

READING MATERIAL

POLITICAL THEORY

CHAPTER 1

SYLLABUS

I. INTRODUCTION

- *Meaning, Nature, and Functions of Political Theory*
 - *Distinction between- Political Science, Political theory, and Political Philosophy*
 - *Significance of Political Theory (SSS)*
 - *Debate on the Decline of Political theory*
-

I. Meaning of Political Theory

Political theory is a core element of political science that examines ideas, principles, and the nature of power within a political system. It seeks to explain, justify, or critique political institutions and practices. The term "**political**" originates from the Greek word *polis*, meaning city-state, and "**theory**" comes from *Theoria*, referring to systematic knowledge.

Definitions of Political Theory

1. **Gould and Kolb**: Political theory is a subfield of political science that covers political philosophy, scientific evaluation, linguistic analysis, and generalizations about political behaviour.
2. **David Held**: It is a network of ideas about government, state, and society, involving assumptions, purposes, and human political capabilities.
3. **Andrew Hacker**: A search for principles of good governance combined with an empirical understanding of political realities.
4. **George Catlin**: Political theory blends political science and philosophy, examining the means and ends of political control.

Summary of Meaning

Political theory deals with both **descriptive** (what exists) and **prescriptive** (what ought to be) analyses of political life. It explains political institutions, provides ethical evaluations and suggests improvements in governance.

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