

## *Methods in the History of Political Thought*

<b>Tutor</b>	Benjamin Mueser, European University Institute
<b>Organization</b>	Graduate Academy
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>ECTS-Points</b>	2
<b>Nos. of pax</b>	max. 25
<b>Content</b>	<p>How do we study and engage with political theory written a long time ago and in contexts much unlike our own? What questions do we ask and what answers can we expect to find from historical texts? This intensive seminar introduces students of political theory to past and present answers to these questions. The course offers a survey of major methodological approaches to historical texts in the history of political thought, including theoretical statements on Straussian reading, 'Cambridge School' contextualism, Marxist interpretation of ideas, and genealogy. Students will be asked to read small samples of each approach and be prepared to discuss them in the seminar. Lectures will focus on analyzing the technique as well as explaining the costs and benefits of each approach. As will become clear, the strict lines between different methodological approaches will often blur upon closer inspection, and each approach is internally diverse. The course discusses both practical questions as well as larger philosophical questions concerning what we are 'doing' when we analyze a historical text and how to impute 'meaning' to a it. Students should come away from the course with a clear understanding of different ways to approach the history of political thought.</p> <p>Students should have taken introductory courses to either political theory, the history of political thought, or intellectual history. This course is meant provide conceptual tools for students interested in undertaking further research in these fields.</p>
<b>Reading list</b>	<p>Introductory Material:</p> <p>Jeff Green – "Political Theory as Both Philosophy and History: A Defense Against Methodological Militancy," <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> (2015)</p> <p>Arthur Lovejoy – <i>The Great Chain of Being</i>, (1936) ch. 1</p> <p>A.T. Grafton, "The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950-2000 and Beyond," <i>JHI</i> 76, 1 (January 2006): 1-32</p> <p><b>Contextualist Method and Practice:</b></p> <p>Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," <i>History and Theory</i>, (1969)</p>

	<p>Adrian Blau – “The History of Political Thought as Detective-Work,” <i>History of European Ideas</i> (2015)</p> <p>Katrina Forester, <i>In the Shadow of Justice</i>, Ch. 1, 4</p> <p><b>Straussian Method and Practice:</b> Arthur Melzer, <i>Philosophy between the lines: the lost history of esoteric writing</i>, pp. 287-324</p> <p>Leo Strauss, <i>Natural right and history</i>, Ch. 1</p> <p><b>Marxist Interpretation of Ideas, Method and Practice</b> Karl Marx, “Preface to the <i>Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy</i>” and “The German Ideology, Part 1” in Robert Tucker, ed., <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i> 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York, 1978), 3-6, 146-200.</p> <p>Ellen Meiksins Wood, <i>Citizens to Lords: A Social History of Political Thought From Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages</i> (London, 2008), 1-27</p> <p><b>Genealogical Method and Practice</b> Amia Srinivasan - The Contingent World: Genealogy, Epistemology, Politics (<a href="https://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Research_files/aoz009%20%281%29.pdf">https://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Research_files/aoz009%20%281%29.pdf</a>)</p>
<p><b>Teaching method</b></p>	<p>The course will consist of both lectures and discussion. Lectures will be used to introduce the basic framework of each methodological approach, and discussions will be used to examine the costs, benefits, and appropriate research questions for each method.</p>
<p><b>Charge</b></p>	<p>This Graduate Academy offering is directed at researchers, post-docs and doctoral students of the University of Lucerne and its partner institutions and is free of charge for these persons.</p>