

# POT 6067 - Contemporary Political Theory

University of Florida

Spring 2023

<b>Instructor:</b>	Cristian Pérez Muñoz
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<b>Office</b>	Anderson 334
<b>Class Hours</b>	Tuesdays, Period 5 - 7 (11:45 AM - 2:45 PM)
<b>Classroom</b>	ARCH0423
<b>Office Hours</b>	Mondays (10 am–1 pm) <i>(by appointment)</i>

## Course Description

This seminar covers a wide range of topics in contemporary political theory. It is divided into two parts. In the first part of the semester, we will examine central theories in contemporary political theory, including utilitarianism, liberalism, communitarianism, libertarianism, feminism, and republicanism. In the second part, we will study and dissect current debates around the contested nature of political power, representation, democracy, and voting rights.

## Course Objectives:

- Learn to identify and analyze complex theoretical arguments
- Familiarize with central themes and approaches in contemporary political theory
- Learn to use political theory as an analytical tool to understand political phenomena

## Course Requirements

This course will have four instances of evaluation. Students will be evaluated based on their participation in class, two presentations, two oral responses to presentations, and a final paper (7000-8000 words). The characteristics of each instance of evaluation are explained below.

1. **Participation:** Students are expected to come to class with all the readings completed and prepared for discussion. This is a seminar course in which each student is expected to participate actively. Absence will adversely affect your participation grade. Participation will represent 30% of the final grade.
2. **Class presentations:** Each student is expected to co-lead the discussion of at least two seminar sessions. Those co-leading the discussion will provide a summary and critical analysis of the week's readings, as well as a set of questions for promoting class debate. Students co-leading the discussion must provide the rest of the class with a written presentation (a maximum of five single-spaced pages). The written presentation must be distributed to the class via Canvas at least 12 hours before the seminar session. Your role as co-discussion leader will represent 20 % of the final grade (10 % each)
3. **First responder** Each week three students will be randomly selected to provide initial answers to the questions proposed by the discussion leaders. Although all students are expected to participate in class, the three students chosen by lottery will have the initial task of initiating the debate. Notice that students who are selected by chance will only be part of the elective pool in the following sessions once all students have performed that role in at least one class. Your role as randomly selected "first responder" will represent 10 % of the final grade.
4. **Final paper:** The seminar paper must be between 7000-8000 words, including references (single-spaced, times new Roman 12 or equivalent). Students are encouraged (although not obligated) to start working on this paper by week 3. By then, they should send the instructor one-page describing potential research questions and topics. After receiving feedback, by week 7 they are encouraged to submit to the instructor a very early draft (e.g., including an introduction and some initial development of the argument). A more developed draft (e.g., including an introduction, literature review, and argument development) is highly recommended by the end of week 12. It is highly advised that students follow this path for writing their seminar papers. Further details of how to write this assignment will be given to you in class and on the course website. This item will represent 40 % of the final grade.  
**Final paper is due on Friday 04/28**

### Grade Distribution:

Class participation	30%
Oral responses	10%
Class presentations	20%
Final Paper	40%

**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

**Course Policies<sup>1</sup>****Class Modality**

As of now, this class will be offered in a face to face format. However, you will be notified in advance if we are required to return to distance learning at some point of the semester.

**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**

In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, please consider getting vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this [link](#) for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.
- You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators. Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class. Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.

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

- If you sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email [covid@shcc.ufl.edu](mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu)) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website for more information.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.
- Continue to regularly visit [coronavirus.UFHealth.org](https://coronavirus.UFHealth.org) for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

### **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.](#)"

### **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.

### **Student Privacy\***

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.

### **Software Use\***

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### **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/](http://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](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

### Health and Wellness\*

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto: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

**Required Readings:** The following is a list of required books. All the other required readings are available in [Canvas](#).

- John Rawls. 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Revised Edition. Harvard University Press.
- Robert Nozick. 1974. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Michael Walzer. 1983. *Spheres of justice: A defense of Pluralism and Equality*. Basic books, 2008.
- Iris Marion Young. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press.

### Recommended Readings:

- Julia Driver. 2010. *Ethics: The Fundamentals*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Will Kymlicka. 2002. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- David Leopold and Marc Stears, eds. 2008. *Political theory: Methods and approaches*. Oxford University Press.
- Adrian Blau. ed. 2017. *Methods in Analytical Political Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shelly Kagan. 1998. *Normative Ethics*. Westview Press.

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (01/10)</u>.</li> <li>– Adam Swift and Stuart White. 2008. "Political theory, social science, and real politics." In David Leopold and Marc Stears (edit) <i>Political Theory: Methods and Approaches</i>, Oxford University Press.</li> <li>– Zofia Stemplowska and Adam Swift. 2012. "Ideal and nonideal theory." <i>The Oxford Handbook of Political Philosophy</i>, pp. 373–389.</li> <li>– Ian Shapiro. 2002. "Problems, methods, and theories in the study of politics, or what's wrong with political science and what to do about it." <i>Political theory</i> 30.4 (2002): 596-619.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Utilitarianism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (01/17)</u></li> <li>– Jeremy Bentham.1781. <i>An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> (Chapters: 1, 2, 4)</li> <li>– John Stuart Mill. <i>Utilitarianism</i> (Chapters 3-5)</li> <li>– Robert Goodin, 1995. <i>Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy</i>, Cambridge University Press (Chapter 1, pp.3–28)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Justice as Fairness (I)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (01/24)</u></li> <li>– Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i>, (Preface, Chapters 1, 2, 3)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Justice as Fairness (II)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (01/31)</u></li> <li>– Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i>, (Chapters 4,5, 8)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Libertarianism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (02/07)</u></li> <li>– Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>, (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communitarianism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (02/14)</u></li> <li>– Walzer, <i>Spheres of Justice</i> (Chapters 1, 4, 5, 12)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Feminism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (02/21)</u></li> <li>– Young <i>Justice and the Politics of Difference</i> (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 8)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Republicanism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Tuesday (02/28)</u></li> <li>– Philip Pettit. 1997. <i>Republicanism: a theory of freedom and government</i>. Oxford University Press. (pp.1- 79)</li> <li>– Cecile Laborde and John Maynor. 2009. "The Republican Contribution to Contemporary Political Theory", In Laborde and Maynor eds., 2009. <i>Republicanism and political theory</i>. John Wiley and Sons.</li> <li>– Frank Lovett. 2009. "Domination and distributive justice". <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 71(3):817–30.</li> <li>– Nadia Urbinati. 2012. "Competing for liberty: the republican critique of democracy". <i>American Political Science Review</i>.106(3):607-21.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Power</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Tuesday (03/07)</u></li> <li>- Steven Lukes, <i>Power: A Radical View</i>, Palgrave</li> <li>- Clarissa Hayward. 1998. "De Facing Power" <i>Polity</i>, Autumn, 1998, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Autumn, 1998), pp. 1-22</li> <li>- Robert Dahl. 2017. "Power as the Control of Behavior." <i>Leadership Perspectives</i>. Routledge, 2017. 221-242.</li> <li>- Clarissa Hayward and Steven Lukes. 2008. "Nobody to shoot? Power, structure, and agency: A dialogue." <i>Journal of Power</i> 1 (1) (2008): 5-20.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Democracy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>(Tuesday (03/21)</u></li> <li>- Adam Przeworski. 1999. "A minimalist conception of democracy." In Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordon (edit), <i>Democracy's Value</i>, Cambridge. pp. 23-55</li> <li>- Jon Elster. 1986. "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory", In Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland (edit) <i>Foundations of Social Choice Theory</i>, Cambridge University Press, 103–132.</li> <li>- Jurgen Habermas. 1996. "Three Normative Models of Democracy," In Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff, eds., <i>The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory</i>, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 239-52</li> <li>- Chantal Mouffe. 2000. <i>The Democratic Paradox</i>, London: Verso, (chapters 1, 4, 5)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Representation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Tuesday (03/28)</u></li> <li>- Hanna Pitkin. 1967. <i>The Concept of Representation</i>, University of California (Chapters 1,4)</li> <li>- Robert Dahl. 1989. <i>Democracy and Its Critics</i>. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (Chapters 4, 5)</li> <li>- Anne Phillips. 1995. <i>The Politics of Presence</i>. Oxford University Press, (Chapter 1, pp. 1-26)</li> <li>- Jane Mansbridge. 2003. "Rethinking Representation." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 97: 515-528.</li> <li>- Andrew Rehfeld. 2009. "Representation Rethought: On Trustees, Delegates, and Gyroscopes in the Study of Political Representation and Democracy." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 103: 214-230</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Political Parties</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Tuesday (04/04)</u></li> <li>- Nancy Rosenblum. 2010. <i>On the side of the angels: an appreciation of parties and partisanship</i>. Princeton University Press (pp.1-21)</li> <li>- Lea Ypi and Jonathan White. 2011. "On partisan political justification." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 105.2 (2011): 381-396.</li> <li>- Matteo Bonotti. 2011. "Conceptualising Political Parties: A Normative Framework." <i>Politics</i> 31 (1): 19-26.</li> <li>- Lise Esther Herman. 2017. "Democratic partisanship: From theoretical ideal to empirical standard." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 111.4 (2017): 738-754.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Voting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Tuesday (04/11)</u></li> <li>- Claudio Lopez-Guerra. 2005. "Should Expatriates Vote?", <i>The Journal of Political Philosophy</i>, 13 (2):216-234</li> <li>- Jason Brennan. 2011 "The right to a competent electorate", <i>The Philosophical Quarterly</i>, 61 (245):700-724</li> <li>- Linda Barclay. 2013. "Cognitive Impairment and the Right to Vote: A Strategic Approach", <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i> 30 (2):148-159.</li> <li>- Ben Saunders. 2018. "A further defence of the right not to vote." <i>Res Publica</i> 24 (1): 93-108.</li> <li>- Emilee Booth Chapman. 2019. "The distinctive value of elections and the case for compulsory voting." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 63.1 (2019): 101-112.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Money and Politics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>(Tuesday (04/18)</u></li> <li>- Ryan Pevnick. 2016. "The Anatomy of Debate about Campaign Finance", <i>Journal of Politics</i> 78 (4)</li> <li>- Christopher Freiman. 2014. "Vote markets." <i>Australasian Journal of Philosophy</i> 92 (4): 759-774.</li> <li>- Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen. 2011. "Vote Buying and Election Promises; Should Democrats Care About the Difference?" <i>The Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 19(2): 125-144.</li> <li>- Chiara Cordelli. 2020. <i>The Privatized State</i>. Princeton University Press, 2020. (pp. 1-44)</li> <li>- Michael Warren. 2004. "What Does Corruption Mean in a Democracy?", <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 48 (2):328-343</li> <li>- Teun Dekker. 2015. <i>Paying Our High Public Officials: Evaluating the Political Justifications of Top Wages in the Public Sector</i>, New York, Routledge (pp. 1-54).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Course Summary</b> 11/11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>(Tuesday (04/25)</u></li> <li>- No readings assigned</li> </ul> </li> </ul>