

POLS 3000

Spring 2018
MWF 9:05-9:55 a.m.
301 Baldwin Hall

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Office Hours: Th 11-Noon (and by appointment)

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY

“Political theory [is] a kind of meeting ground of . . . philosophers who turned to politics out of despair about the unbearable of certain historical experiences. Such was the case of Plato. . . . And we find the statesmen and great men of action who again out of despair turn to philosophy. . . . Such was the case of Machiavelli. . . . And we find finally the philosopher who out of despair of philosophy turns to politics. This is the case of Marx . . . The result in all cases is political theory.”

—*Hannah Arendt*

This course will examine some of the foundational texts in the Western tradition of political thought. The course begins with the ancient Greeks (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) and their accounts of political community, justice, ruling, and citizenship. The course will then engage Christian political thought (in the context of the Roman Empire) through an examination of the political theory of St. Augustine, before turning to the study of Augustine’s neo-pagan counterpart in the c16th Italian Renaissance, Niccolò Machiavelli. The course then moves on to an examination of modern political thought by engaging Karl Marx (on capitalism and communism) and John Stuart Mill (on liberty). The final part of the course will focus on the contemporary issue of facts, truth, and lying in politics through an examination of George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Some common themes and recurring issues in this course include the cause of freedom versus slavery and tyranny, the question of truth and politics, justice, power, wealth, happiness, moral virtue versus political virtù, and the political role and capabilities of women and workers.

Over the course of the semester students will:

1. Gain knowledge of the key terms, concepts, theories, methods, and principles in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Machiavelli, Marx, Mill, and Orwell.
2. Learn how to interpret and comprehend the problems, concepts, and arguments which have shaped the Western tradition of political thought.
3. Consider how the problems, concepts, and arguments treated might be of significance today and challenge our own way of thinking about politics.
4. Develop the capacity to think conceptually, the ability to read carefully and critically, and your own voice as a political theorist.

TEXTS REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE

Rent or buy these books, new or used, at the bookstore or on Amazon.com, but keep in mind that you need to be quite literally on the same page of the text with me and your classmates.

Therefore, you must purchase only these specific editions; no other editions, publishers, or translations will be approved for use in this course.

- Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, 3rd edition, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Hackett)
- Plato, *Republic*, 2nd edition, trans., G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett)
- Aristotle, *Politics*, a new translation by C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett)
- St. Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (Penguin Classics)
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter Constantine (Modern Library)
- Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. Jeffrey C. Isaac, Rethinking the Western Tradition (Yale)
- J. S. Mill, *On Liberty and other writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge)
- Orwell, *1984* (Signet Classics)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Course Format: This is a text-based reading, lecture, and discussion course. Class time will be a mixture of lecture, questions, and small- and large-group discussion activities. I expect you to come to class on time, regularly, and to have read the assigned material for each session.

Reading: It is essential to keep up with the reading. The reading is to be completed by the date listed on the syllabus. I've tried to keep the reading to a minimum. It should take you about 2 hours to do the assigned reading for each session. **Always bring your assigned reading to class** because we will frequently refer to it in class. Student who do not make a regular effort to bring the assigned reading to class will be docked a few points on their EFFORT grade (see below).

Assignments and Grading: Your final grade will be based on six in-class quizzes, a final essay (written in class), and my impression of your effort over the course of the whole semester. The quizzes will be on what we cover in class and will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. I will distribute a study guide at least two days before each quiz.

Grades will be assigned by points as follows, for a total of **100 points**:

7: EFFORT (based on my impression of whether you regularly did the reading, came to class prepared to learn, and made progress over the semester)

13: PLATO quiz (February 2)

13: ARISTOTLE quiz (February 16)

13: AUGUSTINE quiz (March 7)

13: MACHIAVELLI quiz (March 28)

13: MARX quiz (April 6)

13: MILL quiz (April 18)

15: FINAL EXAM (April 30, 8-11 a.m.)

Grading scale: A >93 A- 90-93 B+ 87-90 B 83-87 B- 80-83 C+ 77-80 C 73-77 C- 70-73

Extra Credit: You will have two opportunities to earn extra credit. You can earn 3 extra credit points simply by attending Cinema Politique's free screening of the film *Hannah Arendt* (directed by Margarethe von Trotta) on **March 20, 6:30 p.m., MLC 081**. I will be introducing the movie and leading a Q&A afterwards.

In our last class session on **April 25**, you will be given an exam of about 40 questions that require short answers to some basic matters of 'fact' that pertain to the study of the various theorists and texts read in this course. We will grade this exam together in class. A good score on this exam may well boost your final grade in the course; but a not so good score will not hurt you.

Attendance: My attendance policy is that I expect you to come to class regularly. If you know ahead of time that you will be absent from a class I'd appreciate an email in advance explaining your reason. If you choose to skip classes you will struggle to do well on the in-class quizzes which cover material discussed in class. If you miss several classes without a valid excuse several points will be docked from your EFFORT grade.

Electronic Etiquette Policy: The classroom is a learning environment first and foremost, and everyone is responsible for making certain that the classroom remains an environment conducive to learning. It must be kept free from distractions and disruptions by laptops, cell phones, and other electronic modes of communication and entertainment. Therefore, laptop use during class is banned and all phones should be put away. Studies show that note-taking pen-and-paper students perform better on quizzes and other assessments of learning than students who take notes on a laptop.

Cultural Sensitivity: Our classroom environment should be mutually respectful and inclusive of all students. The classroom should be an environment with no discrimination, where everyone is comfortable and at liberty to contribute to, and benefit from, the entire learning experience. Any suggestions to improve class interactions or any concerns should be brought to my attention.

Academic Honesty: The University's Academic Honesty Policy ("A Culture of Honesty," available at <http://honesty.uga.edu/index.html>) defines scholastic honesty as "the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attribute." Academic honesty is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, will result in disciplinary action.

Cheating and Plagiarism: If I find out that you cheated on a quiz you will immediately fail that assignment and your case will be handed on to a university committee.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Fri., Jan. 5 – Syllabus day

Mon., Jan. 8 – Get to know each other day

Socrates: How Should We Live?

“...the unexamined life is not worth living for man” (Apology, 38A, p. 39)

Wed., Jan. 10 – *Apology* (pp. 21-42)

Fri., Jan. 12 – *Republic*, Bk. I (pp. 1-31)

Mon., Jan. 15 – **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.** No class.

“You who are in the field of psychology have given us a great word. It is the word maladjusted. . . . certainly it is good that in dealing with what the word implies you are declaring that destructive maladjustment should be destroyed. You are saying that all must seek the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But on the other hand, I am sure that we will recognize that there are some things in our society, some things in our world, to which we should never be adjusted. There are some things concerning which we must always be maladjusted if we are to be people of good will. We must never adjust ourselves to racial discrimination and racial segregation. We must never adjust ourselves to religious bigotry. We must never adjust ourselves to economic conditions that take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. We must never adjust ourselves to the madness of militarism, and the self-defeating effects of physical violence.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement,” *Journal of Social Issues* 24:1 (1968).

Plato: The Politics of Truth

“Until philosophers rule as kings in cities or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils, Glaucon, nor, I think, will the human race” (Republic, 473C-D, p. 148).

Wed., Jan. 17 – *Republic*, Bk. II (pp. 32-59)

In-class video: Myles Burnyeat and Bryan Magee on Plato (beginning to 29:12)

Fri., Jan. 19 – *Republic*, Bk. III (pp. 60-93)

Mon., Jan. 22 – *Republic*, Bk. IV (pp. 94-121)

Wed., Jan. 24 – *Republic*, Bk. V (pp. 122-156)

Fri., Jan. 26 – *Republic*, Bk. VI (pp. 157-185)

Mon., Jan. 29 – *Republic*, Bk. VII (pp. 186-212)

Wed., Jan. 31 – Finish Plato’s *Republic* (no reading assignment)

Fri., Feb. 2 – In-class quiz on Plato (no reading assignment)

Aristotle: Is Politics Natural?

“...it is evident that a city is among the things that exist by nature, that a human is by nature a political animal, and that anyone who is without a city, not by luck but by nature, is either a wretch or else better than human, and, like the one Homer condemns, he is ‘clanless, lawless, and homeless’” (*Politics*, 1253a1-5, p. 4).

Mon., Feb. 5 – Introduction to Aristotle (no reading assignment)

Wed., Feb. 7 – *Politics* I (pp. 2-21)

Fri., Feb. 9 – *Politics* II (pp. 22-51)

Mon., Feb. 12 – *Politics* III (pp. 52-82)

Wed., Feb. 14 – Finish Aristotle’s *Politics* (no reading assignment)

Fri., Feb. 16 – In-class quiz on Aristotle (no reading assignment)

St. Augustine: Political Indifferentism?

“Remove justice, and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale? What are criminal gangs but petty kingdoms?” (*City of God*, IV.4, p. 139).

Mon., Feb. 19 – Introduction to Augustine (no reading assignment)

Wed., Feb. 21 – *City of God*, Bk. I (all, but especially the Preface and chs. 1-2, 5, 7-10, 13, 16-21, 27-28, 30-32, 35)

Fri., Feb. 23 – *City of God*, Bk. II (chs. 1-3, 7-8, 13-14, 19-21, 29)

Mon., Feb. 26 – *City of God*, Bk. III (chs. 9-14, 20); Bk. IV (chs. 1-4, 12, 15, 28); Bk. V (chs. 1-2, 8-19, 22-24)

Wed., Feb. 28 – *City of God*, Bk. XI (chs. 1, 9, 13, 22-23, 28); Bk. XII (chs. 1, 6-9, 13, 16, 26, 28); Bk. XIV (chs. 1-2, 7, 9-15, 28); Bk. XV (chs. 1-2, 4, 21); Bk. XXII (ch. 22)

Fri., March 2 – *City of God*, Bk. XVIII (chs. 1-2, 13-14); Bk. XIX (*all*, but especially chs. 1-8, 11-17, 21, 24, 26-27)

Mon., March 5 – Finish Augustine’s *City of God* (no reading assignment)
In-class video: Robert Dodaro, Augustine on the Formation of the Statesman’s Ethical Conscience (26:37-58:38)

Wed., March 7 – In-class quiz on Augustine (no reading assignment)

Fri., March 9 – No class.

March 12-16 – Spring Break!

Niccolò Machiavelli: Epic Politics

“As my intention is to write something useful for discerning minds, I find it more fitting to seek the truth of the matter rather than imaginary conceptions. Many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or heard of, because how one lives and how one ought to live are so far apart that he who spurns what is actually done for what ought to be done will achieve ruin rather than his own preservation” (*The Prince*, ch. 15, p. 72).

Mon., March 19 – Introduction to Machiavelli (no reading assignment)

Wed., March 21 – *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter and chs. 1-11 (pp. 3-55)

Fri., March 23 – *The Prince*, chs. 12-19 (pp. 56-96)

Mon., March 26 – *The Prince*, chs. 20-26 (pp. 97-123)
In-class video: Maurizio Viroli on the Meaning of *The Prince* (beginning – 22:55)

Wed., March 28 – In-class quiz on Machiavelli (no reading assignment)

Karl Marx: The Longing for Social Revolution

“Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, p. 92).

Fri., March 30 – In-class video: BBC Masters of Money - Karl Marx (beginning to 45:12)

Mon., April 2 – *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, parts I and II (pp. 73-92)

Wed., April 4 – *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, parts III and IV (92-102)

Fri., April 6 – In-class quiz on Marx (no reading assignment)

John Stuart Mill: Taking Liberty to Heart

“If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind” (On Liberty, p. 20).

Mon., April 9 – Introduction to Mill (no reading assignment)

Wed., April 11 – *On Liberty*, ch. 1 (pp. 5-18)

Fri., April 13 – *On Liberty*, ch. 2 (pp. 19-55)

Mon., April 16 – *On Liberty*, ch. 3 (pp. 56-74)

Wed., April 18 – In-class quiz on Mill (no reading assignment)

George Orwell: Totalitarianism – Could It Happen Here?

“We do not merely destroy our enemies; we change them” (1984, p. 209).

Fri., April 20 – *1984* (start reading)

Mon., April 23 – *1984* (finish reading)

Wed., April 25 (Last Class) – In-class extra credit factoid quiz.

Mon., April 30 – Final Exam, 8-11 a.m. Your final exam will not be a summative evaluation of the entire term’s work; it will be on the work of only one writer. You will write an essay in class and you will be allowed to use your notes and your book.