

Major Political Thinkers: Machiavelli- Marx (POT4053)

Instructor: Glen Billesbach

Email: gbillesbach@ufl.edu

Meeting Times: M, W, F (9:35 AM- 10:25 AM)

Classroom: [Fine Arts Building C- 0120](#)

Office Hours: M & W, 11 AM -12 PM / By Appointment

Office: Anderson Hall 10 / ufl.zoom.us/j/3337403662

Epigraphs:

“Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back.”

-Keynes

"Invisible ink is what lies under, between, outside the lines, hidden until the right reader discovers it. By “right” reader, I am suggesting that certain books are not for every reader. It’s possible to admire but not become emotionally or intellectually involved in Proust. Even a reader who loves the book may not be the best or right lover. The reader who is “made for” the book is the one attuned to the invisible ink."

-Morison

“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”

-T.S. Eliot

Course Description:

This advanced undergraduate course aims to familiarize students to a variety of approaches in political thought rooted in the power of ideas, including Socratic dialogue/citizenship, economic/political principles, reflexive/critical interpretation, existential reflection, and decolonial questioning. As such, this course offers training for students interested in modes of enquiry that are not often included in conventional quantitative approaches to politics in the disciplines of Political Science and International Relations. Instead of focusing on causal mechanisms and prediction, this course emphasizes the meaning and historical contingency of human life. It is designed to get students ‘thinking interpretively’, alert students to the ways that language and ideas structure our societies, and to pay close attention to the meaning and context involved in political texts. Along with providing considerations on different ways of studying our political world, each of the authors we read have been central to the articulation of traditions that continue to exert a profound impact on contemporary political theory and practice. In this vein, ideologies to be discussed include republicanism, liberalism, communism, existentialism, and post-colonialism. Specifically, the course readings will draw from exemplar texts and discussions of political thought connected to Machiavelli and Marx.

Texts in the order you will need them: Please purchase physical copies of specific editions listed as required below

Socrates- Provided on Canvas

Machiavelli- Required - The Portable Machiavelli; [ISBN: 0140150927](#); Publisher: Penguin Classics; Bondanella Ed.

Smith- Provided on Canvas

Constant- Provided on Canvas

Mill- Provided on Canvas

Marx- Required - The Marx-Engels Reader; [ISBN: 9780393090406](#); Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; Tucker Ed.

Nietzsche- Provided on Canvas

Sartre- Required - Existentialism Is a Humanism; [ISBN: 9780300115468](#); Publisher: Yale; 2007 Ed.

Fanon- Required - Black Skin, White Masks; [ISBN: 9780802143006](#); Publisher: Grove Press; 2008 Philcox Ed.

Arendt- Required - Between Past and Future; [ISBN: 9780143104810](#); Publisher: Penguin Classics; 2006 Kohn Ed.

Assessments, percent of grade, brief description:

Attendance (10%)- As of now, this course is entirely face-to-face. As such, attendance will be recorded and assessed out of 10 points.

Worksheets (25%)- Students are required to complete a total of 12 worksheets on assigned reading each week in which a discussion is held. Worksheets function as a guide for the readings and a prelude for discussions. They are due Thursdays at 11:59 PM.

Essay 1 (15%)- Students are required to write 2,000 words on topics covered in module 1. Questions/rubric will be provided.

Essay 2 (25%)- Students are required to write 3,000 words on topics covered in module 2. Questions/rubric will be provided.

Final Exam (25%)- Students are required to take a comprehensive ‘blue-book’ exam. A study guide and rubric will be provided.

Reading Schedule:

Average reading per lecture = 30 pages. Students should come to **lectures** having read texts carefully.

Module 1. From Ancient to Modern Political Thought

August 24 (W)- Introduction

August 26 (F)- Discussion

August 29 (M)- **Socrates:** *Apology* (63-98)

August 31 (W)- **Socrates:** *Crito* (99-114)

September 2 (F)- Discussion

September 5 (M)- **No Class, Labor Day**

September 7 (W)- **Machiavelli:** *The Prince* (77-107)

September 9 (F)- **No Class- Reading Day**

September 12 (M)- **Machiavelli:** *The Prince* (115-146, 159-162)

September 14 (W)- **Machiavelli:** *Discourses* (168-199)

September 16 (F)- Discussion

September 19 (M)- **Machiavelli:** *Discourses* (200-228, 252-253, 281-287)

September 21 (W)- **Machiavelli:** *Discourses* (287-301, 314-316, 319-338, 342-345, 351-356, 386-388, 400-402, 416-418)

September 23 (F)- Discussion

Module 2. Pillars of Modern Political Thought

September 26 (M)- **Smith:** *Wealth of Nations- Books I; Book III* (Selections on Canvas) (9-22 42-46)

September 28 (W)- **Smith:** *Wealth of Nations- Book IV; Book V* (Selections on Canvas) (49-64, 86-113)

September 30 (F)- Discussion

October 3 (M)- **Constant-** *The Liberty of the Ancients compared with that of the Moderns* (Provided on Canvas)

October 5 (W)- **No Class- Writing Day**

October 7 (F)- **No Class- Homecoming**

October 10 (M)- **Mill:** *On Liberty* (1-26)

October 12 (W)- **Mill:** *On Liberty* (26-52)

October 14 (F)- Discussion

October 17 (M)- **Marx:** *On the Jewish Question; The Paris Manuscripts* (26-52, 67-80)

October 19 (W)- **Marx:** *Theses on Feuerbach; The German Ideology* (143-145; 147-176)

October 21 (F)- Discussion

October 24 (M)- **Marx:** *Wage-Labour and Capital; Selections from Capital* (203-217, 294-308, 319-322, 336-340, 344-351)

October 26 (W)- **Marx:** *Communist Manifesto; The British Rule in India; Letter to Lincoln* (473-500, 1-6, 1-3)

October 28 (F)- Discussion

Module 3. Political Thought Without Modern Banisters

October 31 (M)- **Nietzsche:** *The Prejudices of Philosophers* (7-32)

November 2 (W)- **Sartre:** *Existentialism is a Humanism* (17-54)

November 4 (F)- **No Class- Writing Day**

November 7 (M)- **Fanon:** *Introduction; The Black Man & Language* (xi- xviii, 1-23)

November 9 (W)- **Fanon:** *The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples* (64-88)

November 11 (F)- Discussion

November 14 (M)- **Fanon:** *The Lived Experience of the Black Man* (89-119)

November 16 (W)- **Fanon:** *The Black Man & Recognition; By Way of Conclusion* (185-206)

November 18 (F)- Discussion

November 21 (M)- **Arendt:** *Preface; Tradition & the Modern Age* (3-40)

November 23 (W)- **No Class, Thanksgiving**

November 25 (F)- **No Class, Thanksgiving**

November 28 (M)- **Arendt:** *What is Freedom?* (142-169)

November 30 (W)- **Arendt:** *Conquest of Space & Stature of Man* (260-274); *World Alienation* (Selections on Canvas) (1-10)

December 2 (F)- Discussion

December 5 (M)- Course Wrap-up Lecture

December 7 (W)- Discussion & Final Exam Review

December 9 (F)- **No Class- Reading Day**

December 13 (TUES)- **Final Exam, 3PM-5PM**

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- [Attendance Policies < University of Florida \(ufl.edu\)](https://www.ufl.edu/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/student-conducthonor-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. [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.

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/.

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.