POL1005S – INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS B

Final Exam Review

Week 1: OF THE DICIPLINE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

STUDYING POLITICS SYSTEMATICALLY

Comparative Politics:

- A branch of political studies that uses comparative methodology in the study of political phenomena
- It started by comparing the institutions/ economics/ structures of Developed Vs. Developing Countries
- Why do we compare?
  1) To ESTABLISH differences in terms of development, stability, ability to meet social demands etc. – these differences are linked and help us draw conclusions
  2) To EXPLAIN the transitions from developing to developed countries

1.1) Discipline/ Disciplinary Knowledge

Discipline: a systematic body of knowledge by a founder (father)/ specific vocabulary/ exclusive information/ subject matter

Political Science is a Discipline:

- Political Science has subfields

International Relations/ Comparative Politics/ Public Administration/ Political Theory

Political Science is not something that can be understood by a discussion, it is a complex discipline.

DEFINITIONS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE:

1) Who gets what, how and when – H.Casswell
2) The authoritative location of values – D.Easton
3) The continuation of war by other means- Mao Tetum (use reason with friends, but force with enemies)
4) Man is a political animal – Aristotle (Politics is found everywhere)

Underlying assumption that there is a **private-public distinction**. Assumes that politics only occurs in the public realm. Excludes notions of feminism which exists in households.

ALL THESE DEFINITIONS ASSUME THIS AS A WESTERN CONCEPT!

The discipline of political science claims to be a science, so it claims an objective scientific outlook.

But looks at politics like "facts" / laws, which is not a flexible enough outlook.

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2.4) Marxism

- Marxism tells us how to organise a political and economic system and is socialist in nature
- Karl Marx, in developing his ideology, was responding to the dominant economic system of capitalism
    - Marx believed that the economy is the base of society and above it is the superstructure
        - This means that in order to understand society and how it behaves, one must understand the economy and what it looks like
        - It is through understanding the economy that one begins to understand the superstructure level – which includes religion, politics, the state
        - The economy is a necessary and sufficient condition for everything else in a Marxist state (an example of a cause and effect dichotomy)
    - For Marx, the particular class to which people belong takes primacy over everything
        - This in turn means that Marxism is unable to address the problem of race in the context of colonialism.
            - Discrimination founded on class, has no accountability for the discrimination of race in the colonial world
    - Marxism supports the notion that social and economic rights should be based on equality
- In Marxism, change is revolutionary and only happens with society due to class struggles
    - There are only two classes, for Marx:
        - Those who control the means of production (Bourgeoisie)
        - And those who are the working class and offer labour
    - According to Marxists, the state does nothing but protect the interests of the Bourgeoisie in a capitalist state – a state they do not favour at all
        - They believe that the state should be a progressive one – one that works for the working class

2.5) Colonialism Vs Neo Colonialism

There is a commonality between colonialism and capitalism

- Colonialism:
    - A racial project that assumes one race is superior and therefore dominates the other race(s)
        - Not only possible due to the military strength but also due to its sense of superiority
        - It cannot be understood outside race
- Capitalism:
    - Also a racial project and assumes that some are civilised and some are not
        - The superior ones cannot do the "dirty jobs" so they import slaves (typically of another race, deemed inferior)

This commonality between colonialism and capitalism is best understood through the concepts of settler colonialism and colonies of domination:

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