Course Description:

This course familiarizes advanced students with the main themes of Political Theory. Its target audience is students who study Political Science empirically; its purpose is to convince students of the usefulness of the theoretical discourse for empirical Political Science (and, ultimately, to narrow the gap that has, regretfully, opened up between Theory and the empirical fields in our discipline). The course will be taught in a seminar format; it will live (and die) with students’ willingness to participate and make the course their own.

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Two presentations/papers on weekly readings – 30%.
   Papers written in preparation for discussion will have to be submitted to the entire class at least 24 hrs before our weekly class meeting (i.e no later than Tuesday afternoon)

2. Class participation and discussion (including forum) – 20%.

3. Final exam or term paper – 50%
   Final exam will be a 48-hour take home exam. Students will be able to select two questions from a number of prompts. Each response should be 8-10 pages in length. Alternatively, students can opt to write a term paper. Term papers are expected to be about 30 pages in length. Students who which to write a paper instead of the final exam should discuss their plans with me as early as possible, but no later than the week following spring break.
Course Outline:

August 21
Introduction

Power

August 28
Rulers and Ruled (the Question of Legitimacy): Lorenzetti’s “Allegoria ed effete del Buono e del Cattivo Governo” in Siena


September 4
After Community/Community Reconstituted: Social Contracts


September 11
Sovereignty


September 18
Sovereignty: Limit Cases

Carl Schmitt, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty; Giorgio Agamben, State of Exception.

September 25
Liberty / Liberalism


October 2
no class

October 9
Capitalism (via Marx)

Wolin, chapter 12; Karl Marx, excerpts from German Ideology and Grundrisse (The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. by Robert C. Tucker).
October 16       Feminism


October 23       Critical Race Theory


Purpose

October 30  “The State as Instrument”/ “the State as End”


November 6     Justice

Wolin, chapter 15; John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, chapters I – III.

November 13    Democracy

Benjamin Barber, Strong Democracy; Habermas, Between Facts and Norms, chapters 7.1. and 7.2; Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition, chapters 1 and 2.

November 20    Welfare

T.H. Marshall, Citizenship and Social Class; Claus Offe, Contradictions of the Welfare State; John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, chapter V.

November 27    no class

December 4     Theorizing Power After/Against the State

Wolin, chapter 16 and 17; Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, Empire, Part II; Charles Tilly, Predictions (3 emails written after Sep 11, 2001; find it at http://essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/tilly.htm)