

**PSC 270-01: Introduction to Political Theory (Writing Intensive)**  
**Fall 2009**  
**Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**  
**Graham 209**

**Instructor:** Professor Carisa R. Showden

**Office:** 226 Graham Building

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 11 a.m. – Noon & Thursdays 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., & by appointment.

**Email:** carisa\_showden@uncg.edu (This is the best method for reaching me.)

**Office Phone:** 336-256-0515

**Course Overview:**

Political theory is the study of the fundamental questions of public life. It covers topics such as human nature, the proper relationship between the state and individuals, the proper relationship between the state and social groups, and the rights and duties that accrue to citizens. In this course, we will examine some of the key concepts of political theory and the ways in which they have been framed and have developed from Plato's time to the present. The course is not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, you should leave this class with a basic understanding of some of the key writings of representative political thinkers from the Western tradition.

With the work of each theorist we read this semester, we will use the following four questions as the framework to guide our discussion and analysis: What is the *scope* of the state?; What is the justification for the *authority* of the state?; What are the *ends or purposes* of the state?; and What are the *means* (techniques) the state is to use in achieving its goals? With this framework in mind, you should have a strong grasp by the end of this term of the essential questions asked and various answers posed by eminent political thinkers regarding authority, justice, power, equality, and liberty.

**Note Well:**

1. This course is *writing intensive*. This means that you will be doing a lot of writing this term, produced in response to many different kinds of writing assignments, both formal and informal.
2. Additionally, this is a *reading intensive* course. This means that many of the reading assignments are dense and/or lengthy. You will need to set aside at least 3 hours of reading time for every hour of class time.
  - a. You are expected to do the assigned readings *before* the class in which they will be discussed.
  - b. You may need to review key passages in the assigned readings after we have discussed them in class as well.
  - c. You should also get into the habit of taking reading notes to keep track of the main ideas and important quotes from the assignments.
3. If you are not prepared to commit to a significant amount of reading, writing, and classroom discussion for this course, then you should not enroll in the course this term.

**Goals of the Course (Student Learning Objectives):**

There are two primary goals for this course:

1. to introduce you to the historical development of key political ideas in Western thought and
2. to develop your critical thinking skills.

To achieve the first goal, we will read and discuss certain representative thinkers of classical and modern political thought. To develop your critical thinking skills, you will be asked to analyze the key concepts we will discuss (liberty, freedom, equality, power, justice, etc.) during class discussions and in your written work.

With these two primary goals in mind, we will work to help you meet the following student learning objectives for this course. By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Analyze the significance of time and place for the emergence of particular political ideals.
2. Define key political concepts such as power, authority, justice, equality, and liberty, for yourself and for each of the theorists we read.
3. Analyze the relationship between particular definitions of these concepts and the types of states that embody those ideals, considering specifically the relationship between the ends or purposes of the state and the techniques used to achieve those ends.
4. Apply the theories we read to understand the nature of, and potential solutions to, current political problems.

### **Required Texts:**

(Note: All books are available at the University Bookstore in the Elliot University Center. If you borrow or purchase different editions than the ones listed here, you are responsible for correlating the page numbers of the readings.)

1. Plato. *Republic*. (1992, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Translated by G. M. A. Grube. Revised by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
2. Niccolò Machiavelli. *Selected Political Writings*. (1994). Edited and Translated by David Wootton. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
3. John Locke. *Second Treatise on Government*. (1980). Edited by C. B. MacPherson. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Basic Political Writings*. (1987). Translated by Donald A. Cress; Introduction by Peter Gay. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
5. John Stuart Mill. *Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Considerations on Representative Government*. (1993). Geraint Williams, ed. Rutland, VT: The Everyman Library.
6. Additional Readings on e-reserve, which is accessible through the course blackboard site. These readings are required and are marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) in the schedule of readings below.

### **Course Requirements & Their Weight In Your Final Grade:**

- In-Class Writing and Homework Assignments: **11%**
- Four (4) 2-3 page Formal Response Papers: **9% each (36% total)**
- Two (2) Revised Response Papers: **14% each (28% total)**
- Final Exam: **20%**
- Class Participation: **5%**

### **Assignments & Course Requirements in Detail:**

1. In-Class Writing and Homework Assignments: Throughout the semester, you will be asked to complete a variety of small assignments designed to facilitate depth of understanding of the texts, promote engagement with the material in different ways, and/or develop the basic building-blocks of good writing. These smaller assignments also should help both you and me assess how well you are understanding the material on an on-going basis, providing fairly regular feedback where no single assignment affects the final course grade too severely. While no one assignment is worth more than a few points, these points **do add up**, so you should take these assignments seriously.

2. Formal Response Papers: Throughout the course of the semester, you will write four (4) two-to-three-page formal responses to the texts we are reading. I will provide you the questions on which you will write at least a week before the paper is due. These papers will require you to read a text carefully and reflect on certain dilemmas or questions raised by the arguments presented, and they will combine different writing and thinking skills (specifically summary and critique). You will be expected to use direct quotes and cite the text properly. And of course, as with all writing, spelling, grammar, and punctuation count. **NOTE WELL**: There are six paper options (due dates) listed on the syllabus. You should only write on four of the six.

3. Revised Formal Response Papers: You are required to revise substantially **two (2)** of your four formal response papers in light of the comments you receive from me. Revision means both fixing the grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors and responding to questions I raised about the clarity and substance of your summary and critique. Your grade on your revised paper will reflect the degree to which you improved the substance and style of your writing, responded directly to questions I had about your first draft, and continued your critical engagement with the material. Revised paper grades may go up, down, or stay the same relative to the original draft as revised papers are graded not only on content and form, but on responsiveness to comments and evidence of continued efforts to improve your prose and your ideas. Revised papers are due one week after you receive the original paper back from me. **NOTE WELL**: You may **not** revise paper six, so you must complete your two revisions on earlier papers. **No exceptions. Please plan accordingly.**

4. Final Exam: The final exam will be a blue book exam completed during our university-scheduled final exam period: Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. The exam will be comprehensive and closed-book. You will receive more information on the format of the exam closer to December.

5. Class Participation: I take attendance and note participation daily. Obviously, if you aren't here, you can't participate. That said, just showing up and staying awake isn't participation. Participation includes paying attention, asking questions, contributing to class discussion in a way that demonstrates that you have completed the reading, responding politely to your classmates' questions, etc. NOTE: you are expected to prepare the readings in advance of the class period for which they are assigned. As many of the readings are quite challenging, I strongly encourage you to take notes as you read and bring them to class for reference during discussions.

### **Honor Code**:

I expect all students in this course to abide by both the letter and spirit of the university's academic integrity policy. Violations of the university honor code will be prosecuted. The full text of the Academic Integrity Policy can be viewed at: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>

Specifically pertinent to this course are the following infractions:

a. "Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. Cheating includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying from the work of another student, using notes or other materials not authorized during an examination..." **If caught cheating, you will receive a zero for the assignment.**

b. "Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise." Do NOT engage in plagiarism. **If caught, you will receive a zero for the assignment.**

If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, please see me *immediately*.

## **Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings:**

- Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>: Course Introduction
- Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>: **Plato: *Republic***  
Justice: City and Soul (Statecraft and Soulcraft)  
Book 1 (pp. 1 – 31);  
Book 2 (pp. 32 – 59).
- Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>: **Plato: *Republic***  
Justice, Leadership, and Lies  
Book 3 (pp. 60-69, up to line 392d);  
Book 3 (pp. 86, at 410c – 93);  
Book 4 (pp. 94 – 121).
- Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Class Cancelled. (American Political Science Association meeting)
- Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> : **Plato: *Republic***  
Leadership: The Philosopher-Kings  
Book 5 (pp. 122 – 156).  
*Recommended:*  
Book 6 (pp. 165, at 492 – 177, up to line 504).
- Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>: **Plato: *Republic***  
Noble Myths and Political Education  
Book 7 (pp. 186 – 195, up to line 523);  
Book 7 (pp. 204 at line 532 – 212).  
Book 10 (pp. 279, at 608b – 292).
- Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>: **Niccolò Machiavelli: *Discourses on Livy***  
The Republican Machiavelli (Corruption is bad.)  
Introduction (pp. 81 – 82);  
Book One, Preface & chapters 1-8 (pp. 82 – 107);  
Book One, chapters 55 & 58 (pp. 150 – 158);  
Book Two, Preface and chapters 1-2 (pp. 158 – 171).  
⇒ ⇒ ⇒ **Paper One Due, beginning of class (Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>)**
- Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>: **Machiavelli: *Discourses on Livy***  
The Ambiguous Machiavelli  
Book One, chapters 9 – 12 (pp. 107-119);  
Book One, chapters 16 – 18, 21, & 26 (pp. 121 – 132);  
Book One, chapters 29, 32, 34, 42 – 43, 46, 49 – 50 (pp. 133-145).
- Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>: **Machiavelli: *The Prince***  
The Realpolitik of Princes (Corruption is good?)  
Preface and Chapters 1-10 (pp. 5 – 35).
- Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>: **Machiavelli: *The Prince***  
The Realpolitik of Princes, continued  
Chapters 12-26 (pp. 38 – 80).

- Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>:           **John Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***  
The State of Nature and Private Property  
 Chapters 1-7 (pp. 7 – 51).  
 ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ **Paper Two Due, beginning of class (Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>)**
- Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>:               **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***  
Creating and Maintaining the Liberal Republic: The Social Contract  
 Chapters 8-14 (pp. 52 – 88).
- Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>:               **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***  
The Foundations of Liberal Authority, Rights, and Revolutions  
 Chapters 16-19 (pp. 91 – 124).
- Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>:               **Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *2<sup>nd</sup> Discourse and On The Social Contract***  
Inequalities: Natural and Conventional  
*Discourse*, Preface, Introduction, and Part One (pp. 33 – 46, end of first ¶);  
*Discourse*, Parts One and Two (pp. 52, at ¶ break – 81).  
Inequalities and the Foundations of Political Right  
*Social Contract*, Book One, chapters 1-9 (pp. 141 – 153).  
 ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ **Paper Three Due, beginning of class (Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>)**
- Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>:              FALL BREAK. NO CLASS MEETING
- Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> :             **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***  
The Social Contract and The General Will  
 Book Two, chapters 1-4 (pp. 153 – 159).  
The Law, The Legislator, and The Sovereign  
 Book Two, chapters 6-12 (pp. 160 – 172).
- Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>:             **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***  
The Government  
 Book Three, chapters 1-7 (pp. 173 – 187);  
 Book Three, chapters 11-18 (pp. 194-203).
- Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>:             **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***  
Civil Religion  
 Book Four, chapters 1-2 (pp. 203-207);  
 Book Four, chapter 8 (pp. 220-227).
- Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>:             **John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty***  
Liberty and Its Conditions  
 Chapters 1-2 (pp. 69 – 90, end of first ¶);  
 Chapter 2 (pp. 102, at last ¶ - 105);  
 Chapter 2 (pp. 113 – 123).  
 ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ **Paper Four Due, beginning of class (Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>)**

- Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>:           **Mill: *On Liberty***  
Liberty and Its Conditions, continued  
Chapter 3 - middle of 4 (pp. 123 – 153);  
Chapter 5 (pp. 178 – 181).
- Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>:           **Mill: *On Representative Government***  
Representative Government & Its Conditions and Dangers  
Chapters 2-4 (pp. 198 – 245);  
Chapter 6 (pp. 261 – 276).
- Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>:           **Mill: *On Representative Government***  
Representative Government: Suffrage For Whom?  
Chapter 8 (pp. 299 – 317).
- Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>:           **Karl Marx: selected excerpts**  
Materialism and the Critique of Capitalism  
Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*\*\*  
*The German Ideology, Part One* (three excerpts)\*\*  
*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (excerpt on “Alienated Labor”)\*\*  
*Recommended:*  
*Capital, Vol. One* (excerpts)\*\*  
⇒ ⇒ ⇒ **Paper Five Due, beginning of class (Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>)**
- Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>:           **Marx: selected excerpts**  
Communism  
“The Communist Manifesto” (excerpts)\*\*
- Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>:           **Marx, continued**  
\*\*Be sure to bring your Marx readings, especially the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*
- Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>:           **Michael Walzer: “In Defense of Equality”\*\***
- Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>:           **Walzer, continued. (No Additional Readings)**
- Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>:           **THANKSGIVING BREAK. NO CLASS MEETING.**
- Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>:           **Iris Marion Young: “Displacing the Distributive Paradigm”\*\***  
⇒ ⇒ ⇒ **Paper Six Due, beginning of class (Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>) (NOT eligible for revision!)**
- Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>:           **Iris Marion Young: “The Five Faces of Oppression”\*\***
- Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>:           **8 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.: FINAL EXAM**