

MODULE 1 - ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS OF POLITICS

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Origins

- 'Politics' and 'Political Science' - from the Greek word 'Polis'
- 'Polis'- 'City State.'
- Several number of city states – some of them intellectual and cultural leaders
- Several thinkers and philosophers – Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
- “Ideally the polis was a corporation of citizens who all participated in its government, religious cults, defense, and economic welfare and who obeyed its sacred and customary laws.”



Death of Socrates- Jacques Louis David, 1787



School of Athens – Rafael, 1509-1511

Origins (contd.)

- Movie suggestions- Alexander the Great, 300.
- Government in a Polis – usually consisted of an assembly of citizens, a council, and magistrates.
- Different ranks of citizenship – longstanding struggles for equality
- Non-citizens – women, minors, resident aliens, and slaves.



19th Century Painting by Philip Foltz, Pericles' Funeral Oration

Defining Politics – Politics as Power

- Moregenthau – “Politics is a struggle for Power.”
- Lasswell and Kaplan - "The concept of power is perhaps the most fundamental in the whole of political science; the political process is shaping, distribution and exercise of power".
- Robert A. Dahl observes: "Politics arises, whenever there are people living together in associations, whenever they are involved in conflicts and whenever they are subject to some kind of power, rulership, or authority. "

Defining Politics – Politics as Power

- Robert Dahl – “A political system is a persistent pattern of human relationships, that involves to a significant extent, power, rule and authority.”
- Michael Curtis – “Politics is organised dispute about power and its use, involving choice among competing values, ideas , persons, interests and demands. The study of politics is concerned with the description and analysis of the manner in which power is obtained, exercised and controlled, the purpose for which it is used, the manner in which decisions are made, the factors which influence the making of those decisions and the context in which those decisions are made.”

Defining Politics- Politics as Conflict and Controversy

- J D B Miller – “Politics is what it is: because men, in their social situation, find themselves divided...politics is a natural reflex of the divergence between members of a society.”
- Quincy Wright- “Politics exists when ends and means are controversial.”

Defining Politics- Politics as the Study of State and Institutions

- R.G. Gettel - “Political Science as a study of state in the past, present and future and of Political institutions and Political theories
- J.W.Garner - “Political Science begins and ends with the state”
- Paul Janet - “Political Science is concerned with the foundations of the state and principles of government.”
- George Catlin - “Politics means either the activities of political life or the study of these activities. And these activities are generally treated as activities of the various organs of government.”

Defining Politics – Politics as the Study of Institutions

- Bridal - “Political Science is, above all, descriptive study which brings together the description of national political institutions, their history, their ideological principles, their working, the forces that direct them, the influence they undergo, the results they obtain and their effect on the life of the country and its relations with neighboring states

Traditional and Modern Definitions of Political Science

- Traditional Approaches – Emphasis on State, Government and Institutions. Emphasis on formal legal structure
- Modern Approaches – “What is actually happening in politics?” Stress on facts, reality, forces, processes and informal structures.