre Manent: A liberális gondolat története, Tanulmány Kiadó, Pécs, 1994.</p>		
8.2. Seminar/ laboratory	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks
Quentin Skinner: Jelentés és megértés az eszmetörténetben	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Niccolò Machiavelli: A fejedelem (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Niccolò Machiavelli: Beszélgetések (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	

¹ For example, organisational aspects, recommendations for students, specific aspects relating to the course/seminar, such as inviting experts in the field, etc.

Jean Bodin: Az államról (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Thomas Hobbes: Leviatán (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
John Locke: Második értekezés a polgári kormányzatról (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Montesquieu: A törvények szelleméről (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A társadalmi szerződésről (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Benjamin Constant: A régiek és a modernek szabadságának összevetése	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Immanuel Kant: Az örök békéről	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
James Madison: 10. levél	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	
Alexis de Tocqueville: A demokrácia Amerikában (excerpts)	interpretation of texts (in Hungarian), discussion	

Bibliography

1. Quentin Skinner: Jelentés és megértés az eszmetörténetben, in: Horkay Hörcher Ferenc (ed.): A koramodern politikai eszmetörténet cambridge-i látképe, Tanulmány Kiadó, Budapest, 1997, 7-53.
2. Niccolò Machiavelli: A fejedelem, XV-XXV. fejezet, in: Niccolò Machiavelli művei, Első kötet, Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1978, 51-83.
3. Niccolò Machiavelli: Beszélgetések Titus Livius első tíz könyvéről, Első könyv, I-VI. fejezet, Második könyv, I-IV. fejezet, in: Niccolò Machiavelli művei, Első kötet, Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1978, 91-112, 226-244.
4. Jean Bodin: A szuverenitásról, in: Jean Bodin: Az államról, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 1987, 73-104.
5. Thomas Hobbes: Leviatán, Második rész, XVII-XXI. fejezet, in: Thomas Hobbes: Leviatán, Polis Könyvkiadó, Kolozsvár, 2001, 193-241.
6. John Locke: Második értekezés a polgári kormányzatról, V-XI. fejezet, in: John Locke: Második értekezés a polgári kormányzatról, Polis Könyvkiadó, Kolozsvár, 1999, 57-137.
7. Montesquieu: A törvények szelleméről, XI. könyv: A politikai szabadságot létrehozó törvényeknek az alkotmányhoz való viszonyáról, in: Montesquieu: A törvények szelleméről, Osiris Kiadó – Attraktor, Budapest, 2000, 245-260.
8. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A társadalmi szerződésről, avagy a politikai jog elvei, Első könyv, VI-IX. fejezet, Második könyv, I-IV. fejezet, VI. fejezet, VIII-X. fejezet, Negyedik könyv, VIII. fejezet, in: Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Politikafilozófiai írások, Atlantisz Kiadó, Budapest, 2017, 273-285, 286-296, 299-302, 307-315, 401-414.
9. Benjamin Constant: A régiek és a modernek szabadságának összevetése, in: Benjamin Constant: A régiek és a modernek szabadsága, Atlantisz Kiadó, Budapest, 1997, 235-260.
10. Immanuel Kant: Az örök békéről, in: Immanuel Kant: Történetfilozófiai írások, Ictus Kiadó, Budapest, 1997, 255-334.
11. James Madison: 10. levél, in: Alexander Hamilton – James Madison – John Jay: A föderalista, Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1998, 91-100.
12. Alexis de Tocqueville: A demokrácia Amerikában, I. kötet, V. fejezet, III. kötet, IV. rész, in: Alexis de Tocqueville: A demokrácia Amerikában, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 1983, 47-101, 483-539.

9. Evaluation

Type of activity	9.1 Evaluation criteria ²	9.2 Evaluation methods ³	9.3 Percentage in the final grade
9.4. Course	proper assimilation of the knowledge taught and its correct application	assessment is carried out throughout the semester through participation in debates, as well as in the final (oral) exam at the end of the semester	70%
	assimilation and appropriate use of concepts specific to political thinking		

² 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.

³ Both final evaluation methods and ongoing evaluation strategies should be established.



9.5. Seminar/ laboratory	active participation in interpreting texts	assessment takes place throughout the semester through active participation in the process of interpreting texts and through participation in debates and discussions	30%
	active participation in debates		
9.6 Minimum standard for passing			
70% attendance at lectures and seminars. Active participation in the process of interpreting texts. Active participation in debates and discussions.			

Date of entry:
 June 2025

Signature of course coordinator
 Prof. dr. Demeter Márton Attila

Signature of seminar coordinator
 Prof. dr. Demeter Márton Attila

Date of approval in the department:
 July 2025

Signature of the head of department
 Prof. dr. Frunză Mihaela-Cornelia