

**COVENANT UNIVERSITY
NIGERIA**

*TUTORIAL KIT
OMEGA SEMESTER*

**PROGRAMME: POLITICAL
SCIENCE**

COURSE: POS 223

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this document are intended for practice and leaning purposes at the undergraduate level. The materials are from different sources including the internet and the contributors do not in any way claim authorship or ownership of them. The materials are also not to be used for any commercial purpose.

POS 223: POLITICAL IDEAS

Lecturers: Dr. G. Agbude and Mr. I. Wogu

QUESTIONS

- 1. Discuss at least 4 strands of democracy**
- 2. Critically discuss the erroneous foundations of anarchism as system of government**
- 3. Critically interrogate the three forms of Democracy**
- 4. Compare and contrast conservatism and liberalism**
- 5. Discuss the concept of socialism and some of its basic tenets.**
- 6. Critically evaluate neo-liberalism and its effects on any contemporary African state of your choice**
- 7. Evaluate the merits and the demerits of socialism**
- 8. Do you consider socialism as an idea system of government for Nigeria? Adduce at least 8 reasons for your Yes or your No**
- 9. Critically assess capitalism and its basic tenets**
- 10. Compare and Contrast fascism and fabianism? Which one do you prefer and adduce 3 reasons for your answer.**
- 11. Discuss the merit and the demerits of capitalism**
- 12. Compare and Contrast Positive and Negative Freedom**
- 13. Discuss the fundamentals of Liberalism as an ideology**
- 14. Critically interrogate the absence or presence of the ideals of democracy in Nigeria**
- 15. What is conservatism?**
- 16. Discuss the viability or the inviability of the thesis of the Communists**
- 17. What is anarchism?**
- 18. Identify and discuss the factors that buttress the failure or the success of democracy in Nigeria.**
- 19. Identify and Discuss the basic tenets of Marxism**
- 20. Identify and discuss the fundamentals of monarchism.**

MODEL ANSWERS IN ALTERNATE SEQUENCE (ODD NUMBERS)

- 1. Discuss at least 4 strands of democracy**
 - Liberals understand democracy in individualist terms, as consent expressed through the ballot boxes.
 - Conservatives emphasize the need to protect property and traditional institutions from the untutored will of the many.
 - Socialists endorse a form of radical democracy based on popular participation and the desire to bring economic life under public control. It tags liberal democracy as a bourgeoisie democracy.

- Anarchists endorse direct democracy and call for continuous popular participation and radical decentralization.
- Fascists embrace the idea of totalitarian democracy holding that a genuine democracy is an absolute dictatorship as the leader monopolizes ideological wisdom.

3. Discuss the forms of Democracy

- a. Classical Democracy: It was in Athens, the most powerful ancient Greek city state that classical democracy was witnessed most. It was a government by mass meeting (The Assembly). The Assembly met 40 times a year.
- b. Bourgeois or Liberal Democracy: This is a form of democracy that is found in capitalist societies. It grew from the classical democracy; but due to the complex nature of the capitalist system and society, it is now operated in the indirect form instead of the Athenian direct democracy. Economic Power plays a long role in this kind democracy.
- c. People's Democracy: This owes its origin to Marxism-Leninism Political ideology. This is antithetical to bourgeois democracy.

The principles are:

- To institutionalize equality in the ownership of the means of production
- To create conditions in which all members of the society could remain healthy in body and mind.
- To create equality in the enjoyment of leisure so that everyone would have time to participate in politics.

To universalize education so that people would be aware of political and economic life

5. Discuss the concept of socialism and some of its basic tenets.

- It is a political and economic theory or system of social organization based on collective or state ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.
- A theory or policy that aims or advocates the ownership or control of the means of production – capital, land, property, etc – by the community as a whole and their administration in the interests of all

Basic tenets

- Socialists believe that the community as a whole should own and control the means of production. That is, all forms of private ownership of the means of production should be abolished.
- The means of production are put in the hands of the state or cooperative ownership.
- It emphasizes planned economy as against market economy. That is, the economy is centrally planned and regulated.
- It is also based on making provision for those in need as in the welfare state.

That is, it pursues the proper distribution of material benefits or rewards in the society.

- Socialism stands for the principle of equality. It forbids the concentration of wealth in the hands of some people.

7. Evaluate the merits and the demerits of socialism

Merits

- Socialism strives to promote public welfare.
- It is a socio-economic system that upholds dignity of human personality.
- It upholds social goods.
- It eliminates the evils of capitalism such as destructive competition, overproduction, concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, wasteful advertisement.
- There is fair distribution of wealth.
- It emphasizes scientific planning.

Demerits

- ✓ The fallacy of collective ownership.
- ✓ Little incentive to produce because the means of production is concentrated in the hands the state.
- ✓ Under socialism, the consumer's sovereignty is discouraged or disappears.
- ✓ Socialism is associated with multiplicity of social factions – Utopian or Revolutionary socialists, Evolutionary socialists, Social democrats, Christian socialists, Marxian socialists, Fabian socialists, etc.

9. Critically assess capitalism and its basic tenets

Capitalism means a distinct form of social organization based on generalized commodity production in which there is private ownership and/or control of the means of production.

That is, under capitalism, economic life is organized according to market principles (market competition).

In a capitalist system, capital is supplied either by the single owner of a firm or by shareholders in the case of a joint stock company.

In its most developed form, capitalism restricts the role of the state in economic and social policies to the barest minimum.

It stands for free trade or deregulation or liberalization. In the 20th Century, we now have welfare capitalism in Western Europe. The next development in capitalism is the mixed economy stage, in which the production of certain goods or services are nationalized, while the rest of the economy remains in private ownership.

Basic tenets

- ✓ The means of production is held predominantly by private hands.
- ✓ Economic life is organized according to market principles built on the forces of demand and supply.
- ✓ It dwells on the idea of profit maximization or material self-interest.

11. Discuss the merit and the demerits of capitalism

Merits

- ✓ It brings about technological innovation.
- ✓ It increases production capacity.
- ✓ It promotes efficiency and effectiveness.
- ✓ It encourages entrepreneurship development.
- ✓ It promotes incentives and creativity.

Demerits

- ✓ Workers do not receive a fair share of the fruits of their labour. In other words, they are poorly remunerated.
- ✓ It encourages the monopoly of the means of production by a few who may begin to exploit the many.
- ✓ It is based on ruthless competition which is very harmful to the society.
- ✓ It emphasizes more of profit maximization.
- ✓ It encourages the creation of artificial scarcity.

13. Discuss the fundamentals of Liberalism as an ideology

The word was first used in Spain in 1811 to refer to the group drawing up the 'liberal' constitution.

The Latin '*Liber*' referred to a class of freemen. That is, men who were neither serf nor slaves. By the 1840s, liberalism came to be known in Europe as a political idea. Liberal ideas, resulted from the breakdown of feudalism in Europe and the growth in its place of a market or capitalism. Liberalism contains a set of beliefs based on the fact that there should be as much individual freedom as possible.

It was an attack on absolutism while advocating for constitutional and representative government.

In its evolution, freedom of speech holds a central place and tolerance becomes its hallmark.

Basic tenets

- **Individualism:** Liberalism reflects the primacy of human individual over social groups and religious beliefs. That is, individual is of special value.
- **Reason:** Man is seen and believed to be a rational creature. He has immense potential to contribute to social progress as well as his own good.
- **Toleration:** Liberalism emphasizes the willingness to accept and celebrate moral, cultural and political diversity.
- **Civil Liberties:** Liberalism promotes civil liberties of the individual, including freedom of thought and expression, freedom of association and movement, personal freedom, which rules out search or arrest without a warrant, and strict compliance with legal and judicial procedure.
- **Justice:** Liberalism is rooted in justice, which is about giving each person what he or she is due.
- **Public Policy:** Liberalism holds that public policy should be the product of free bargaining between groups of individuals formed to pursue their common interests.
- **Freedom of contract:** No individual can accept any obligation without his consent, and without consideration of mutual benefits.
- **Consent:** It holds that government must be based on the consent of the governed.

- **Constitutionalism:** It believes in limited government which is achievable through separations of power, checks and balances as embedded in the constitution.

•

15. What is conservatism?

The ideology of conservatism is in opposition to the liberal ideology. It is a political ideology that opposes radical change. It emphasizes the existing institutions.

In the 1970s' it was practiced in Germany, Canada, Denmark, and the UK.

Basic tenets

- **Tradition:** The central theme of conservative ideology is its defence of tradition, its desire to maintain established customs and institutions.
- **Religion:** Related to the above is the conservative postulation that man is basically a religious animal and religion is the foundation of civil society. A divine sanction infuses the legitimate existing social order.
- **Authority:** Conservatism emphasizes the importance of authority. It argues that authority, like society, is natural. It holds that authority is rooted in the nature of society and accompanying social institutions. It places special emphasis on leadership and discipline.
- **Property:** Property ownership gives people security and some kind of independence from government, and it encourages them to obey state laws and have respect for other people's property.
- **Human Imperfection:** They maintained that man is by nature morally weak and therefore must be constrained to obey existing institutions and societal laws and regulations.
- **Organization:** They see the society as a complex and bigger structure that must be obeyed by the individuals. The rules and regulations of the whole (the larger society) must supersede the part.

17. What is anarchism?

Anarchy is a Greek word that literally means '*without rule*'. As a mode of thought, it holds that society can and should be organized without the coercive authority of the state. As an ideology, anarchism believes that man does not require any form of authority, government or rule. It is both positive and negative. Anarchists do advocate the abolition of law and government, but in the belief that a more natural and spontaneous social order will develop.

The Origin of anarchism can be traced back to the philosophical schools in ancient Greece, especially the Stoics and the Cynics.

William Godwin (1756-1836), a British political theorist, was regarded as the first thinker who argued in no unshakeable terms for a stateless society. He attacked the exploitation of man by man. he contended that exploitation was possible because of tyrannical government and unequal ownership of property.

Capital translated into political power survives on the ruins of the dispossessed.

Government, the anarchists argue, provided shelter and encouraged exploitation.

Basic Tenets

ANTISTATISM: It prefers stateless society in which individuals are free to manage their affairs by voluntary agreement, without coercion or compulsion. According to them, authority is an offence against the principle of liberty and equality.

They contend that human beings are free and autonomous creations, who should treat each other with respect and sympathy.

Their basic assumption is that power exercised by one person or group over another is the cause of most of our contemporary problems. They argue that all associations should be voluntary.

COOPERATION: they insist on the free and spontaneous association of citizens. They maintained that man is a social animal; men attain their fulfillment when they cooperate with one another – voluntarily and spontaneously. Society emerges as a natural phenomenon.

They argue that the state system is unnatural and therefore unnecessary.

According to them, government is not the solution to the problem of order; rather it is the cause.

MAN IS INNATELY GOOD: Anarchism believes that man is innately good and kind and has potentiality for greater goodness; but man has been corrupted by the habits and institutions of authority. The natural goodness in man is mocked up by religion, education, politics and institutions of authority.

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY: Anarchism stands opposed to any institutional restraint that compromises individual freedom: religious institutions, capitalism, private property and the state. According to them, if man is to be truly free, these institutions must be abolished. They believe that contemporary educational system is destructive of freedom, creativity and learning.

ANTICHURCH: Anarchists bitterness against establishment went beyond the state and its accompanying institutions to the church.

They argue that the abolition of the church and the state must be the first and indispensable condition of the true liberation of society.

Anarchists are set against the church because religion seeks to impose a set of moral principles upon the individual and to establish a code of acceptable behaviour.

FREE ECONOMY: The Anarchists see capitalism in class term. A ruling class exploits and oppresses the masses.

They objected to the violation of property rights and individual freedom and argued that state socialism is a system of exploitation in which a ruling class of capitalists has simply been replaced by a new ruling class of state and party officials.

They therefore subscribe for an economy in which free individuals manage their own affairs without need for state ownership or regulation.

19. Identify and Discuss the basic tenets of Marxism

Dialectical Materialism: Marx borrowed the idea of dialectics from Hegel, a German Philosopher. According to Hegel, the universe is the product of the absolute spirit. The absolute spirit moves the world and human actions through the process of dialectics which is an interaction between thesis and anti-thesis leading to synthesis. The synthesis has both the thesis and the anti-thesis. The growth in the human society is the product of the absolute spirit moving towards perfection and freedom.

For Marx, matter and not idea (absolute spirit) is responsible for the growth and movement in the world. Conflict is due to the interaction between two classes on the quest for better material condition.

Historical Materialism: Marx and Engels applied dialectics to the material or the social world consisting of economic production and exchange. A study of the productive process, for them, explained all other historical phenomena. They noted that each generation inherited a mass of productive forces, an accumulation of capital, and a set of social relations which reflected these productive forces. These forces shaped human character and thoughts of each generation. The growth of human society is a product of material forces. Thus, human history is determined by material forces. From primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, communism. They articulated a deterministic view of history. Despite this deterministic view of history, they argue that the individuals have a role to play in the historical transformation of the world.

Class Struggle: Marx and Engels assert that the contradictions in the mode of production give rise to class conflict, and men become conscious of these contradictions that there is a conflict between the class that controls the mode of production and the class that does not have. In capitalism, two classes are the bourgeoisie, possessing the means of production and the proletariat, constituting the labour force.

In every society, there are two classes – the rich and the poor; one that owns the means of production and the other that has nothing but its labour to sell.

Alienation: The workers are alienated first from themselves given the fragmentation of the production process (division of labour) and secondly, they cannot even consume what they produce. Also, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are alienated, though that of the proletariat class is more thorough.

He is of the opinion that in the capitalist system, man is alienated from his labour, from other men, from nature and he is equally alienated from the system.

These four alienated situations cannot allow man to have freedom in the capitalist system.

Revolution: Having identified the evils of the 19th Century capitalism, Karl Marx recommended blood bathed revolution as the only way of ending the exploitation, alienation, oppression and domination that characterized this social eco-political arrangement. He advocated a violent revolutionary seizure of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The society will have to move from capitalism through socialism to communism which is a classless society. In communism, there will be a withering away of the state.