

POT 2002: Introduction to Political Theory

Fall 2013
Section: 123C
Meeting times: MWF, period 5 (11:45-12:35)
Classroom: 016 Matherly

Instructor: Chris Manick
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Office hours: W 10:00-11:00
Th 1:00-2:00

"Your question is: why am I so interested in politics? But if I were to answer you very simply, I would say this: why shouldn't I be interested? That is to say, what blindness, what deafness, what density of ideology would have to weigh me down to prevent me from being interested in what is probably the most crucial subject to...the society in which we live, the economic relations within which it functions, and the system of power which defines the regular forms and the regular permissions and prohibitions of our conduct? The essence of our life consists, after all, of the political functioning of the society in which we find ourselves."

- Michel Foucault

"The political scientist who ignores the biases in everyday classifications ends up practicing politics surreptitiously and unconsciously—and therefore confusedly—rather than analyzing it."

- Allan Janik

Course description:

This class is designed to familiarize students with a number of thinkers generally recognized as fundamental for the development of political modernity. It resembles a sort of "greatest hits" album, and a short one at that. But while the course is in no way meant to be exhaustive in its scope, the authors we read have all been central to the articulation of a number of traditions that continue to exert a profound impact on contemporary Western political theory and practice. In this vein, ideologies to be discussed include (but will not be limited to): authoritarianism, republicanism, liberalism, democracy, socialism, and Marxism. Topically, we will discuss political obligation versus political obedience, political resistance and revolution, the "social contract," natural rights, sovereignty, liberty, private property, history, power, and human nature. We will also address such problems as the relationships between ethics and politics, religion and politics, philosophy and politics, commercial and political life, and the consequences of economic inequality.

In addition to introducing students to canonical texts in political theory, a larger goal of this course will be looking at how we engage with them. These ideologies, topics, and relationships constitute, in part, the political, cultural, economic, and social situations that we exist within right now—that is, they help determine how we experience and understand our everyday lives. Thus, our broader goal in this course is to come to grips, at least in some small measure, with how we in the modern West have become what we are, and to think critically about the ways in which knowledge derived from reflection upon old texts might inform our approach to political life in the present. This means actively and aggressively reading texts in order to gain a critical awareness of the themes and arguments they contain. Having a "critical awareness" means being able to speak intelligently about an argument (giving more than just an intuitive reaction) and express its significance to others.

Note: I retain the right to alter the requirements of this course at my discretion. This includes (but is not limited to) the required texts, the schedule and arrangement of readings, number and weight of assignments, and expectations.

Required texts:

Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, (ed. Francis Cornford). Oxford University Press.

ISBN: 0195003640

The Portable Machiavelli, (eds. Peter Bondanella & Mark Musa). Penguin Publishers.

ISBN: 0140150927

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, (ed. Peter Laslett). Cambridge Univ. Press.

ISBN: 0521357306

The Marx-Engels Reader, (ed. Robert C. Tucker). Norton Publishers.

ISBN: 039309040X

The Portable Nietzsche, (ed. Walter Kaufmann). Penguin Books.

ISBN: 0140150625

Note: Please try to obtain these versions, especially where passages are assigned from the editors' introductions. I have done my best to assign versions that are easy to find, economically-priced, and yet responsibly edited. Websites like amazon.com or half.com should have plenty of inexpensive copies. That said, the world won't end if you show up with a different translation or copy. But you are responsible for reading all assigned sections, including introductory materials.

Grading:

Five components will comprise your final grade (due dates are located in the schedule below):

1. Essay 1 (25%)
2. Essay 2 (25%)
3. Essay 3 (25%)
4. Discussion questions (10%)
5. Attendance and participation (15%)

Papers: The highest grade a late paper can receive in the absence of a legitimate excuse is a "C+." Please be aware: a "C+" is not the lowest grade a late paper can receive; it is the highest (i.e. it is the ceiling, not the floor).

Quizzes: These will be of the "pop" (i.e. unannounced) variety. The number and occasion of quizzes will be determined by the class' willingness to participate in discussion and will comprise part of your participation grade.

Participation: You are required to participate in two ways: (1) For each of the five (5) major thinkers we read, you will be responsible for emailing me at least one discussion question and response (due dates for questions are located in the schedule below); (2) Since a crucial component of "doing" philosophy is engaging in agonal debate over texts, you will be held accountable for attending and partaking in all classroom discussions. In fact, discussion accounts for a large portion of our in-class activities. Consequently, you cannot earn an "A" without participating in class.

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Please come see me as soon as possible regarding this matter.

Grading Scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	59-0

Academic Integrity:

All students are required to abide by the University of Florida's Academic Honesty Guidelines. Among other things, this means cheating on essays and exams is totally unacceptable, as is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of portraying as your own the words or ideas of other people. The following pledge is hereby implied for all work submitted in this class: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." If you are unsure what comprises plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, you should consult with me (sooner rather than later), and/or visit <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/procedures/honorviolations.php>

Readings:

There's no getting around it: this course is a motorcycle ride through the Louvre. In one semester we will cover some of the most important arguments made in Western political philosophy. This course should be considered a challenge, but one that you are fully capable of meeting if you give a committed effort. It is assumed that you are here because you want to understand these arguments. That said, I do not apologize for reading loads. They reflect the best balance I can find between the demands of time and the demands of content. In other words, we are going to read the essential stuff and get to the point, but that still means we have to work to get there. My goal is to get you reading and get you thinking. My expectations are simple: (1) study the texts actively, critically, and aggressively; (2) come to class prepared and willing to participate in meaningful discussion. This means having done the readings *in advance* of the class for which they have been assigned. It is essential that you keep up with the readings. Falling behind will make it difficult for you to participate in class discussions, follow the lectures, write papers, and develop intellectually.

Schedule of readings:

Introduction: How and why one "does" political theory

August 21 (W) Introduction, course logistics, syllabus perusal (no readings)

August 23 (F) Getting familiar with the class and with my expectations (no readings)

August 26 (M) Thiele - "Theory and Vision"

Plato, justice, and the politics of the soul

August 28 (W) *The Republic*, pp 1-40 (ch I-IV)

August 30 (F) *The Republic*, pp 41-66 (ch V-VIII)

September 02 (M) NO CLASS

September 04 (W) *The Republic*, 102-118, 119-144 (ch X-XI, XII-XIV)

September 06 (F) *The Republic*, pp, 175-211 (ch XVIII-XXII)

September 09 (M) *The Republic*, pp 211-235, 264-266, 273-274, 279-280, 287-288, 301-320 (ch XXIX-XXXIV, XVIII-XXV)

PLATO DISCUSSION QUESTION/RESPONSE DUE

September 11 (W) Discussion (no readings)

Machiavelli, republicanism, and the science of politics

- September 13 (F)** *The Portable Machiavelli*, pp 17-26 (Introduction), pp 77-95 (*The Prince*)
September 16 (M) *The Portable Machiavelli*, pp 96-166 (*The Prince*)
September 18 (W) *The Portable Machiavelli*, pp 168-228, 252-253, 281-287 (*The Discourses*)
September 20 (F) *The Portable Machiavelli*, pp 287-301, 314-316, 319-325, 326-338, 342-345, 351-356, 386-388, 400-402, 416-418 (*The Discourses*)

MACHIAVELLI DISCUSSION QUESTION/RESPONSE DUE

September 23 (M) Discussion (no readings)

FIRST PAPER TOPIC HANDED OUT

September 25 (W) Student-led essay review

Modernity's "Noble Lie": John Locke, natural law, and the social contract

- September 27 (F)** Constant - "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns"
September 30 (M) *Two Treatises of Government*, 267-302
October 02 (W) *Two Treatises of Government*, pp 93-110 (from Laslett Introduction)
October 04 (F) *Two Treatises of Government*, pp 303-330

FIRST PAPER DUE

October 07 (M) *Two Treatises of Government*, pp 330-374

October 09 (W) *Two Treatises of Government*, pp 374-405

LOCKE DISCUSSION QUESTION/RESPONSE DUE

October 11 (F) Discussion (no readings)

The Marxist critique of liberalism

- October 14 (M)** Catch-up day
October 16 (W) *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp 3-6, 26-52, 53-65, 299-302
October 18 (F) *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp 70-105
October 21 (M) *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp 143-145, 148-163
October 23 (W) *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp 203-217, 305-306, 336-339
October 25 (F) *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp 469-491

MARX DISCUSSION QUESTION/RESPONSE DUE

October 28 (M) Discussion (no readings)

SECOND PAPER HANDED OUT

October 30 (W) Student-led essay review

Toward a post-modern politics

- November 01 (F)** *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp 95-6, 101-2, 447-450, 568-576, 581-582, 592-594, 618-620, 628-631, 632-634
November 04 (M) *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp 463-501
November 06 (W) *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp 501-505, 513-563
November 08-11 (HOMECOMING BREAK– NO CLASSES)
November 12 (T) **SECOND PAPER DUE**

November 13 (W) Michel Foucault - "Governmentality"

November 15 (F) Michel Foucault - "Subject and Power"

November 18 (M) Leslie Thiele - "The Agony of Politics"

POSTMODERN DISCUSSION QUESTION /RESPONSE DUE

November 20 (W) David Foster Wallace - Kenyon College Commencement Speech

FINAL PAPER HANDED OUT

November 22 (F) Discussion (no readings)

Semester review

November 25-29 (THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASSES)

December 02 (M) Student-led essay review

December 04 (W) NO CLASS

December 10 (F) Final Essay Due