

POT 2002: Introduction to Political Theory

University of Florida

Spring 2021

Instructor:	Cristian Pérez Muñoz
E-mail	cperezmunoz@ufl.edu
Office	Anderson 206
Class Hours	Tuesdays (8:30 AM - 10:25 AM), Thursdays (9:35 AM - 10:25 AM)
Classroom	TBC
Office Hours	Mondays (10 am–1 pm) <i>(by appointment)</i>
TAs	Yuanxin Wang (yuanxin.wang@ufl.edu); Walker Chavatel (wchavatel@ufl.edu)

Course Description

This is an introductory course to the field of political theory. We will cover topics that are central to political thought and crucial to understanding human societies. In particular, we will study the ideas of freedom, power, equality, justice, democracy, nationalism, citizenship, and oppression. By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of key political ideas and thinkers.

Course Objectives:

- Be familiar with important political ideas and thinkers
- Learn to identify and analyze complex theoretical arguments
- Apply analytical tools to address controversial issues and make informed choices about them.

Course Requirements

This course will have four instances of evaluation. Students will be evaluated based on their participation in class, ten In-class quizzes, three short (two pages) essays, and a final paper (5 pages). The characteristics of each instance of evaluation are explained below.

1. **Participation:** Students are expected to come to class with the readings completed and prepared for discussion. Absence will adversely affect your participation grade. Participation in class discussions, and commentaries on Perusall, will be evaluated in terms of their quality and quantity. Participation will represent 20% of the final grade.
2. **In-Class Quizzes:** Quiz items may be multiple choice or true/false, to answer in the first 10 minutes of ten class sessions. Each in class-quiz will be graded as pass/fail. To obtain a pass score, it is necessary to correctly answer at least 60% of the quiz. In-Class Quizzes will represent 10 % of the final grade.
3. **Short essays:** Each student must write three brief essays (two pages, single-spaced, Times New Roman). Essays will address a question provided by the instructor. You may use course materials to elaborate your answer. The deadlines for submission of short essays are: **first (Tuesday, 02/09)** and **second (Tuesday 03/09) and (Tuesday 03/30)**. Note: short essays cannot be submitted beyond these deadlines. They will represent 30 % of the final grade (10 % each)
4. **Final paper:** The final paper will have to be 3000-4000 words long (single space, times new Roman 12 or equivalent). Students must choose among a list of topics provided by the instructor, Further details of how to write this assignment will be given to you in class and on the course website. This item will represent the 25 % of the final grade. **Final paper is due on Monday 04/26**

Grade Distribution:

Class participation	20%
In-Class Quizzes	10%
Short Essays	40%
Final Paper	25%

Letter Grade Distribution:

>= 94	A	74 - 76	C
90 - 93	A-	70 - 73	C-
87- 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
84 - 86	B	64 - 66	D
80 - 83	B-	60 - 63	D-
77 - 79	C+	<61	F

Important Dates:

Short Essays: First (Tuesday, 02/09),
Second (Monday 03/09), Third (03/30)
Final Paper: Monday 04/26

Course Policies¹**During Class**

These are challenging times for the whole world. We are a diverse group of people, and every one of us has a different relationship with the pandemic and its consequences. It is crucial to treat your instructor and classmates with respect and kindness during class meetings and activities. For more information on netiquette guidelines, see the [UF Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#).

Education during COVID-19

"The Department of Political Science is committed to maximizing the quality of education during this time of Covid-19. The Department values social responsibility, public safety, and the best learning environment for our students. To promote a safer campus environment during a forecast increase in COVID cases, UF Health plans to test all undergraduate students who are taking in-person classes by January 10, the day before classes begin and at least biweekly thereafter.

Students and faculty are expected to actively abide by UF and CDC guidelines to ensure the safety of students and faculty alike. This means that faculty will need to be as flexible as possible during to semester, adapting to any pedagogical constraints posed by in-class HyFlex technology as well as the possibility of exposure to Covid. As such, it may be necessary during the semester to make temporary modifications to initial class modalities to conform to UF and CDC guidelines to ensure that every student in the class is afforded the best possible educational experience.

At a minimum, Face-to-Face (F2F) students must strictly follow UF guidelines for student behavior during the Covid pandemic, as outlined [here](#).

¹The items with an asterisk(*) are textually copied from [UF Policy on Course Syllabi](#).

Students who do not follow these guidelines at all times will be required to leave the class. In order to accommodate the drop/add period, all students (including F2F) will meet online the first day of class. In-person section(s) will commence meeting in the assigned classroom thereafter unless there are complications during the drop/add period. Please note that students who have signed up for F2F sections must attend classes in person unless given permission from the instructor to move online. Students enrolled in an online section are to attend the synchronized course virtually. If you are experiencing difficulties because of the class modality in your section (whether online or F2F) that interferes with your ability to benefit from class meetings, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. It may be possible to implement modifications to ensure that your class experience is not compromised.??

Attendance Policy*

Attendance at all lectures is mandatory and will be registered. A penalty of one point will be subtracted from the final grade for each unexcused absence. Late work is not accepted. Exceptions include documented illness, legal, or civic/university duty situations. If you miss an assignment and have a valid excuse, please email me within the same week to evaluate the situation and eventually arrange a makeup. "The 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.](#)"

CLAS Policy on Zoom Presence

"The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated on the basis of your attendance and your participation in class activities. Since the pedagogical approach of this course depends heavily on student engagement and interaction, you are required, at a minimum, to participate in class activities through the audio function of Zoom. Your video presence is invited as well."

Privacy

Unauthorized audio or video recordings of the class are not allowed.

Grading Policy*

This course is consistent with current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. For detailed information, visit this [link](#).

Academic Integrity and Honesty*

"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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code](#). 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.”

Accommodations for 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.”

Online Course Evaluation*

“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 their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.”

Technical Support*

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Health and Wellness*

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care](#) website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent. Please note that the schedule of activities and procedures in this course are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Any change in the syllabus will be communicated to all students in the class. Changes will be posted on Canvas and announced in class.

Course Outline

Readings: All the required readings are available in [Canvas](#).

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction – (Tuesday, 01/12–Thursday, 01/14). – Introductory meeting (no readings assigned)
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom (I) – (Tuesday, 01/19–Thursday, 01/21) – John Stuart Mill <i>On Liberty</i> (chapters 1 and 2) – Isaiah Berlin. 1969. "Two concepts of Liberty", in <i>Four Essays on Liberty</i>. pp, 118–172
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom (II) – (Tuesday, 01/26–Thursday, 01/28) – Charles Taylor. 1979. "What's wrong with Negative Liberty?" in <i>The Idea of Freedom</i>, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford University press, 1979), 175–193 – Philip Pettit. 1996. "Freedom as anti-power". <i>Ethics</i> 106: 576–604 – Scanlon, Thomas. "A theory of freedom of expression." <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> (1972): 204–226.
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power – (Tuesday, 02/02–Thursday, 02/04) – Robert Dahl. 1957. "The concept of power." <i>Behavioral science</i> 2 (3): 201–215. – Steven Lukes, <i>Power: A Radical View</i>, 2nd edition, (Chapters 1 and 2)

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality (I) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Tuesday, 02/09–Thursday, 02/11) - Harry Frankfurt. "Equality as a Moral Ideal", <i>Ethics</i> 98, 1987 - Sen, Amartya. <i>Equality of What? The Tanner Lectures on Human Values</i>. - First Short Essay due: Tuesday, 02/09
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality (II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Tuesday, 02/16–Thursday, 02/18) - Elizabeth Anderson. 1999. "What is the Point of Equality?." <i>Ethics</i> 109.2 (1999): 287–337. - Gerald Cohen. 1989. "Are Freedom and Equality Compatible?" in Jon Elster and Karl O. Moene, eds. <i>Alternatives to Capitalism</i>, Cambridge University Press, pp. 113–126.
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice (I) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Tuesday, 02/23–Thursday, 02/25 (No class: Recharge day)) - John Rawls. 1958. "Justice as Fairness", <i>Philosophical Review</i>, 67 (1958)
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice (II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Tuesday, 03/02–Thursday, 03/04) - Robert Nozick. 1973. "Distributive Justice". In <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i>, 45–126.

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Justification of the State – (Tuesday, 03/09–Thursday, 03/11) – Quentin Skinner. 2002. “From the State of Princes to the Person of the State,” in <i>Visions of Politics: Renaissance Virtues</i> Cambridge University Press, vol. 2, pp. 368–413. – Robert Paul Wolff. 1998. <i>In Defense of Anarchism</i>, University of California Press. (Chapter 1) – Catharine MacKinnon. 1989. <i>Toward a feminist theory of the state</i>. Harvard University Press, 1989.(Chapter 8), pp. 157–170. – Second short essay due: Tuesday 03/09
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy (I) – (Tuesday, 03/16–Thursday, 03/18) – Joseph Schumpeter “Two Concepts of Democracy” – Robert Dahl- 1979. “Procedural Democracy”, in <i>Philosophy, Politics and Society</i>, Edited by P. Laslett, and J.S. Fishkin (Blackwell, 1979), 97–133 – Jon Elster. 1986. “The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory”, in <i>Foundations of Social Choice Theory</i>, Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland (Cambridge, 1986), 103–132
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy (II) – (Tuesday, 03/23–Thursday, 03/25) – Joshua Cohen. 2003. “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy”, in Derek Matravers and Jonathan Pike (edit) <i>Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology</i>, pp.342–360. – Lynn Sanders. 1997. “Against deliberation”. <i>Political Theory</i> 25 (3): 347–376. – Chantal Mouffe. 2000. <i>The Democratic Paradox</i>. verso, 2000. (Chapters 1 and 4)
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationalism – (Tuesday, 03/30–Thursday, 04/01) – Alasdair MacIntyre. “Is Patriotism a Virtue?” The Lindley Lecture, University of Kansas, – David Miller. 1993. “In Defence of Nationality”, <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i> 10, no. 1, 1993. – Robert Goodin.1988). “What is so Special About Our Fellow Countrymen?”, <i>Ethics</i>, 98: 663–86. – Third Short Essay due: Tuesday, 03/30

<p>Week 13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (<u>Tuesday, 04/06–Thursday, 04/08</u>) - Iris Marion Young. 1989. "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship". <i>Ethics</i>, 99. 1989 - Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman. 1994. "Return of the citizen: A survey of recent work on citizenship theory." <i>Ethics</i> 104.2 (1994): 352-381.
<p>Week 14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oppression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (<u>Tuesday, 04/13–Thursday, 04/15</u>) - Carole Pateman. 2007. "Race, sex, and indifference." In Carole Pateman and Charles Mills <i>Contract and domination</i> (2007): 134-164. - Paulo Freire. 2013. <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 50th Anniversary Edition</i>. Bloomsbury (Chapter 1), pp-43–71. - Lea Ypi. 2013. "What's wrong with colonialism", <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> 41.2 (2013): 158-191.
<p>Week 15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (<u>Tuesday, 04/20</u>) - No readings assigned