

POLS 3000

Spring 2019
MWF 10:10-11:00 a.m.
301 Baldwin Hall

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Office Hours: immediately after class and by appointment

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY

Bulletin Description: Political theory for students with little or no previous course work in the area. Focuses on one or more important political concepts or phenomena (e.g., power, freedom, or political ambition) and as entry-point into various approaches and literatures within the field.

Course Description: This course will introduce you to some of the foundational texts in the Western tradition of political thought. We begin with ancient Greek philosophers (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) and their accounts of political community, justice, ruling, and citizenship. Next we study Christian political thought (in the context of the Roman Empire) through an examination of the philosophy, politics, and theology of St. Augustine's massive work, *City of God*. Then we will turn our attention to princely politics in Machiavelli's little treatise, *The Prince*. The course concludes with a study of modern political thought by engaging John Stuart Mill (on liberty and the subjection of women) and Karl Marx (on capitalism, communism, and revolution). Some common themes and recurring issues in this course include the state, human nature, justice, the desire for domination, the cause of freedom against slavery and tyranny, good and evil, God and gods, virtue or excellence as a human being, the political role and capabilities of women and workers, the meaning of life, truth and opinion, power and glory, wealth, war, work, happiness, and individuality.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Course Format: This is a text-based reading, lecture, and discussion course. Class time will be mostly lecture, with pauses and breaks for questions and discussion, and occasionally a small-group activity. 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 should be completed before class by the date listed on the syllabus. I've tried to keep the reading to a minimum. **Always bring your book to class.**

Attendance: My attendance policy is that I expect you to come to class regularly. If you know ahead of time when you will be absent, I'd appreciate an email or notice 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 you will get zero points for your EFFORT grade.

Assignments and Grading:

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

- 5: Effort
- 5: Books (see “book check” days below)
- 10: 3-page writing assignment on Plato (due Feb. 8)
- 10: Aristotle quiz (Feb. 18)
- 10: Augustine quiz (March 6)
- 15: 4-page writing assignment on Machiavelli (due March 27)
- 15: Mill quiz (April 12)
- 10: Marx quiz (April 24)
- 20: Final paper (due May 6, 5 p.m.)

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 before each quiz.

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 have three opportunities to earn extra credit. The film “Captive State” is scheduled to be released in theatres on **March 29**. You can earn up to 3 extra credit points if you watch the film and write a short paper that provides a *critical interpretation* of the film from the perspective of one of the theorists we have studied (due **April 15**). You will earn 2 extra credit points simply by attending class on **March 25**. And in our last class session on **April 29**, you will be given a quiz of 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 quiz together in class. A good score on it may well boost your final grade in the course; but a not so good score will not hurt you.

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 is available at <http://honesty.uga.edu/index.html>. 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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is a classic college course. We read classic works in the spirit of the classic objectives of the university: namely, the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and the education of citizens.

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, Mill, and Marx.
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 courage and capacity to think critically and to better think for yourself.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Buy or rent a copy of these books, new or used, at the bookstore or online, but keep in mind that you need to be 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. It is important to have these physical books rather than electronic versions on your phone or computer because we want to have a meaningful interaction together about a piece of writing, and it works better if you read the book in print and then bring your copy to class to talk about it, leaving your technology off and in your bag so it does not get in the way.

- Plato, *Republic*, 2nd edition, trans., G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett)
ISBN-13: 978-0872201361 | New \$12.35 | Used \$2.50

- Aristotle, *Politics*, a new translation by C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett)
ISBN-13: 978-1624665578 | New \$22.00 | Used \$16.59

- St. Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (Penguin Classics)
ISBN-13: 978-0140448948 | New \$18.00 | Used \$8.48

- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter Constantine (Modern Library)
ISBN-13: 978-0812978056 | New \$10.00 | Used \$1.00

- J. S. Mill, *On Liberty and other writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge)
ISBN-13: 978-0521379175 | New \$15.23 | Used \$3.24

“The printed, bound and paid-for book was—still is, for the moment—more exacting, more demanding, of its producer and consumer both. It is the site of an encounter, in silence, of two minds, one following in the other’s steps but invited to imagine, to argue, to concur on a level of reflection beyond that of personal encounter.”

—John Updike

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Class begins, Wed., Jan. 9 – Syllabus day

Fri., Jan. 11 – Name day

Socrates: Care For Your Soul!

“I say to you: Wealth does not bring about excellence, but excellence makes wealth and everything else good for men, both individually and collectively” (Apology, 30B, p. 33).

Mon., Jan. 14 – The Life of Socrates

Read: Plato’s *Apology* (pp. 21-42)

Wed., Jan. 16 – The Death of Socrates

Read: No reading, but be sure you’ve read (and maybe re-read) Plato’s *Apology*

Fri., Jan. 18 – The *Elenchus*: Socrates’s Method (*book check*)

Read: *Republic* I (pp. 1-31)

Plato’s *Republic*:

Thinking philosophically about politics, and politically about philosophy

“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).

Mon., Jan. 21 – **No class.** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Wed., Jan. 23 - Plato’s Three Problems: Knowledge, Ethics, and Politics

Read: *Republic* II (32-59)

Fri., Jan. 25 – Plato’s City

Read: *Republic* III (60-93)

Mon., Jan. 28 – Plato’s (Political) Psychology and What Justice Is

Read: *Republic* IV (94-121)

Wed., Jan. 30 – Plato’s Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Political Proposals

Read: *Republic* V (122-156)

Fri., Feb. 1 – Plato’s Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Political Proposals, continued

Read: *Republic* VI (157-185)

Mon., Feb. 4 – The Allegory of the Cave

Read: *Republic* VII (186-212)

Aristotle's *Politics*: What is a Political Community?

“...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).

Wed., Feb. 6 – Introduction to Aristotle’s Life and Works
No reading.

Fri., Feb. 8 – The Political Community (*book check*)
Read: *Politics* I (2-21)
****3-page paper on Plato due in class****

Mon., Feb. 11 – The Political Community (continued)
No reading.

Wed., Feb. 13 – Ruler and Ruled
Read: *Politics* II (22-51)

Fri., Feb. 15 – Citizens and Constitutions
Read: *Politics* III (52-82) (Book IV is highly recommended but not required)

Mon., Feb. 18 – **In-class quiz on Aristotle**

St. Augustine: God, Gangster Politics, and Christian Pilgrims

“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).

Wed., Feb. 20 – Introduction to St. Augustine (*book check*)
Read: *City of God*, Bk. I (all)

Fri., Feb. 22 – Augustine II
Read: *City of God*, Bk. II (chs. 1-4, 6-7, 11-14, 16-23), Bk. III (chs. 1, 9-17, 20-21, 28, 30-31),

Mon., Feb. 25 – Augustine III
Read: *City of God*, Bk. IV (chs. 1-4, 6-8, 12, 15, 18-23, 25, 26, 28-30, 33), Bk. V (chs. 1, 8-19, 21, 24-26)

Wed., Feb. 27 – Augustine IV
Read: *City of God*, Bk. XI (1, 6-9, 13, 15, 17, 19-23), Bk. XII (1-3, 6-9, 13, 15-16, 22, 26-28)

Fri., March 1 – Augustine V
Read: *City of God*, Bk. XIII (1-3, 10-14), Bk. XIV (1, 4, 6-18, 25, 27-28), Bk. XV (4-8, 21-22)

Mon., March 4 – Augustine VI
Read: *City of God*, Bk. XIX (All) and Bk. XXII (22-24, 30)

Wed., March 6 – **In-class Augustine Quiz**

Fri. March 8 – No class. Enjoy Spring Break!

Niccolò Machiavelli: Great 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 18 – Machiavelli’s Life and Times (*book check*)
Read: *The Prince* (all)

Wed., March 20 – Reading *The Prince*
No reading, but be sure to have read all of *The Prince*

Fri., March 22 – In-class small group activity on Machiavelli’s notorious maxims

Mon., March 25 – In honor of Machiavelli I will bring coffee, *cantucci*, and we’ll watch a video.
****Extra Credit Day****

John Stuart Mill: Defending Liberty in Democratic Times

“That so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of the time” (*On Liberty*, p. 67).

Wed., March 27 - Introduction to Mill
No reading assignment.
****3-page brief paper on Machiavelli due****

Fri., March 29 – The Problem of Social Tyranny (*book check*)
Read: *On Liberty*, ch.1 (5-18)

Mon., April 1 – Truth and the Battlefield of Opinions
Read: *On Liberty*, ch. 2 (19-55)

Wed., April 3 – The Importance of Individuality for Human Happiness
Read: *On Liberty*, ch. 3 (56-74)

Fri., April 5 – On the Subjection of Women
Read: *The Subjection of Women*, ch. 1 (119-145)

Mon., April 8 – On the Subjection of Women (continued)
Read: *The Subjection of Women*, ch. 2 (146-165)

Wed., April 10 – On the Subjection of Women (continued)
Read: *The Subjection of Women*, ch. 3 (166-194) (If you have time, read ch. 4).

Fri., April 12 – **In-class quiz on Mill**

Karl Marx: The Longing for Social Revolution

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

Mon., April 15 – Introduction to Karl Marx
No reading.

Wed., April 17 – The Bourgeoisie
Read part I of *The Communist Manifesto* (73-84)

Fri., April 19 – The Proletariat and Communism
Read parts II and III of *The Communist Manifesto* (84-102)

Mon., April 22 – On Revolution
No reading.

Wed., April 24 – **In-class quiz on Marx**

Fri., April 26 – TBD

Mon., April 29 – *Last class.* **In-class extra-credit factoid quiz.**

****FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY, MAY 6, BY 5 P.M.****