



**ACADEMIC SENATE
Executive Committee
REFERRAL FORM**

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

Date:	11/12/2025
To:	General Education Committee
From:	Academic Senate Executive Committee
Subject:	Academic Senate Referral
Classification	GE-019-256
Title of Referral:	<u>PLS 2040 - Introduction to Political Thought (New GE Area 3B)</u>
Background:	See attached referral request form. Additional background provided by the Executive Committee: New course proposed for GE Area 3B.
Recommended resources:	See attached referral request form and supporting documentation. Additional resources recommended by the Executive Committee: None. For the Committee's Report on this referral, please list in separate sections, the resources recommended, and resources actually consulted. If a resource was not consulted, briefly state why.
Review and recommend:	Review and recommend as appropriate.
Date required for presenting committee report to the Executive Committee:	3/2/2026

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Keywords: PLS, 2040, Introduction, Political, Thought, New, GE, Area, 3B

Background:

Outlines the major political philosophers and their contributions to political thinking around making a humane and just society possible. Explains central concepts such as justice, sovereignty, natural rights, democracy, power, equality, capitalism, humanism, knowledge, and freedom, and their implications for addressing important political and moral questions. Engages canonical and non-canonical authors and texts from the ancient period to the 21st century to critically examine the development of these concepts across varying historical contexts and civilizations.

At the end of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the basic political philosophies of diverse political thinkers and compare them to others.
2. Identify and explain the major concepts, arguments, and debates within political philosophy as well as gender, race, class, and indigenous interventions.
3. Examine theoretical underpinnings of contemporary political systems and processes, as well as the debates about them.
4. Classify how views of politics have developed over the past 2,000 years.
5. Present analysis and/or arguments that are balanced and supported by textual evidence.
6. Apply critical thinking skills to their political and social lives, allowing them to grow as moral persons and critical democratic citizens

Required Assignments: Analytical essays, weekly reading interpretation assignments, iterative draft writing assignments, weekly seminar discussion.

Required Content: Original texts by canonical political philosophers (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Mill, Nietzsche); original texts by feminist, critical race, and Indigenous critics (e.g., W.E.B. Du Bois, Wollstonecraft, Robert Nichols)

In the major curriculum, the course functions as an introduction to the basic political concepts (such as power, oppression, resistance) and political ideals (such as justice, equality, freedom) that underpin political systems and process. The ability to understand and identify the theoretical history and debates within politics and political thought will give our students the ability to think more carefully and critically about all the substantive subfields in Political Science: American, Comparative, IR, Public Administration, and Public Law. It aligns with the following PLOs:

#3 Effective Argumentation: Students can effectively present arguments, both about research and political positions, orally and in writing.

#7 Normative and Legal Underpinnings: Students can demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to think critically about political concepts (such as power, oppression, and resistance) and political ideals (such as justice, equality, and liberation), as well as the theoretical and legal underpinnings of political systems and processes.

#8 Global and Political Engagement: Students will produce and apply political science knowledge to engage with diverse communities and perspectives, contributing towards pluralistic forms of justice in local, global, and epistemic dimensions.

Intercultural Engagement: The required essay assignments ask students to integrate knowledge and perspectives across diverse approaches toward the creation of a humane and just society. Weekly reading assignments pair diverse political thinkers, inviting synthesis and critical comparison across diverse human experiences.

Critical Thinking: The required analytical essays must be thesis-driven arguments that make reasoned conclusions through an informed engagement with other perspectives. The iterative writing exercises are designed to develop analytical acuity around comparing diverse approaches to core concepts and debates in political thought.

Written Communication: Students will produce several writing assignments. Included in this writing is iterative drafts and feedback. These exercises familiarize students with analytical writing for the purpose of persuasion.

PLS 2040 is open to all students with all the information they need to know in order to succeed in the course. There are no prerequisites, so students can enter in their first semester. Appropriate resources are provided to students to succeed in this entry-level course.

Students will learn how the field of political science is undergirded by a host of political concepts and ideals that guide the formation and transformation of the political systems that shape our lives. Students will come to appreciate how these political concepts and ideals interact with cultural, social, economic, and discursive forces and processes. Students will ponder what it means to be a democratic citizen and how competing conceptions of freedom, justice, equality, and sovereignty shape civilized and democratic life. Students will consider what role they play in making a just and humane society possible.