

POT 2002: Introduction to Political Theory

Professor Dan O'Neill
Office: 218 Anderson
OH: Tues, 10am-12pm

Fall 2022
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:

This class is designed to introduce students to a number of intellectual traditions that have been fundamentally important to the development of modern political life: liberalism, democracy, conservatism, feminism, Marxism, and Black political thought. Our narrow goal in the course is to come to a better understanding of these traditions by engaging with thinkers whose writings are regarded as crucial for their articulation. More broadly, the course aims to help students to think critically about the ways in which knowledge derived from the history of political thought might inform their approach to political thinking and political action in the present.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

*Please purchase these specific editions of the books.

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett, ed. C.B. Macpherson)
ISBN: 0915144867

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the Discourses* (trans. G.D.H. Cole)
ISBN: 1636000932

The Portable Edmund Burke (Penguin, ed. Isaac Kramnick); ISBN: 0140267603

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of Rights of Woman* and *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (with excerpts from *An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* (Oxford, ed. Janet Todd); ISBN: 9780199555468

The Marx-Engels Reader (Norton, ed. Robert C. Tucker); ISBN: 9780393090406

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Dover Thrift Edition, 1994); ISBN: 9780486280417

Course Requirements:

This is a face-to-face lecture class. In addition, all discussion sections will be held in person and your physical attendance is mandatory at them unless you are not cleared to come to campus or are feeling ill. In the event you cannot attend discussion section in person, alternative assignments for attendance and participation will be provided and are required to fulfill this portion of your grade.

Assignments and Grading: Grades for the course will be determined by 5 components: two 5-6 page papers (25% each); an in-class written exams (20%); a written final examination (20%); and weekly section attendance and active participation (10%) These components will be aggregated into an overall letter grade at the end of the course, in keeping with current UF policies for assigning grade points, which you can access by following this [link to the university grades and grading policies](#).

The highest grade a late assignment can receive in the absence of a legitimate excuse is a “C+.” An example of a legitimate excuse would be an illness for which you have a signed doctor’s note. Please be aware: A “C+” is not the lowest grade a late assignment can receive; it is the highest (i.e., it is the ceiling, not the floor). You have plenty of time to write these assignments; do not wait until the last minute. Due dates are listed below. The midterm and final exams will be entirely essay based; questions will be distributed beforehand. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies; [Attendance Policies < University of Florida \(ufl.edu\)](#)

The course is out of 100 total points, and the Grading Scale is as follows: 93-100 (A); 90-92 (A-); 87-89 (B+); 83-86 (B); 80-82 (B-); 77-79 (C+); 73-76 (C); 70-72 (C-); 67-69 (D+); 63-66 (D); 60-62 (D-); 0-59 (E; failing)

Teaching Assistants and Sections: We have four excellent Teaching Assistants for this course. They are:

Wallie Hassen, whassen@ufl.edu, OH: Monday, 11:35AM to 1:35PM

Timothy Stolz, stolzt@ufl.edu, OH: Tuesday, 3:15PM to 5:15PM

Anna Verma, annaverma@ufl.edu, OH: 10:15 AM to 12:15 PM

Daniel Zengotita, dzengotita@ufl.edu, OH: Fridays 12:40-1:40PM and 4-5PM

Your attendance and participation in section is mandatory and will be graded (see above), and it is highly recommended that you visit your TA in Office Hours. The TAs will also work in close consultation with me to do the grading in the course. This means:

If you have a problem with your grade, you must first take it up with your TA. If you are still unconvinced, or feel that you have been grievously harmed in some fashion (“But I’ve never gotten grade X before...” does not count), then by all means bring your concerns to me as the final arbiter of the issue. However, be aware: I reserve the right to change grades in either direction, down as well as up; so please give it some thought. Political theory is not easy. Your TAs are a valuable resource for your success in the course. They can help you to gain a firm grasp of the material in sections, and aid you in the development of your papers.

Preparation: You should do the reading for a given lecture prior to coming to class on that day. If you are playing catch up on the reading, you will be in trouble in this course. At a deeper level, failure to stay up with the reading and reflect upon it prior to lecture and section will stunt your intellectual growth, which would be a shame.

Policy on Academic Integrity: All students are required to abide by the University of Florida’s Academic Honesty Guidelines. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Among other things, this policy means that cheating on exams is totally unacceptable, as is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of portraying as your own the words or ideas of other people. Examples include submitting entire papers, or portions of papers, that you did not write (*e.g.*, old papers written by other students, new papers written by other students, papers which you paid a “research” service to write for you, papers or portions of papers downloaded from the Internet). Copying verbatim or paraphrasing any substantial portion of text by another author without acknowledging the source via quotation and/or footnotes is plagiarism. Plagiarism is far easier to spot than you might think. Do not ruin your experience in this or any other class by engaging in academic dishonesty. **This should be made somewhat easier in the current class because all outside sources are strictly forbidden. The papers will be put through Turnitin on Canvas.**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Class Demeanor: Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion (including online conversations) should be held at a minimum, if at all. Phones should be turned off prior to class. Save Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, etc., until your free time.

Course Evaluation Process: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#) Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in the Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

Materials and Supplies Fees: There are no additional fees for this course.

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Policy Regarding in Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student

who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Lecture, Reading, and Discussion Schedule:

August 24 (W): Syllabus Walk Through; “What is Political Theory and Why Should I Care?”

August 29 (M): From Ancient to Modern Political Thought

August 31 (W): Locke, *Second Treatise*, pp. 3-30

September 5 (M): NO CLASS (Labor Day)

September 7 (W): Locke, *Second Treatise*, pp. 30-65

September 12 (M): Locke, *Second Treatise*, pp. 65-107

September 14 (W): Locke, *Second Treatise*, pp. 107-124
First Paper Topic Handed Out

September 19 (M): Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pp. 122-148

September 21 (W): Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pp. 149-175
First Paper Due

September 26 (M): Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, pp. 2, 9-25, 28-31, 37-38

September 28 (W): Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, pp. 40-45, 76-79, 93-102

October 3 (M): *Portable Edmund Burke*, pp. 416-474

October 5 (W): *Portable Edmund Burke*, pp. 63-81, 489-499

October 10 (M): *Portable Edmund Burke*, 507-530

October 12 (W): *Portable Edmund Burke*, 194-212
Second Paper Topic Handed Out

October 17 (M): Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, pp. 3-62

October 19 (W): Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, pp. 65-90
Second Paper Due

October 24 (M): Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, pp. 191-197, 221-265

October 26 (W): Wollstonecraft, *An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution*, pp. 287-298, 313-340, 354-371

October 31 (M): From Early to Later Political Modernity (19th and 20th Centuries)

November 2 (W): *Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 26-46, 53-54, 3-6, 299-302

November 7 (M): *Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 70-81, 344-345

November 9 (W): *Marx-Engels Reader*, 203-217, 305-306, 336-339

November 14 (M): *Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 469-491

**November 16 (W): Problematizing Marx
Exam Topics Handed Out**

November 21 (M): In Class Exam

November 23 (W): NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

November 28 (M): Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, pp. v-vi, 1-54

November 30 (W): Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, pp.55-82

December 5 (M): Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, pp. 83-125

December 7 (W): Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 127-165
Final Exam Questions Handed Out

December 14 (W): Final Exam (3pm-5pm)