

FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.A.LL.B. 1st Semester

SUBJECT: Political science-I

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Lecture-1



Political Science: Definition, Theory, Nature and Scope

Common people, renowned scholars and political scientists of high repute very often use the words politics and political science to denote the same thing that is they use the two terms interchangeably. But a proper scrutiny and hair split analysis will reveal that there is a difference between the terms though this difference can easily be ignored. It is believed that the term politics is derived from the word Polis the exact meaning of which is city-state.

In ancient Greece, polis or the city state was the most popular and general form of political organisation. Every polis or city- state had its own form of government, administration, management etc and all these did not depend upon the size of the polis or city-state. Thus politics means the political affairs or administration of polis. Thus politics is understood to denote something about polis or city-state.

In today's world there is practically no existence of city-state but the term politics derived from polis has gained popularity, publicity and importance. Now-a-days by politics we generally mean the activities associated with the governance of a country or area. We thus cannot separate the term politics from the affairs of state and these affairs are associated with the administration and decision making issues of state. Politics in this way has been inextricably connected with state as it was in ancient Greece with the polis.

We have so far noted only one meaning of the term politics but there is another meaning which is also to be found in wide circulation. This meaning is—activities aimed at improving some one's status within an organization. In this sense politics is used to mean as a type of instrument or vehicle to achieve definite purpose.

The purpose may be of a particular person or group of persons and it may be good or bad. However it may be, politics acts as an instrument and it carries with it pejorative sense or connotation. We are thus in a position to conclude that politics has two distinct meanings—one is academic which is associated with the administration or management of state and the other is non-academic which is generally pejorative.

It is the latter meaning which has introduced a difference between politics and political science. A general and numerous accepted definition of political science is: The study of state, government and politics and this study must be based on scientific principles and reasons. Political science is, therefore, an academic discipline.

Definitions of Political Science:

David Held has viewed politics (or political science) in a different way. In his opinion politics is a practical activity (emphasis added) about the discourse and struggle over

organization of human possibilities and in this sense political science can be treated as a study of power (emphasis added). The concept of power relates to the capacity of social agents and institutions.

Harold Lass well has defined political science in the following words. He calls political science an empirical science, as an empirical displine, as the study of the shaping and sharing of power, and a political act as one performed in power perspectives.

MCQ

1.The history of political philosophy has been identified with the history of the quest for

(a)Justice (b)Liberty (c) power(d) Organisation

2.Socrates was a Greek _____

(a) Philosopher (b) Singer (c) Composer (d) Poet

3. Who is the student of Socrates?

(a) Aristotle (b) Plato(c) Aristophanes (d) None of these

4. Who is the contemporary of Socrates?

(a)Aristophanes(b) Aristotle(c) Homer (d) None of these

5. According to Plato, Socratesfather was:

(a)Sophroniscus (b) Aristophanes (c) Lamprocles (d) Zenexenus