

POLS 3000 – Introduction to Political Theory

Asynchronous Sessions

First Short Session, June 10 - July 8

Instructor

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Course Objective

This course is intended to be a broad introduction to the study of political philosophy, focusing heavily on the Western tradition. Its purpose is to explore various answers to a broad set of questions central to political theory. What is human nature? What purposes should states seek to achieve? How should states be structured? How should we conceive of the relationship between states and individuals? We will explore different ways of answering these questions through reading a collection of canonical political thinkers.

The course has the following objectives, which students will meet through preparation for class, written work, and online participation:

1. To read and analyze texts dealing with some of the most important problems and theories in political philosophy.
2. To explore and analyze how political theories are formulated.
3. To explore and analyze how different political theories relate to each other.
4. To explore and analyze the ways in which works of political philosophy may inform, illuminate, and enrich contemporary political discussions.

Course Format

I will hold class daily Monday through Friday, minus holidays, during the term. Since it is an asynchronous course, you can access the material any time you choose. I will post lectures by 8:00 AM each day of class. They typically run for about an hour.

Texts

All texts are available as pdf's in the "Course Content" section on the class' eLC page.

Grading

This course will be graded on the following plus/minus grading scale.

A=94-100, A-=90-93, B+=87-89, B=83-86, B-=80-82, C+=77-79, C=73-76, C-=70-72, D= 60-69, F=<60

Course Requirements

Exams

There will be both a midterm and a final exam consisting of a 4-5 page (double spaced, 12 point font) response to your choice of sets of provided prompts. **Each will constitute 30% of the final grade.**

Papers

Discussion and analysis are important aspects of philosophy-based courses. To facilitate discussions and questions, each student is required to turn in **three 2-3 (double spaced, 12 point font) page papers covering works encountered in the course which will account for 30% of the total grade.** There are seven opportunities to write, and you may choose any three from Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx and Mill. The due dates for each are listed on the calendar, and no late assignments will be accepted. You may use secondary sources, but the primary focus should be the assigned text. Pay close attention to overall themes, conflicts, unanswered questions, the strength of arguments, relevance to modern situations, etc. You are free to use any content you create for these assignments on your midterm and/or final.

Online Participation

Since we are not meeting in person, online participation is a required component of the course. **For 10% of your total grade, you are required to make 10 substantive comments on modules over the course of the class with at least 5 before the midterm. Comments must be at least a paragraph in length to count toward your total.** Comments can include reactions to readings or my lectures, questions, responses to others' comments, connections to outside information, etc. If a post is not deemed substantive I will let you know. If you post more than 5 comments before the midterm, they will all count toward your overall total. Though this aspect only accounts for 10% of your grade, I have found that it is a great place to engage with each other and to explore ideas that will be helpful on other assignments.

Due to the volume of content, I will not be able to go back to review posts from previous works. That means that posts are due the day we finish each work. For instance, we are scheduled to complete Plato's *Republic* on Tuesday, June 14th. I will count comments posted by 11:59 that night.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All students at the University of Georgia agree to abide by the following code when they sign the admissions application: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." For more information, check the following link:

http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm

Calendar

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced.

Friday	June 10	Intro/Constant - "Liberty of the Ancients Compared..."	read text
Monday	June 13	Plato - The Republic - Books 1-5	read books 1-2, 7-10
Tuesday	June 14	Plato - The Republic - Books 6-10	Plato Paper Due*
Wednesday	June 15	Machiavelli - The Prince - Chapters 1-12	read chapters 1-26
Thursday	June 16	Machiavelli - The Prince - Chapters 13-26	Machiavelli Paper Due*
Friday	June 17	Hobbes - Leviathan - Chapters 1-13	read chapters 1-18
Monday	June 20	Hobbes - Leviathan - Chapters 14-31	Hobbes Paper Due*
Tuesday	June 21	Locke - 2nd Treatise - Chapters 1-7	read chapters 1 - 19
Wednesday	June 22	Locke - 2nd Treatise - Chapters 8-19, Midterm Posted	Locke Paper Due*
Thursday	June 23	Midterm Work Session (Time TBA)	Midterm Due Saturday, June 25
Friday	June 24	Midterm Work Day	Midterm Due Saturday, June 25
Monday	June 27	Rousseau - Social Contract - Book 1 - Book 2: Chapter 5	read books 1-3
Tuesday	June 28	Rousseau - Social Contract - Books 2: Chapter 6 - Book 4	Rousseau Paper Due*
Wednesday	June 29	Marx - Communist Manifesto - Chapter 1	read chapters 1-2, 4
Thursday	June 30	Marx - Communist Manifesto - Chapters 2 and 4	Marx Paper Due*
Friday	July 1	Mill - On Liberty - Chapters 1-2, Final Posted	read chapters 1-5
Monday	July 4	Holiday	
Tuesday	July 5	Mill - On Liberty - Chapters 3-5	Mill Paper Due*
Wednesday	July 6	Rawls - Theory of Justice Summary, Final Posted	read text
Thursday	July 7	Final Work Session (Time TBA)	
Friday	July 8	Final Due	

*3 papers required