

PIA2107: GOVERNMENT AND LAW

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Government and Law

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

2107

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

SA2107 Government, Law and Society, POL2107 Government, Law and Society, POL2107 Government, Law and Economy, POL2107 Government and Law

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

What are the reasons for having a government and what should be its main functions? What are the main types of government and is there a best form? What is law? What are the reasons for having law and what should be its main functions? What is rule of law and how can it be achieved? What is civil disobedience and how should it be conducted? How do government and law related to and interact with each other? Based on the intellectual discoveries of great thinkers and philosophers to answer these questions in the past, this course provides a foundation and an opportunity for students to reflect on and make their original discoveries of knowledge and ideas concerning government, law, and their inter-relationship.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Appraise the intellectual discoveries of philosophers in the past on government and law.	40	x	x	
2	Apply the intellectual discoveries of philosophers on government and law in analysis of public affairs in Hong Kong, China and the contemporary world for the discovery of original ideas and perspectives.	40	x	x	
3	Construct innovative approaches and/or suggestions for resolving current problems related to government and law in Hong Kong, China and the contemporary world.	20		x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)	
1	Reading	One piece of philosophical reading around 7,000 words every week of the semester for the formulation of an inquisitive mind and a passion for knowledge about the intellectual discoveries of philosophers in the past on government and law.	1	2 hours/week

2	Class workshop	Three-hour class workshop every week of the semester for discussing the theories and concepts mentioned in the philosophical readings, applying the theories and concepts to analyse real world current issues, constructing a strong foundation in discipline-specific knowledge as well as original ideas and perspectives concerning public affairs in Hong Kong, China and the contemporary world.	1, 2, 3	3 hours/week
3	Literature search & review	Discovery and analysis of information and facts, using critical reasoning and reflexive self-assessment, from a range of sources, including class workshop, discussions, books, articles, television, internet, documentaries, and the mass media.	1, 2, 3	2 hours/week
4	Essay-writing	Written presentation of the discovered discipline-specific knowledge, original ideas and perspectives, as well as innovative suggestions concerning public affairs and problems related to government and law in Hong Kong, China and the contemporary world.	1, 2, 3	2 hour/week

5	Canvas e-learning	Out-of-class online comments, questions, responses, debates, discussions, reviews of class workshops and readings as opportunities for the exchange of views, self-reflection, discovery of new knowledge, construction of original ideas, and formulation of innovative suggestions related to government and law in Hong Kong, China and the contemporary world.	1, 2, 3	2 hours/week
---	-------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------	--------------

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class workshop participation and performance	1, 2, 3	30	Attending the workshops, participating in class exercises, interacting with teachers and fellow students, asking questions and debating on real world current issues for students to demonstrate their ability to reflect critically on the intellectual discoveries of philosophers in the past on government and law, apply those intellectual discoveries in analysis of public affairs in Hong Kong, China and the contemporary world, as well as construct innovative approaches and/or suggestions for resolving the related problems.	No

2	Individual essays	1, 2, 3	70	Two pieces of individual essay over the semester to assess students' ability to appraise the intellectual discoveries of philosophers in the past on government and law, discover discipline-specific knowledge, formulate original ideas and perspectives on public affairs related to government and law in Hong Kong, China and the contemporary world, as well as construct innovative approaches and/or suggestions for resolving the related problems. Each essay should be around 1,500 words.	No
---	-------------------	---------	----	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Class workshop participation and performance

Criterion

Class attendance and participation in class exercises, interaction with teacher and fellow students, discussion and reflection on the intellectual discoveries of philosophers in the past and public affairs in Hong Kong, China and/or the contemporary world.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Marginal (D)

Marginal demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Failure (F)

Insufficient demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Assessment Task

2. Individual essays

Criterion

Knowledge of and reflection on the intellectual discoveries of philosophers in the past on government and law, application of those intellectual discoveries to analyse public affairs in Hong Kong, China and/or the contemporary world, discovery of original ideas and perspectives, formulation of innovative approaches and/or suggestions for resolving current problems in respect of government and law, writing and communication skills.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Marginal (D)

Marginal demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Failure (F)

Insufficient demonstration of accomplishing the assessment criteria.

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Government. Law. Social contract. State powers. Monarchy. Aristocracy. Democracy. Natural law. Human law. Rule of law. Citizen rights. Civil rights. Human rights. Legal rights. Civil disobedience.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Cicero, Marcus Tullius, On the Commonwealth. Selected pages.
2	Fuller, Lon L., The Morality of Law. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964. Selected pages.
3	Hart, H.L.A., The Concept of Law. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford, 1961. Selected pages.
4	Hayek, Friedrich A., The Road to Serfdom. Selected pages.
5	Hume, David, Essays, Literary, Moral, and Political. Selected pages.
6	King, Martin Luther Jr., Letter from Birmingham City Jail. 1963, selected pages.

7	Machiavelli, Niccolò, The Prince. Selected pages.
8	Markovits, Daniel. Democratic Disobedience. 2005. Selected pages.
9	Plato, The Republic. Selected pages.
10	Rawls, John, A Theory of Justice. Oxford Oxfordshire: Oxford University Press, 1971. Chapter VI Duty and Obligation, selected pages.
11	Raz, Joseph, The Authority of Law – Essays on Law and Morality. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1979. Selected pages.
12	Smith, William. Civil Disobedience and Deliberative Democracy. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. Selected pages.
13	Summers, Robert S., Essays in Legal Theory. Dordrecht; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000. Selected pages.
14	Thoreau, Henry David, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience. Aesthetic Papers, 1849, selected pages.
15	Tocqueville, Alexis de, Democracy in America. Volume One, 1835, selected pages.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Nil