

2023-11-26: IPT 2002 Syllabus - Spring 2024

POT 2002: Introduction to Political Theory

Instructor: Daniel Zengotita

Email: dzengotita@ufl.edu

Meeting Times: M, W, F Period 5 (11:45AM-12:35PM)

Classroom: AND 0034

Office Hours: Wednesday 1PM-3PM

Office:

Course Description:

This course aims to familiarize students with six influential thinkers in the history of Western political theory. Although this course is not intended to be exhaustive in its scope, the authors we read have made lasting intellectual contributions that continue to exert a lasting impact on contemporary Western political theory and practice. The course will engage with the following subjects: absolutism, liberalism, democracy, conservatism, feminism, and black political thought. We will examine different conceptions of statecraft, human nature, freedom, revolution, history, equality, social hierarchy, and education. The topics covered in this course reflect the political, cultural, economic, and social situations that we find ourselves in, offering us new ways to think about how we experience and understand our everyday lives. Thus, our broader goal in this course is to come to think critically about the ways theoretical texts might inform our approach to political life today and help us act accordingly.

Learning Objectives:

- i. Acquire and hone close-reading skills and apply them to analyze foundational texts
- ii. Identify and articulate persistent conceptual problems and the different solutions foundational thinkers have offered in response
- iii. Develop and craft well-structured, thesis-driven argumentative essays based on the assigned readings and lectures
- iv. Cultivate a broad view of Western political thought and its value for thinking about present day (political) problems

Required Texts:**

1. Plato. *Republic* (Translated by C.D.C Reeve). Publisher: Hackett; ISBN: 9780872207363

2. John Locke. *Second Treatise of Government* (Edited by C.B. McPherson). Publisher: Hackett; ISBN: 0915144867

3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Social Contract & Discourses* (Translated by G.D.H. Cole). Publisher: Loki's Publishing; ISBN: 1636000932

4. Edmund Burke. *The Portable Edmund Burke* (Edited by Kramnick). Publisher: Penguin; ISBN: 0140267603

5. Mary Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Publisher: Oxford; ISBN: 9780199555468 (book)

6. W.E.B. Du Bois. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Publisher: Dover; ISBN: 9780486280417

Any other assigned readings will be available on the Canvas Course Page.

Course Assessments:

- A. **Attendance and Participation (15%)**: This course is entirely face-to-face. As such, attendance will be required and assessed out of 15 points.

- B. **Worksheets (30%)**: Students are required to complete worksheets on assigned reading each week in which a discussion is held. Worksheets function as a companion for readings and a prelude for discussions. They will help you identify and elaborate on key tensions in the text. They are due Thursdays at 11:59 PM.

- C. **Essay #1 (15%)**: Students will be required to write 1,500 words on topics covered in half 1. The questions and rubric will be provided one week before the deadline.

- D. **Essay #2 (20%)**: Students will be required to write 2,000 words on topics covered in half 2. The questions and rubric will be provided one week before the deadline.

- E. **Final Exam (20%)**: Students are required to take a comprehensive 'blue-book' exam. A study guide and rubric will be provided.

Course Modules and Schedule:

Module 1: Exiting the Cave: Philosopher Kings, Social Contracts, and the Individual

January 8: Introduction to POT 2002: "What is Political Theory?"

January 10: Introduction to POT 2002: "On Close-Reading Skills and Asking Good Questions"

January 12: Discussion

January 15: No Class- Martin Luther King Junior Day

January 17: Plato: Book I {all} (1-36)

January 19: Discussion

January 22: Plato: Book II {367d- 376d}, Book III {from 412a}, Book IV {up to 434d} (45-56, 96-102, 103-121)

January 24: Plato: Book V {from 471c}, Book VII {up to 521b}, Book VIII {from 555b} (164-175, 208-215, 251-269)

January 26: Discussion

January 29: Locke: Two Treatises of Government (5-30)

January 31: Locke: Two Treatises of Government (30- 68)

February 2: Discussion

February 5: Locke: Two Treatises of Government (68-90, 100-106, 107-113,123-124)

February 7: On how to craft political theory essays (see canvas page for writing resources)

February 9: Discussion

Module 2: Revolutions in Thinking about Democracy, Conservatism, and Feminism

February 12: Rousseau: Discourses on Inequality – Preface, Part I (122-148)

February 14: Rousseau: Discourses on Inequality - Part II, Appendix (149-175)

February 16: Discussion

February 19: Rousseau: The Social Contract- Book I; Book II (1-16; 17-39)

February 21: Rousseau: The Social Contract- Book III; Book IV (40-48, 69-75; 76-81; 95-102)

February 23: Discussion

February 26: Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France (417-446)

February 28: Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France (446-474)

March 1: Discussion

March 4: Burke: Inquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful, An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs (63-81, 489-499)

March 6: Burke: Letter to Member of National Assembly, On Regicide Peace, Details on Scarcity (507-516, 517-530, 195-203)

March 8: Discussion

March 11: Spring Break

March 13: Spring Break

March 15: Spring Break

March 18: Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Men (5-14, 29-33, 37-47, 50-62)

March 20: Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (65-68, 71-83, 84-96, 119-126, 130- 133)

March 22: Discussion

March 25: Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (144-150, 191-197, 221-231, 258-265, 280-283)

March 27: Wollstonecraft: An Historical & Moral View of the French Revolution (287-301, 313-319, 320-328, 365-371)

March 29: Discussion

Module 3: The Past and Future of Status and Hierarchy: Citizens, Excluded Groups, and Transhumanism

April 1: Du Bois: Forethought, Of Our Spiritual Strivings, Of the Dawn of Freedom (v-vi, 1-24)

April 3: Du Bois: Of Mr. Booker T Washington, Of the Meaning of Progress, Of the Training of Black Men, (25-45, 55-67)

April 5: Discussion

April 8: Du Bois: Of the Sons of Master and Man, Of the Faith of the Fathers (99-131)

April 10: Du Bois: Passing of the First-Born, Alexander Crummell, The Coming of John, Sorrow Songs (133-165)

April 12: Discussion

April 15: Canvas Reading - On the Politics of Human Enhancement I

April 17: Canvas Reading - On the Politics of Human Enhancement II

April 19: Discussion

April 22: Review Session

April 24: Review (Last Class Session)

April 26: Reading Day (NO CLASS)

May 3: Comprehensive Final Exam (7:30-9:30AM)

University and departmental policies:

The course is out of 100 total points, and the Grading Scale is as follows: 94-100 (A); 90-93 (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). 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). Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Academic Integrity Policy: 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/studentconductionor-code>) specifies several 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 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).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect 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.

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. 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/.

Counseling and Wellness Center contact information:
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 352-392-1575

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. Phones should be turned off prior to class. 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, 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. If students have concerns about classroom issues, disagreements or grades, their first point of contact is the classroom instructor whose contact information appears on the syllabus. If the problem cannot be resolved, the student should email the next departmental contact: Michael Martinez. That email should include a clear description of the student's concern. Most concerns are resolved at this level. If a resolution cannot be reached at the departmental level, the student will be referred to the Office of the UF Ombuds. People learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse opinions on course content, which may include images, texts, data, and theories from across the disciplines. This is especially true in courses that deal with provocative or contemporary issues. UF offers many such courses, in which students encounter concepts of race, color, sex, and/or national origin. We teach these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal contributions to today's complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, facts, ideas, and opinions—including those that some may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. In response to challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. But hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation's sake have no place in a classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. These guidelines can help instructors and students as they work together to fulfill the mission of the University of Florida, which includes the exploration of intellectual boundaries, the creation of new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas.