This course provides a survey of Western political thought from the 17th to the 19th centuries. In addition to approaching these historical texts on their own terms, we will use them to explore three topics of pressing relevance to contemporary politics:

**Authority:** What is the “state” and what (if anything) justifies the authority it claims over our lives? If the state has legitimate authority, when are we permitted to resist the state?

**Freedom:** How should we understand freedom? What sort of freedom is worth promoting? What (if anything) justifies tolerating beliefs and actions that are noxious?

**Inequality:** What should our attitudes be towards increasing economic inequality? What is the relationship between material and social inequality? What does it mean to treat one another as equals?

By the end of the course, the hope is that you will not only have a greater appreciation of where many of our political ideas come from, but also be better equipped to approach these ideas with some critical distance.

The syllabus describes (1) course objectives, (2) course materials, (3) grades and assignments, (4) rules and requirements (including important dates), and (5) a course schedule.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.
1. Course Objectives

- Sharpen analytical thinking and debating skills.
- Understand the moral foundations of political and economic institutions.
- Approach historical texts with careful reflection.
- Practice engaging with viewpoints different than one’s own.
- Confront difficult moral questions about the way we organize our social life.
- Come to understand one’s personal values better.

2. Course Materials

The following books are available for purchase from the UGA bookstore. While I will be making reference to these editions, I understand if you opt for different editions out of cost concerns.


The following readings will be available on eLC:

Bentham, J., An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation [excerpts]
Hume, D., Treatise of Human Nature [excerpts]
Locke, J. The First Treatise [excerpt]
Proast, J. “The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration, Briefly Consider’d and Answer’d”

3. Assignments and Grading

The following components will make up your grade in this course:

1. Class Quizzes: 20%
2. Class Papers: 50% (2 at 25% each)
3. Take-Home Final Examination: 30%
Participation:
While participation does not appear as a formal portion of your total grade, participation is a key element of succeeding in the class. Exceptional participation can result in a boost of your final grade by a third of a letter grade. If you are unable to attend class, let me know ahead of time.

Class Quizzes:
There will be 9 brief quizzes administered randomly throughout the semester. These quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class and be based on the material covered in class the previous session (e.g. a quiz on Wednesday will cover material from Monday’s class). No make-ups will be administered – so it is important to be on time! The questions will not be trick questions, but track main features of the class discussion. You are free to consult your readings and notes during these quizzes.

These quizzes will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Your letter grade for this part of your total grade will be based on the number of passes as follows:

- 8-9 Passes: A
- 7 “”: A-
- 5-6 “”: B+
- 4 “”: B
- 2-3 “”: C+
- 1 “”: D+

Midterm and Final Papers:
There will be two 1500-word papers due throughout semester. The first paper is due February 21 at 5pm, and the second paper is due April 17 at 5pm. More information on the papers will be provided later in the semester.

Take-Home Final Examination:
There will be a take-home, open-book final examination in this course. The examination will involve short-answer questions that require you to (i) explain concepts and arguments presented in the texts using your own words, and (ii) compare and contrast claims advanced by the authors.

4. Rules and Requirements

Academic Freedom and Respect:
We will be talking about controversial issues in this course. I expect students to disagree with each other, as well as with me. To that end, it is important to have an open, civil environment to explore and express a variety of positions. The point is to learn something from one another, not to “win.” This requires each of us to engage respectfully with one another, especially when we disagree.
**Electronic Devices:**
There is good evidence that electronic devices significantly distract from learning. I do not ban laptops because I understand that some people might have very good reasons to use them. That being said, unless you have a very good reason, I recommend not using laptops. From my own experience, not having laptops makes time in classroom more engaging and valuable.

**Academic Integrity:**
UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [www.uga.edu/ovpi](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi).

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated on any assignment. *You* are responsible for knowing and following the honor code and all rules of academic integrity.

**Late Work:**
For the midterm and final, papers submitted past the deadline will incur a penalty of a third of a letter grade for each 24-hour period the paper is late.

Emergencies do happen. I will accommodate any that should come up. NB: Computer problems do not count as an emergency. Back up early and often. I recommend using a cloud service such as Dropbox or Google Drive.

**Important Dates:**
Spring Semester Begins – January 7  
Add/Drop – January 7-13  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – January 20  
First Paper Due – February 21  
Spring Break – March 9-13  
Withdrawal Date – March 20  
Second Paper Due – April 17  
Classes End – April 28

**5. Course Schedule**
All readings marked with a * are available on eLC.

January 8 – Introduction  
No Reading [please start the reading for next class]
Hobbes

January 10 – Human Nature
*Leviathan*, Introduction (NB: not the editor’s introduction), Chapters I, III-VI, XI

January 13 – The War of All against All
*Leviathan*, XIII

January 15 – The Laws of Nature
*Leviathan*, XIV-XV

January 17 – The State as Solution
*Leviathan*, XVI-XIX

January 20 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
No Class

January 22 – Freedom and Obedience
*Leviathan*, XX, XXVI (paragraphs [1]-[39]), XXVII

January 24 – Conscience and Education
*Leviathan*, VII, XXVI (paragraphs [40]-[41]), XXIX, XXX, XLIII (paragraphs [1]-[2], [22]-[23]), Review and Conclusion

Locke

January 27 – The State of Nature
*Second Treatise*, Chapters I-IV

January 29 – Consent and Contract
*Second Treatise*, Chapters VI (only §57), VII-VIII
David Hume, *Political Writings*, “Of the Original Contract” (164-173, stop at end of first paragraph)

January 31 – Property and Inequality
*Second Treatise*, Chapter V
*Excerpt from First Treatise*

February 3 – Revolution
*Second Treatise*, Chapters IX-XI, XVIII-XIX

February 5 – Toleration
*A Letter Concerning Toleration* (entire, excepting postscript)
February 7 – Against Toleration
*A Letter Concerning Toleration*, cont.
* Proast, J. “The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration, Briefly Consider’d and Answer’d”

**Rousseau**

February 10 – Human Nature and Society
*Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality*, Preface, Part One (read note XV)

February 12 – Social Inequality
*Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality*, Part Two (read last paragraph of note IX)

February 14 – Legitimacy and Freedom
*The Social Contract*, Book I-II

February 17 – Republican Government
*The Social Contract*, Book III, Chapters 1-2, 4-5, 10, 12, 15-16, 18

February 19 – Censorship and Religion
*The Social Contract*, Book IV; Chapters 1-2, 7-9

February 21 – First Paper Due
No Class

**Hume**

February 24 – Reason and Morality
* Hume, D., *Treatise of Human Nature*, 3.1.1-3.1.2

February 26 – Justice as Convention
*Political Writings*, “A Treatise of Human Nature,” 3.2.1-3.2.2, 3.2.5

February 28 – Civil Government and Allegiance
*Political Writings*, “A Treatise of Human Nature,” 3.2.7-10

March 2 – Institutional Design

March 4 – Progress
*Political Writings*, “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” “Of Commerce”
Mill

March 6 – Utilitarianism
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“Utilitarianism”), II (pp. 120-126 [finish paragraph on 126], pp. 135-139 [start at the bottom of 135]), V

March 9-13: Spring Break
No Class

March 16 – The Tyranny of Prevailing Opinion
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“On Liberty”), I

March 18 – An Epistemic Defense of Free Speech
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“On Liberty”), II

March 20 – Experiments in Living
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“On Liberty”), III

March 23 – The Limits of Freedom
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“On Liberty”), IV, V (just the paragraph connecting p. 102-103)

March 25 – The Case for Representative Government
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“Considerations on Representative Government”), II-III

March 27 – Voting Rethought
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“Considerations on Representative Government”), VII-VIII

March 30 – Social Equality
*On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings* (“The Subjection of Women”), I-II

Marx

April 1 – The Criticism of Rights
*Marx-Engels Reader*, “On the Jewish Question” (stop at p. 47)

April 3 – Alienation
April 6 – Exploitation: Surplus Value
*Marx-Engels Reader, “Capital, Volume One,” Part I, Chapter I (skip pp. section starting at 314 and ending at 319, start again at “Fetishism of Commodities…”); Part II, Chapter VI, Part III, Chapter VII, Section 2 (pp. 351-361)

April 8 – Exploitation: Power
*Marx-Engels Reader, “Capital, Volume One,” Part V, Chapter XXV

April 10 – Historical Materialism

April 13 – Revolution and the End of History
*Marx-Engels Reader, “The Communist Manifesto,” (sections I, II, IV), “Critique of the Gotha Program” section IV, “The German Ideology” (p. 160, just the paragraph beginning with, “Further, the division of labour implies…”), “Capital, Volume Three” (p. 441, from “In fact, the realm of freedom…” to end of section),

**Nietzsche**

April 15 – The Truth Is Terrible
*Nietzsche, “An Attempt at Self-Criticism” from The Birth of Tragedy

April 17 – Paper 2 Due
No Class

April 20 – Philosophy as Psychology
*Nietzsche, “On the Prejudices of Philosophers” from Beyond Good and Evil
*On the Genealogy of Morality, “Preface”

April 22 – The Slave Revolt in Morality
*On the Genealogy of Morality, “First Essay”

April 24 – Guilt and Responsibility
*On the Genealogy of Morality, “Second Essay”

April 27 – Perspectivism
*On the Genealogy of Morality, “Third Essay”

April 28 – A Review and Conclusion
No Reading

*Take-Home Final Exam due May 1 at 5:00pm*