UG PS S6-01 (DSC)

FOUR YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESTER-VI

POLITICAL THINKERS-1

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Surya Kumar Bhuyan School of Social Sciences

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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BACHELOR OF ARTS

POLITICAL SCIENCE

CONTENTS

		Pages
UNIT 1:	**Plato and Aristotle** Plato: Theory of Justice, Theory of Ideal State; Aristotle: Theory of Citizenship and Theory of Revolution	**1-8**
UNIT 2:	**St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas** St. Augustine's Views on Human Nature, Views on State, Views on City of God, Views on Justice, Contributions of St. Augustine; Political Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Thomas Aquinas' Views on the Origin of the State, Views about Reason and Faith, Views on Classification and Functions of Government, Views on Supremacy of Church	**9-17**
UNIT 3:	**Niccolo Machiavelli** Views on Human Nature, Views on Forms of Government and the Preservation of the Dominion, Views on Ethics and Politics, Contribution of Machiavelli to Political Thought	**18-25**
UNIT 4:	**Thomas Hobbes** Views on Human Nature and State	**26-32**
UNIT 5:	**John Locke** Views on Human Nature, Theory of Social Contract, Views on Individualism, Views on Liberty of Women, Views on Private Property	**33-40**
UNIT 6:	**Jean Jacques Rousseau** Theory of Social Contract, Theory of General Will, Rousseau's Contribution to Political Thought	**41-47**
UNIT 7:	**Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill** Utilitarianism: Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill	**48-54**
UNIT 8:	**English Idealism: T.H.Green** T.H. Green and English Idealism; Green on the State; Green on Freedom and Rights:Green's views on Freedom, Green's views on Rights; Green on War; Other key concepts of Green: Punishment, Property, Natural Law, Society	**55-63**
UNIT 9:	**Utopian Socialsim: Robert Owen** Concept of Utopian Socialism: Meaning and Origin, Main Features of Utopian Socialism; Robert Owen: His Views and Contribution, Early Life and Intellectual Influences, Theory of Human Character, Property and Communism, Cooperative Communities, Education and Social Reform,	**64-72**

Experiments of Robert Owen; Assessment of Robert Owen's Contribution

UNIT 10: Karl Marx **73-80**

Theory of Dialectical Materialism, Theory of Class Conflict, Theory of Alienation

UNIT 11: V.I. Lenin, Mao-Tse-Tung and Antonio Gramsci **81-90**

V.I. Lenin: Views on Imperialism, Views on Revolution, Views on the Role of the Communist Party; Mao-Tse-Tung: Political Ideas of Mao-Tse-Tung, Views on Revolution; Antonio Gramsci: Gramsci's Views on Hegemony and State

UNIT 12: Evolutionary Socialism : Eduard Bernstein **91-99**

Evolutionary Socialism and Eduard Bernstein: Eduard Bernstein and Revisionism; 12.4 Bernstein's Views: Bernstein on ''Theory of Breakdown", Bernstein on Class Structure and Class War; Bernstein on Dialectical and Historical Materialism, Bernstein on Surplus Value; Assessment of Bernstein's Contribution

UNIT 13: Fabianism **100-108**

Meaning and Definition of Fabianism: Important Features of Fabianism; Henry George: A prominent Source of influence on Fabianism: Theory of Distribution, Single Taxation, Law of Human Progress; An Estimate of Henry George's Views

UNIT 14: Anarchism **109-116**

Meaning and Definition of Anarchism: Core Characteristics of Anarchism, Features of Anarchist Society; Peter Kropotkin and Joseph Proudhon: Peter Kropotkin: Early Life and Contributions, Joseph Proudhan : Early Life and Contributions (Property as Theft)

COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course of the Sixth Semester of the BA (Political Science) programme of KKHSOU is titled “Political Thinkers-1 ”. The contributions of political thinkers constitute a vital component of the study of Political Science. As a matter of fact, the views and ideas expressed by eminent political thinkers at different stages of history have significantly contributed towards developing a theoretical framework in the realm of political philosophy. The course "Political Thinkers" has fourteen units encompassing the political thought of some leading personalities of the western world.

The first unit of the course discusses the views of Plato and Aristotle, the two great political thinkers of ancient Greece, the latter being the cradle or birth place of political thought in the western world. In the history of political thought, the relationship between the Church (religious authority) and the State (earthly authority) constituted an integral aspect of the philosophy of some thinkers, especially in the medieval period. Accordingly, the second unit of the course deals with the views of two great Christian philosophers, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. The dawn of the modern period heralded the beginning of a new era in the realm of political thought in terms of fundamental notions regarding statecraft, human nature and freedom, ideas on the formation of the society and the state along with issues of political obligation. In this context, the course discusses in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth units the views and ideas of leading political thinkers of the early modern period Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau respectively. In the seventh unit, discussions are made on the concept of utilitarianism forwarded by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. The eighth and the ninth units encompass discussions on two very important strains of thought in the realm of western political philosophy, namely English Idealism and Utopian Socialism. In this regard, the views of T.H. Green- the prominent English idealist thinker and Robert Owen- a leading utopian socialist thinker have been covered in the course.

Marxism occupies an important place in the study of political thought. Therefore, various theories of Karl Marx namely- Theory of Dialectical Materialism, Theory of Class Conflict and Theory of Alienation are analysed in the tenth unit. The eleventh unit focusses on V.I. Lenin, Mao -Tse-Tung and Antonio Gramsci wherein detailed descriptions have been provided about the theories put forward by them.

The twefth and thirteenth units cover the theme of gradualism in socialism in terms of Evolutionary Socialism (Eduard Bernstein) and Fabianism (Henry George) respectively. Finally, the course ends with a discission on Anarchism- a school of thought that believes in mutual assistance and voluntary association among the members of society rather than the existence of any laws or authority. Accordingly, in the fourteenth unit, the views of two prominent anarchist political thinkers, namley, Peter Kropotkin and Joseph Proudhon have been covered.

While going through the units of the course, you will find that each unit is further divided into certain sections and sub-sections, wherever necessary, for your better understanding. Again, some units carry certain activities. These "ACTIVITIES" will provide you the opportunity to practically apply your own thoughts based on the knowledge gained from reading the text in a particular section. Besides, in order to give you additional information on certain relevant topics, you will find a category called "LET US KNOW" after the sections in each unit. Another category that has been included at the end of each section of a particular unit is "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS". The

purpose of this category is to help you asses yourself as to how thoroughly you have understood a particular section. It will be better if you answer the questions contained in these boxes immediately after you go through the sections of the units and then match your answers with "ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" given at the end of each unit. Furthermore, a set of sample questions has been included under the category called "MODEL QUESTIONS" to give you a hint of the type of questions you are likely to get in the examination.