

**PSC 270-01: Introduction to Political Theory (Writing Intensive)**  
**Spring 2008**  
**Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.**  
**Graham 310**

**Instructor:** Professor Carisa R. Showden

**Office:** 226 Graham Building

**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.; and by appointment.

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**Course Overview:**

Political philosophy 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. (The specific requirements for each of these activities are discussed after the schedule of readings.)

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: **15%**
- Mid-Term Exam: **20%**
- Annotated Bibliography: **10%**
- First Draft of Final Paper: **10%**
- Second Draft of Final Paper: **10%**
- Final Paper (Final Draft): **25%**
- Class Participation: **10%**

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

Tues. Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>: Course Introduction

Thurs. Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>: **Plato: *Republic***  
Justice: City and Soul (Statecraft and Soulcraft)  
Book 1 (pp. 1 – 31);

- Tues. Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>: Book 2 (pp. 32 – 59).  
**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).
- Thurs. Jan. 24<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).
- Tues. Jan. 29<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).
- Thurs. Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>: **Plato: *Republic***  
Noble Myths and Political Education, continued  
 Book 10 (pp. 279, at 608b – 292).
- Tues. Feb. 5<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).  
*Optional Reading:*  
 Wootton’s “Introduction”: pp. xi – xiv, end of ¶3  
 Wootton’s “Introduction”: pp. xxx, ¶2 – xxxvii.
- Thurs. Feb. 7<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).
- Tues. Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>: **Machiavelli: *The Prince***  
The Realpolitik of Princes (Corruption is good?)  
 Preface and Chapters 1-10 (pp. 5 – 35).  
*Optional Reading:*  
 Wootton’s “Introduction”: pp. xiv, start of ¶4 – xxx, end of ¶2.
- Thurs. Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>: **Machiavelli: *The Prince***  
The Realpolitik of Princes, continued  
 Chapters 12-26 (pp. 38 – 80).
- Tues. Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>: **John Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***  
The State of Nature and Private Property  
 Chapters 1-7 (pp. 7 – 51).  
*Optional Reading:*

- Macpherson's "Introduction": pp. vii – xix.
- Thurs. Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>: **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***  
Creating and Maintaining the Liberal Republic: The Social Contract  
 Chapters 8-14 (pp. 52 – 88).  
*Optional Reading:*  
 Macpherson's "Introduction": pp. xix – xxi.
- Tues. Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>: **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***  
The Foundations of Liberal Authority, Rights, and Revolutions  
 Chapters 16-19 (pp. 91 – 124).
- Thurs. Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>: **Mid-Term Exam**
- Tues. March 4<sup>th</sup>: **Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality***  
Inequalities: Natural and Conventional  
 Preface, Introduction, and Part One (pp. 33 – 46, end of first ¶);  
 Parts One and Two (pp. 52, at ¶ break – 81).
- Thurs. March 6<sup>th</sup>: **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***  
Inequalities and the Foundations of Political Right (continued)  
 Book One, chapters 1-4 (pp. 141 – 147).
- March 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>: Spring Break
- Tues. March 18<sup>th</sup>: **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***  
The Social Contract and The General Will  
 Book One, chapters 5-9 (pp. 147 – 153);  
 Book Two, chapters 1-4 (pp. 153 – 159).  
The Law, The Legislator, and The Sovereign  
 Book Two, chapters 6-12 (pp. 160 – 172).  
*Optional Reading:*  
 Gay's "Introduction" to Basic Political Writings (pp. vii - xvii).
- Thurs. March 20<sup>th</sup>: Final Paper Instruction & Library Research Day—**ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY**  
 ⇒ **Meet in the CITI lab (Jackson Library, First Floor)**
- Tues. March 25<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).
- Thurs. March 27<sup>th</sup>: **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***  
Civil Religion  
 Book Four, chapters 1-2 (pp. 203-207);  
 Book Four, chapter 8 (pp. 220-227).

- ⇒ **Annotated Bibliography Due, beginning of class**
- Tues. April 1<sup>st</sup>: **Edmund Burke: “Reflections on the Revolution in France” (excerpt)\*\***  
**Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen\*\***
- Thurs. April 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Burke** discussion continued. (No additional Readings)  
⇒ **Final Paper Draft One Due, beginning of class**
- Tues. April 8<sup>th</sup>: **John Stuart Mill: *Utilitarianism***  
Utilitarianism and Justice  
Chapter 2 (pp. 6 – 27);  
Chapter 5 (pp. 61 – 67).  
*Recommended:*  
Chapter 5 (pp. 43 – 52);  
Williams’ “Introduction” (pp. xix – xxxii).
- Thurs. April 10<sup>th</sup>: **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).
- Tues. April 15<sup>th</sup>: **Mill: *On Liberty***  
Liberty and Its Conditions, continued  
Chapter 3 - middle of 4 (pp. 123 – 153);  
Chapter 5 (pp. 178 – 181).
- Thurs. April 17<sup>th</sup>: **Mill: *On Representative Government***  
Representative Government & Its Conditions and Dangers  
Chapters 2-4 (pp. 198 – 245);  
Chapter 6 (pp. 261 – 276).  
*Optional Reading:*  
Williams’ “Introduction” (pp. xxxvi – xxxviii.)
- Tues. April 22<sup>nd</sup>: **Mill: *On Representative Government***  
Representative Government: Suffrage For Whom?  
Chapter 8 (pp. 299 – 317).  
⇒ **Final Paper Draft Two Due, beginning of class**
- Thurs. April 24<sup>th</sup>: **Michael Walzer: “In Defense of Equality”\*\***
- Tues. April 29<sup>th</sup>: **Walzer**, continued. (No Additional Readings)
- Thurs. May 1<sup>st</sup>: Course Wrap Up. No Additional Readings.
- Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup>: **Final Papers Due not later than 3:00 p.m.**

## **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. **Mid-Term Exam:** An in-class, short essay format exam that will ask you to explain and analyze the major themes of the works we have read, bringing to bear your understanding of the assigned readings, the lectures, and the class discussions. You will need to bring a blue book to the exam.

3. **Final Paper:** The final paper is designed to help you learn how to construct and analyze arguments in political philosophy. This assignment will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the course material and your critical thinking skills. The paper will be graded for both content and form. Thus, the quality of your analysis will be the most important factor in determining your grade, but your demonstration of writing skills will directly affect your grade as well.

Your final paper will consist of a series of op-ed pieces where you take on the persona of the theorists in addition to a summary essay that pulls together the main themes of the op-eds and gives you a chance to reflect on the essay topic based on what you've learned this semester. The topic of the final paper will be a contemporary political or public policy issue of your choice that you will research in order to write informed essays.

To receive high marks on the final paper, not only must you write a polished and sophisticated final product, but you must also demonstrate that you have written thoughtful early drafts, and that subsequent drafts directly respond to feedback received on these early drafts.

**Note well:** Failure to complete *both* early drafts will result in a **zero** for the final paper grade. **Revising** is a critical part of the final paper project.

4. **Annotated Bibliography:** Because the final paper requires you to do some outside, independent research, and because the final paper requires multiple drafts, you will need to begin your research for the paper fairly early in the semester. To make sure that you are finding and using a range of relevant and useful materials for your topic, you will be required to prepare and submit an annotated bibliography before you submit any paper drafts. *To enable you to find good source material, and to help you properly construct your annotated bibliography, you will spend one class period (MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup>) at Jackson Library with Ms. Lynda Kellam, the political science data services and government information reference librarian at Jackson Library.*

**NOTE VERY WELL:** Attendance at this class meeting is mandatory. Failure to attend will result in a 25% reduction in your class participation grade.

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW AND LET ME KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE A CONFLICT.**

5. **Class Participation:** When you don't read in advance, don't engage with the ideas expressed by the writers, the instructor, and the other students, or when you attend class only sporadically, both your learning and your classmates' learning is greatly inhibited.

Additionally, class becomes really boring.

So you are expected to show up, to pay attention, and 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.

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.

Rudeness (to me, to other students, or both) will result in a "0" for the day. Other things that will hurt your participation grade:

- Text messaging.
- Reading the newspaper.
- Surfing the internet.
- Doing homework for other classes.
- Talking, rolling your eyes, passing notes, etc. while one of your classmates is speaking.
- Being late. (If persistent lateness becomes an issue, the classroom door will be locked promptly at 12:30.)
- Not bringing books and/or notes to class. (BRING your books to class!)
- Sleeping. (If you're that tired, you're better off staying home and getting real rest.)

### **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://www.uncg.edu/reg/Policy/HonorPolicy.html>.

Specifically pertinent to this course is the following infraction: "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 fail (receive a zero for the assignment).

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