

POLS 4020: Political Philosophy: Hobbes through Nietzsche

University of Georgia, Department of Political Science

Spring 2020

M W F 12:20-1:10pm

Baldwin 301

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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.

- Hobbes, T. *Leviathan*, ed. E. Curley, Hackett, ISBN: 0872201775
- Hume, D. *Political Writings*, eds. S. D. Warner and D. W. Livingstone, Hackett, ISBN: 0872201600
- Locke, J. *Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. M. Goldie, Oxford University Press, ISBN: 0198732449
- Mill, J. S. *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*, eds. M. Philp, F. Rosen, Oxford University Press ISBN: 0199670803
- Nietzsche, F. *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Ed. K. Ansell-Pearson, Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 9781316602591
- Rousseau, J. J. *The Basic Political Writings*, 2nd Edition, ed. D. A. Cress, Hackett ISBN: 1603846735
- Ed. Tucker, R. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition, W. W. Norton ISBN: 039309040X

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.

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

Political Writings, “Of the Independency of Parliament,” “Of Parties in General,” “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth”

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

Marx-Engels Reader, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” (start at, “Estranged Labor” p. 76 and stop at “The Meaning of Human Requirements” p. 93)

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

Marx-Engels Reader, “On the History of His Opinions (Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*),” (entire), “The German Ideology (pp. 148-155), “Critique of the Gotha Program” section I

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