

POLS 4020: Political Philosophy: Hobbes through Nietzsche

University of Georgia, Department of Political Science

Fall 2020

T Th 9:35-10:50am (though see Section 3 below)

Baldwin 101D

Instructor: Harrison Frye

Office: Baldwin 418

Office Hours: Thurs. 2-3pm and by appointment (via Zoom)

E-mail: hpfrye@uga.edu

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) how the course will be run in light of COVID-19 restrictions, (4) grades and assignments, (5) rules and requirements, and (6) 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:

- 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. How Class Will Be Run in Light of COVID-19

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this class will be run a little differently than it would during a normal semester. Social distancing requirements limit the number of students allowed in a classroom. For our classroom, the limit is 18 students (the enrollment cap for the course is 45 students). To accommodate these restrictions, the course will combine in-person with online elements to engage all students in learning. This means three things for you:

First: In the course schedule below, I have separated the course into week chunks. In a given week, I want you to do the reading *and* watch three 15-20 minute lectures I will post on eLC for that week on Sunday night before the date listed. This will constitute the online component of the course.

Second: I will split you into four groups to act as discussion sections where I can engage you and you can engage your peers with this material. These groups will meet in-person as follows:

- Group 1: Tuesdays 9:35-10:10am
- Group 2: Tuesdays 10:15-10:50am
- Group 3: Thursdays 9:35-10:10am
- Group 4: Thursdays 10:15-10:50am

I will run Group 4 concurrently through Zoom for students who wish to access the course off-campus. Once classes go online after Thanksgiving, I will run all sections via Zoom.

Third: These are unusual and stressful times for all of us. I am keeping this in mind while trying my best to give you a quality education within the parameters given to me. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions you have.

4. Assignments and Grading

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

1. Two Take-Home Examinations (30% each)
2. A One-Page Final Paper Proposal (10%)
3. A Final Paper (30%)

Participation:

Participation does not appear as a formal portion of your total grade, nor do I require attendance to your discussion sections. That being said, 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.

Take-Home Examinations:

There will be two take-home, open-book examinations in this course. These examinations 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.

Final Paper and Final Paper Proposal

There will be one 1500-word final paper in the course. This paper can be on any topic so long as it is related to the course material. My only requirement is that the paper must advance and defend a thesis relate: it cannot be merely exploratory. Because this is relatively open-ended, you will write and complete a 1-page proposal that you will workshop in the final week of classes (which will be conducted online). I will provide more details later.

5. 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:

Fall Semester Begins – August 20

Add/Drop – August 20-26

First Take-Home Examination Due – October 2

Withdrawal Date – October 27

Fall Break – October 30

Second Take-Home Examination Due – November 24

Thanksgiving Break – November 25-27

Classes go Online After Thanksgiving

Final Paper Proposal Due – November 30

Classes End – December 9 (no class on us for December 8 due to Friday schedule)

Final Paper Due – December 17

6. Course Schedule

All readings marked with a * are available on eLC.

August 20 – Introduction

No in-person meeting. I will post an introductory lecture on eLC. During class-time, I will host a Zoom meeting that I wish you to come by so I can meet all of you face-to-face (albeit online). More details to follow.

Hobbes

Week Starting August 24 – The State of Nature

Leviathan, Introduction (NB: not the editor's introduction), Chapters I, III-VI, XI, XIII, XIV-XV

Week Starting August 31 – The Hobbesian State

Leviathan, XVI-XIX, XX, XXI, XXVI (paragraphs [1]-[39]), XXVII, VII, XXVI (paragraphs [40]-[41]), XXIX, XXX, XLIII (paragraphs [1]-[2], [22]-[23]), Review and Conclusion

Locke

Week Starting September 7 – Natural Law, Authority, and Property

Second Treatise, Chapters I-IV, VI (only §57), VII-VIII

David Hume, *Political Writings*, "Of the Original Contract" (164-173, stop at end of first paragraph)

Second Treatise, Chapter V

*Excerpt from *First Treatise*

Week Starting September 14 – Revolution and Toleration

Second Treatise, Chapters IX-XI, XVIII-XIX

A Letter Concerning Toleration (entire, excepting postscript)

* Proast, J. "The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration, Briefly Consider'd and Answer'd"

Rousseau

Week Starting September 21 – Society and Freedom

Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality, Preface, Part One (read note XV), Part Two (read last paragraph of note IX)

The Social Contract, Book I-II

Week Starting September 28 – The Republican State

The Social Contract, Book III, Chapters 1-2, 4-5, 10, 12, 15-16, 18; Book IV, Chapters 1-2, 7-9

*First Take-Home Examination due October 2nd by 5pm

Hume

Week Starting October 5 – Morality, Justice, and Allegiance

* Hume, D., *Treatise of Human Nature*, 3.1.1-3.1.2

Political Writings, “A Treatise of Human Nature,” 3.2.1-3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.2.7-10

Week Starting October 12 – Institutional Design and Progress

Political Writings, “Of the Independency of Parliament,” (EXCERPT) “Of Parties in General,” “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth,” “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” “Of Commerce,” “Of Refinement in the Arts”

Mill

Week Starting October 19 – Free Speech

On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings (“On Liberty”), I-IV

Week Starting October 26 – Representative Democracy

On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings (“Considerations on Representative Government”), II-III, VII-VIII

On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings (“The Subjection of Women”), I-II

Marx

Week Starting November 2 – Early Marx

Marx-Engels Reader, “On the Jewish Question” (stop at p. 47), “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” (start at, “Estranged Labor” p. 76 and stop at “The Meaning of Human Requirements” p. 93)

Week Starting November 9 – The Theory of History and the Criticism of Capitalism

Marx -Engels Reader, “On the History of His Opinions (Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*),” “Capital, Volume One,” Part I, Chapter I (skip 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), “Critique of the Gotha Program” sections I & IV, “The Communist Manifesto,” (sections I, II, IV)

Nietzsche

Week Starting November 16 – The Dark Side of Morality
The Genealogy of Morals (entire)

Week Starting November 23 – 2nd Examination
No meetings: 2nd Exam due November 24th by 5:00pm.

November 25-27 Thanksgiving
No class

Classes go Online After Thanksgiving

Week Starting November 30 – Discussing Paper Proposals
1-Page Proposal due (more details to follow)

December 9: Last Day of Classes

Final Paper Due December 17 5pm

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- *If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.*
- *UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).*
- *If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.*
- *Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.*