

PSC 270-01: Introduction to Political Theory (Writing Intensive)
Spring 2010
Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Graham 209

Instructor: Professor Carisa R. Showden

Office: 226 Graham Building

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m., or 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, 2nd 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:

- Short, Informal Writing Assignments: **15%**
- Two 4-5 page Formal Response Papers: **13% each (26% total)**
- Revised Paper: **17%**
- Mid-Term Exam: **15%**
- Final Exam: **22%**
- 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:** At two points during the term, one before and one after the mid-term, you will write a 4-5 page formal paper in response to direct prompts that I will provide. You will receive 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.

3. **Revised Formal Response Paper:** You are required to **revise substantially** your first paper in light of comments you receive from me and your own continued reflection on the course material. 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. I will announce the due date for the paper revision when I return your original paper.

You may also revise your second paper, though you are not required to do so. If you revise your second paper, the grades for the original and the revision will be averaged, and that will be your score for your second paper grade. Revised second papers are due not later than the beginning of the final exam period (3:30, Thursday May 6th).

4. **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.

5. **Final Exam:** The final exam will be comprehensive and closed-book. It will be a combined short and long essay format requiring you to reflect on the major themes we have covered this semester. The exam will be held during our university-scheduled final exam period: Thursday, May 6th: 3:30 – 6:30. Please note that final exam periods are scheduled a year in advance so that no class exams conflict, and exam times are available on the web. Exams are not scheduled for your traveling convenience and early exams will not be offered. Please plan accordingly.

6. **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 Readings:

Tues. Jan. 19th: Course Introduction

Thurs., Jan. 21st **Plato: Republic**
Justice: City and Soul (Statecraft and Soulcraft)
Book 1 (pp. 1 – 31);
Book 2 (pp. 32 – 59).

Tues. Jan. 26th **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. 28th: **Plato: Republic**
Leadership: The Philosopher-Kings
Book 5 (pp. 122 – 156).
Recommended:
Book 6 (pp. 165, at 492 – 177, up to line 504).

Tues. Feb. 2nd **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).

- Thurs. Feb. 4th **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).
- Tues. Feb. 9th: **Machiavelli: *Discourses on Livy***
The Ambiguous Machiavelli
Book One, selected chapters from 9 – 50 (pp. 107-145).
- Thurs. Feb. 11th **Machiavelli: *The Prince***
The Realpolitik of Princes (Corruption is good?)
Preface and Chapters 1-14 (pp. 5 – 47).
- Tues. Feb. 16th: **Machiavelli: *The Prince***
The Realpolitik of Princes, continued
Chapters 15-26 (pp. 47 – 80).
- Thurs. Feb. 18th **John Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***
The State of Nature and Private Property
Chapters 1-7 (pp. 7 – 51).
- ➔➔ **PAPER ONE DUE in class (Feb. 18th)**
- Tues., Feb. 23rd: **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***
Creating and Maintaining the Liberal Republic: The Social Contract
Chapters 8-14 (pp. 52 – 88).
- Thurs., Feb. 25th: **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***
The Foundations of Liberal Authority, Rights, and Revolutions
Chapters 16-19 (pp. 91 – 124).
- Tues.. March 2nd **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 4th **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***
Inequalities and the Foundations of Political Right
Book One, chapters 1-9 (pp. 141 – 153).
The General Will, Sovereignty, and the Law
Book Two, chapters 1-4 (pp. 153 – 159).
Book Two, chapters 6-12 (pp. 160 – 172).

- Tues., March 9th SPRING BREAK
 Thurs, March 11th: SPRING BREAK
- Tues., March 16th **Rousseau: *On The Social Contract***
The Government
 Book Three, chapters 1-7 (pp. 173 – 187);
 Book Three, chapters 11-18 (pp. 194-203).
Civil Religion
 Book Four, chapters 1-2 (pp. 203-207);
 Book Four, chapter 8 (pp. 220-227).
- Thurs., March 18th MID-TERM EXAM
- Tues., March 23rd **John Stuart Mill: *Utilitarianism***
Utilitarianism and Justice
 Chapter 2 (pp. 6 – 27);
 Chapter 5 (pp. 61 – 67).
- Thurs., March 25th **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, March 30th: **Mill: *On Liberty***
Liberty and Its Conditions, continued
 Chapter 3 - middle of 4 (pp. 123 – 153);
 Chapter 5 (pp. 178 – 181).
- Thurs. April 1st: class cancelled WPSA
- Tues., April 6th **Mill: *On Representative Government***
Representative Government & Its Conditions and Dangers
 Chapters 2-4 (pp. 198 – 245);
 Chapter 6 (pp. 261 – 276);
 Chapter 8 (pp. 299 – 317).
- Thurs, April 8th **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)**

- Tues., April 13th **Marx: selected excerpts**
Communism
“The Communist Manifesto” (excerpts)**
- Thurs., April 15th **Marx**, continued
**Be sure to bring your Marx readings, especially the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*
- Tues., April 20th **Michael Walzer**: “In Defense of Equality”**

➔➔ **PAPER TWO DUE in class (April 20th)**
- Thurs., April 22nd **Iris Marion Young**: “Displacing the Distributive Paradigm”**
- Tues., April 27th **Iris Marion Young**: “The Five Faces of Oppression”**
- Thurs., April 29th: Course Wrap Up. No additional readings.
- Thursday, May 6th: **3:30 – 6:30: FINAL EXAM**