

POL40001 Contemporary Political and Social Theory

Credit Points:	12.50
Level:	4 (Undergraduate)
Dates & Locations:	This subject is not offered in 2011.
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: A 2-hour seminar per week. If enrolments exceed 30, the 2nd hour of the seminar may be split into 2 or 3 smaller classes. Total Time Commitment: 10
Prerequisites:	None
Corequisites:	None
Recommended Background Knowledge:	Politics and International Studies at Undergraduate level
Non Allowed Subjects:	166-407 Contemporary Political and Social Theory
Core Participation Requirements:	For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Description, Subject Objectives, Generic Skills and Assessment Requirements of this entry. The University is dedicated to provide support to those with special requirements. Further details on the disability support scheme can be found at the Disability Liaison Unit website: http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/
Contact:	Prof. Adrian Little little@unimelb.edu.au
Subject Overview:	This subject examines contemporary debates in political and social theory with a particular focus on developments within and challenges to liberal democracy. Initially the difficulties of liberalism in the face of social change will be analysed in the light of theories of postmodernism, postindustrialism and McDonaldisation. From this basis recent theories of democratic renewal are discussed including those concerned with the 'Third Way', social capital and civil society. Alternative theories of political renewal in complex, pluralistic societies will then be examined focusing in particular on the way that they understand violence, disagreement and incivility. The subject concludes by evaluating recent radical democratic theories which are concerned with establishing a new ethical framework through which we can rethink political disagreement.
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # understand the major challenges to liberal democracy in contemporary political theory. # be able to explain the implications for political theory of recent social and cultural phenomena such as postmodernism and McDonaldisation. # grasp theories of democratic renewal such as those associated with risk society, the Third Way and social capital. # be able to articulate the reasons why there has been a shift towards deliberative politics in recent theory. # understand the relationship between civility and incivility and their implications for understanding democracy. # comprehend the growth of pluralistic interpretations of complex societies in relation to political conflict and disagreement. # be able to explain the reasons behind the emergence of radical theories of democracy and their implications for political ethics.
Assessment:	An essay of 5000 words (100%) due during the examination period.
Prescribed Texts:	A subject reader will be available for purchase from the University Bookshop.
Breadth Options:	This subject is not available as a breadth subject.
Fees Information:	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees
Generic Skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # possess the ability to explain and analyse complex ideas in a lucid fashion. # be capable of organising their work into a coherent structured argument. # be able to identify and access relevant research to the topic.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # display evidence of an analytical approach to theoretical debates. # be able to explain the implications of theories for practical politics. # demonstrate a thorough and critical understanding of the literature relevant to the topic.
<p>Related Majors/Minors/ Specialisations:</p>	<p>Anthropology & Social Theory International Politics International Studies Political Science Political Science Political Science Politics and International Studies Sociology Sociology Sociology Sociology</p>