

University of Florida
Dept. of Political Science

POT2002 – Sect. #042G – Introduction to Political Theory

Instructor: Mauro J. Caraccioli, M.A. | mjcaraccioli@ufl.edu
Fall Semester (2014) – Office Hours: MW (3:00-4:00) in AND 320
Meetings: MWF (Period 7 – 1:55-2:45) | Room: LIT 113
Course Home Page: <http://people.clas.ufl.edu/mjcaraccioli/courses/pot2002/>

Course Summary: This is an introductory level undergraduate course that seeks to expose students to the history, practice, and analysis of Political Theory. Once considered in confrontation with Political Science, political theorists have in recent decades taken up the banner of being a ‘moral compass’ within the discipline. Yet whereas that task was once fulfilled by distinct stories and narratives, contemporary efforts have taken the form of detailed treatises and complex analytic systems. In this course we will explore how this shift took place and how the ways that we think, speak, and write about Political Theory affect and define our participation in today’s local, national, and international political realities.

Learning Objectives:

- To study the historical foundations and development of the field of Political Theory from Classical Greece, through the European Renaissance, and into the contemporary period.
- To critically analyze and understand key concepts and ideas in the history of political thought (e.g., justice, natural law, utopia, sovereignty, the state, history, power, revolution), tracing their narrative evolution across different thinkers and contexts.
- To familiarize students with original source writings on the study of political theory, assessing how different strands of thought inform the ways we understand the world.

Books: Required for the course – Available in the **UF Bookstore** or **Amazon.com**

- Plato, *Four Texts on Socrates* (Cornell University Press, 1998)
- Bartolomé de las Casas, *An Account, Much Abbreviated, of the Destruction of the Indies* (Hackett, 2003)
- Thomas More, *Utopia* (Dover, 1997)
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Portable Machiavelli* (Penguin, 1979)
- Karl Marx, *The Portable Karl Marx* (Penguin, 1978)
- Steven Lukes, *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat* (Verso, 2009)

Methodology and Requirements

Includes: lectures, readings, written exercises, personal study, two reaction papers, one midterm exam, and a final narrative project.

Additional Readings: In addition to the required books mentioned above, the instructor will provide required readings from the Course Program in electronic format through the course homepage: <http://people.clas.ufl.edu/mjcaraccioli/courses/pot2002/>.

Grade	Two (2) Reaction Essays	30%
Distribution: (100%)	One (1) Midterm Exam	20%
	Final Narrative Project	30%
	Participation and Attendance:	20%

Reaction Papers I & II: Students will write two 500-word responses (2 double-spaced pages); 1” margins, Times New Roman, size 12. Each paper constitutes fifteen (15) percent of the final grade in the course and is **due the Monday after their distribution**. Reaction papers will be based on lectures, readings, and the student’s creative understanding. The prompts for these papers will be distributed on **September 15** and **October 27**.

Midterm Exam: Exam will be in class on **Monday, October 13** and will consist of an essay question based on all preceding course lectures, exercises, readings, and the student’s creative understanding, all of which constitute reliable safeguards (helps) for students in their work during the entire semester, as well as in preparing for the exam. **DO NOT TAKE THEM LIGHTLY**. The exam question will be distributed on **Monday, October 6**.

Final Narrative Project: Comprehensive project based on a topic corresponding to the central theme of the course. **Previous discussion of the topic with the instructor is highly encouraged**. Project will take the form of an analytic, or, narrative paper of 1,000 - 1,200-words (4 to 5 double-spaced pages). The paper is worth thirty (30) percent of the final grade in the course and the final version is due **Wednesday, Dec. 10, by 5:00PM in Anderson Hall 320**. Any paper that is not received at (or before) the due date will be given an “E” grade. Final Project instructions will be distributed on **Monday, November 10**.

*****Reaction Essays (I and II), the Midterm Exam, the Final Narrative Project, and active participation are all required for successful completion of the course.*****

Grade Scale: The awarding of a grade represents a judgment on the quality of student performance in the course; **it is not a reward for mere attendance or for trying hard**.

Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score
A	95-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-94	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	E	0-59

Course Policies & Expectations

Last day to drop this class is August 29, 2014.

Participation & Attendance: Students are responsible for all lectures, instructions, and assignments (readings, exercises, exams, and papers) given at **any regular session**. Attendance at all sessions is required and necessary for successful completion of the course. **5% of the participation and attendance grade** will result from at least **one office visit**.

Academic Honesty: All work in this course must be the student's own. Anyone guilty of cheating or plagiarism will fail the course and **be reported to the university for disciplinary procedures**. Please refer to [UF's Student Conduct & Honor Code](#).

Electronic Etiquette Policy. Use of All Electronic Devices is Prohibited in Class, including voice-recording of lectures, cell-phone use, tablets, and laptop computers. Exceptional situations will be considered by the instructor on an individual basis.

LATE-POLICY: Students arriving late, i.e., any time after the first ten (10) minutes of class (i.e., 2:05 p.m.) are **NOT PERMITTED** to enter the classroom. **Being late suggests harmful reluctance to one's task at hand and disrupts the work of others.**

IMPORTANT: Unexcused absence from even one regular session indicates a serious neglect of work by the student toward meeting the requirements of the course. A sign-in sheet will be distributed at the beginning of class in order to keep *a record of attendance*. This record is established for each student at each session during the entire semester, beginning with **the second week of classes** (Monday, September 1st). **You have only two (2) "free" absences throughout the semester.** Penalties will be withheld **only if** the student presents a **WRITTEN** (no fax; no e-mail; no voice-mail) and acceptable justification (indicating the name of the student, the date of and reason for the absence, and appropriate or necessary documentation) before the following class session. Only appropriate, substantial reasons (e.g., hospitalization, serious illness, untoward event, family emergency) constitute acceptable justification. As a rule, **no late assignments will be accepted.** If a student fails to submit their work as a result of illness or accident, s/he must advise the instructor as soon as possible and prior to the due date of the assignment. If the student has a valid excuse (to be determined by the instructor), s/he may be given extra time to finish the assignment at the instructor's discretion.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations must first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#). Please see me early regarding this matter.

Important Note: The instructor reserves the right to amend any of the administrative information (syllabus, readings, exams, paper) throughout the course of the semester and **will inform students with due time and consideration** of any such changes.

Course Program for POT2002 (Fall 2014) * = Provided by Instructor

Week I – Aug. 25, 27, 29: Learning to Think & Write About Political Theory

- (M): Introductions (W): *Thiele, pp. 1-25 (F): * Abbott, pp. 369-397

Week II – Sep. 1, 3, 5: The Timeless Wisdom of the Ancients

- (M): Labor Day (W, F): W&W, pp. 9-12; 29-37; Aristophanes, pp. 115-176 (*Clouds*)

Week III – Sep. 8, 10, 12: Philosophy Turns Rogue

- (M, W): Plato, pp. 12-28; 41-97 (*Euthyphro & Apology*) (F): Plato, pp. 99-114 (*Crito*)

Week IV – Sep. 15, 17, 19: Shaping the Western Canon (Reaction Paper #1 Prompts Distributed)

- (M): *Plato, pp. 109-85 (*Phaedo*) (W, F): *Plato, pp. 1-40; 227-35 (*Republic*)

Week V – Sep. 22, 24, 26: Narrating The Encounter (REACTION PAPER #1 DUE)

- (M, W): Las Casas, pp. viii-lv; 107-119 (F): Las Casas, pp. 1-21

Week VI – Sep. 29, Oct. 1, 3: A Dystopian Interlude

- (M, W): Las Casas, pp. 21-88 (F): Las Casas, pp. 89-105

Week VII – Oct. 6, 8, 10: A Utopian Interlude (Midterm Questions Distributed)

- (M): More, *Utopia*, pp. 1-27 (Book I) (W, F): More, *Utopia*, pp. 28-85 (Book II)

Week VIII – Oct. 13, 15, 17: Midterm

- (M): MIDTERM (W, F): APT Meeting & Homecoming

Week IX – Oct. 20, 22, 24: The Story of Renaissance & Reformation

- (M, W, F): Machiavelli, pp. 419-79 (*Belfagor; Mandrake Root*); 77-166 (*The Prince*)

Week X – Oct. 27, 29, 31: A New Modernity? (Reaction Paper #2 Prompts Distributed)

- (M): Machiavelli, pp. 167-228 (W, F): Mach., pp. 252-53, 287-301, 314-316, 319-338, 342-345, 351-356, 386-388, 416-418. (*The Discourses*)

Week XI – Nov. 3, 5, 7: The Narratives of Political Theory, Pt. I (REACTION PAPER #2 DUE)

- (M, W, F): Lukes, pp. 1-174

Week XII – Nov. 10, 12, 14: The Narratives of Political Theory, Pt. II (Final Project Distributed)

- (M, W, F): Lukes, pp. 175-260

Week XIII – Nov. 15, 17, 19: The Language of Ideology

- (M, W, F): Marx, pp. 3-4, 40-2, 45-6, 48-53, 63-4; 155-95 (*Letters, Theses, Critique, Ideology*)

Week XIV – Nov. 24: A Call to Arms

- (M): Marx, pp. 203-44 (*Manifesto*) (W, F): No Class (Thanksgiving)

Week XV – Dec. 1, 3, 5: The Poetry of the Revolution

- (M, W): Marx, pp. 287-323 (*Brumaire*) (F): Wrap-Up

**Week XVI: Final Narrative Project Due – Wed., Dec. 10, 5:00PM in
Anderson Hall, Rm. 320**