

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY

POLS 3000 | Fall 2023
MWF 12:40-1:30 | Baldwin 301
Professor Ilya P. Winham (iwinham@uga.edu)
Office: Baldwin 304A
Office Hours: By appointment

*The basic question of political theory could be put this way:
What is going on? What is really happening in society?
We need to ask this question because the ordinary commonsense
understanding of what is going on is inadequate. And the answers offered
frequently are surprising, strange, even shocking for ordinary understanding.
—Charles Taylor*

Political theory is both a specialized field of study within political science and a cognitive enterprise that we all engage in whenever we reflect on and attempt to navigate the course of human events. As an academic field, political theory is at the core of an education in political science, for the only way to think intelligently about politics is to learn to think one's way through the works of the great writers on the subject. Political theory is also at the heart of the very idea of a university, which was created as an academic institution to foster reflection and conversations on the fundamental questions of life—questions that are not raised or discussed in business or natural science courses.

The principal aim of this course is to offer a detailed examination of some of the classic texts of the Western tradition of political thought. The course begins with Plato and Aristotle, the two great teachers of the human race, and their inquiry into political leadership and the greatest good for political communities. The course then examines Machiavelli's conception of grand politics in *The Prince*. After Machiavelli we turn to modern political thought by way of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (on capitalism, socialism, communism, and social revolution) and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*. The course concludes with a study of Hannah Arendt's essays "On Violence" and "Lying in Politics."

We will approach these books, essays, and pamphlets with the three-fold aim of entering into the thought-world of the text in order to understand the aims of its author on his or her own terms, to feel the force of the problems that the author took himself or herself to be confronting, as well as the promise (and difficulties) of his or her strategies for confronting them. Once we have a sense of what an author is doing through an intense study of his or her work, we will be in a better position to appreciate the material as a cognitive resource by which we can arm ourselves with concepts and perspectives to help us think clearly, critically, and creatively about our world. These works have enriched the world we live in, and by becoming familiar with them we will be able to acquire a deeper understanding of what is really happening in our society.

PRIMARY TEXTS FOR STUDY:

The following books are **required** and available in the campus bookstore for purchase: (Texts marked * will be made available on eLC and you do not need to purchase them.)

- *Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, 3rd edition, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. J. M. Cooper (Hackett)
- Plato, *Republic*, 2nd edition, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett)
- Aristotle, *Politics*, a new translation by C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett)
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter Constantine (Modern Library)
- J. S. Mill, *On Liberty and other writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge)
- Hannah Arendt, *Crisis of the Republic* (Harvest)

NOTE: Buy or rent these physical books, new or used, at the campus bookstore or order them online. You may not use a different edition or translation of these books. You may not use electronic editions either (I want you to learn how to interact with books, not your devices). My role in this class is to help you learn, and I cannot do that if you are not on the same page reading the same words as I am.

It is essential to keep up with the reading. The reading is to be completed by the date listed on the syllabus. ****Always bring the assigned reading to class.**** The texts for this class are not “quick reads”; nor can you simply read the first few pages or glance over their paragraphs quickly to catch their leading ideas. You must reserve enough time to read the assigned texts carefully and completely.

COURSE FORMAT AND OBJECTIVES:

My objectives for this course are open-ended. While I hope you acquire knowledge from the readings and lectures, the ultimate payoff of this course is learning how to read, interpret, and think critically. By taking this course you will:

- Develop skills of careful and thoughtful reading of political thought.
- Develop a sense of history which is necessary for an adequate understanding of political life.
- Develop the ability to think systematically, analytically, creatively, and critically about political ideas, practices, and problems.
- Consider how the problems, concepts and arguments examined might be of significance today and challenge our own way of thinking about politics.

This is a text-based lecture course. Given the number of students in the course and setup of the classroom, class time will be devoted to lectures. I expect you to come to class on time, regularly, and to listen and take notes. I expect you to have read the assigned material for each class session *before* coming to class and to be prepared to participate during breaks in the lectures for questions, discussion, the airing of different points of view, and so on. If for some reason you have to arrive late or must leave early, tell me *before* the moment in question and then arrive/depart as unobtrusively as possible. (If you think this will become habitual, don't take the class).

Classroom rules and conduct: 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. Therefore phones must be silenced and put away. If you must look at your phone during class you must inform the instructor before class begins. Although I disapprove of the use of electronic devices during class, I will allow you to take notes on a laptop, tablet, or similar device.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the DRC and the instructor.

GRADED IN-CLASS QUIZZES:

The quizzes will consist of true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and very short answer questions. You'll have the entire class period to complete the quiz, which usually takes less than 10 minutes.

Date	In-class Quiz	Points
Aug. 28	<i>Apology and Republic I</i>	10
Oct. 2	<i>Politics I and II</i>	10
Oct. 11	<i>The Prince</i>	10
Oct. 23	<i>On Liberty</i>	10
Nov. 3	<i>The Subjection of Women</i>	10
Nov. 13	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i>	10
Nov. 27	<i>On Violence</i>	10
Dec. 4	<i>Lying in Politics</i>	10
Total:		80

GRADED PAPER ON PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*:

You will write a 5-page paper on Plato's *Republic* which will be due Wednesday, September 20, and it will be worth 20 points. Detailed directions for this assignment will be posted on eLC.

Grading scale: A >93 A- 90-92 B+ 87-89 B 83-86 B- 80-82 C+ 77-79 C 73-76 C- 70-72.

Late assignments: No late assignments will be accepted unless you have received express written permission (i.e., an email) from me giving you an extension of time on the assignment. I will grant extensions for a reasonable amount of time (usually a few days) for legitimate reasons.

Extra credit: You will have a chance to earn a little extra credit on some of the quizzes. If you want to propose an extra credit opportunity for the whole class, feel free to email me with your idea. Your proposal is more likely to be accepted if it is not submitted near the end of the semester.

ChatGPT and other Large Language Models: I consider the use of ChatGPT and similar tools a clear and egregious violation of academic integrity that should be—and will be—punished most severely.

Academic honesty: The University's Academic Honesty Policy ("A Culture of Honesty," available at <http://honesty.uga.edu/index.html>) defines scholastic honesty as "the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed." 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.

Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Assignments

Wednesday, August 16 – Syllabus

Friday, August 18 – Learn Names

Monday, August 21 – Read Plato's *Apology* (pp. 20-42)

Wednesday, August 23 – Review or reread Plato's *Apology* (pp. 20-42)

Friday, August 25 – Read Plato's *Republic*, Book I (pp. 1-31)

Monday, August 28 – **In-class quiz on *Apology* and *Republic I***

Wednesday, August 30 – Read Plato's *Republic*, Book II (pp. 32-59)

Friday, September 1 – NO CLASS

Monday, September 4 – NO CLASS (Labor Day Holiday)

Wednesday, September 6 – Read Plato's *Republic*, Book III (pp. 60-93)

Friday, September 8 – No new reading. Catch up if you are behind!

Monday, September 11 – Read Plato's *Republic*, Book IV (pp. 94-121)

Wednesday, September 13 – Read Plato's *Republic*, Book V (pp. 122-156)

Friday, September 15 – Read Plato's *Republic*, Book VI (pp. 157-185)

Monday, September 18 – Read Plato's *Republic*, Book VII (pp. 186-212)

Wednesday, September 20 – ***Republic* paper due by midnight (NO CLASS)**

Friday, September 22 – Introduction to Aristotle. No reading assignment.

Monday, September 25 – Read Aristotle's *Politics*, Book I (pp. 2-21)

Wednesday, September 27 – Read or review Aristotle's *Politics*, Book I (pp. 2-21)

Friday, September 29 – Read Aristotle's *Politics*, Book II (pp. 22-51)

Monday, October 2 – **In-class quiz on *Politics I* and *II***

Wednesday, October 4 – Introduction to Niccolò Machiavelli. Start reading Machiavelli's *Prince*

Friday, October 6 – Skinner on Machiavelli (Video). Keep reading Machiavelli's *Prince*

Monday, October 9 – Finish reading Machiavelli's *Prince* (pp. 3-123)

Wednesday, October 11 – **In-class quiz on *The Prince***

Friday, October 13 – Introduction to J. S. Mill

Monday, October 16 – Read Mill’s *On Liberty*, ch. 1 (pp. 5-18)

Wednesday, October 18 – Read Mill’s *On Liberty*, ch. 2 (pp. 19-55)

Friday, October 20 – Read Mill’s *On Liberty*, ch. 3 (pp. 56-74)

Monday, October 23 – **In-class quiz on *On Liberty***

Wednesday, October 25 – Read Mill’s *Subjection of Women*, ch. 1 (pp. 119-145)

Friday, October 27 – NO CLASS

Monday, October 30 – NO CLASS

Wednesday, November 1 – Read Mill’s *Subjection of Women*, ch. 2 (pp. 146-165)

Friday, November 3 – **In-class quiz on *The Subjection of Women***

Monday, November 6 – Read part I of *The Communist Manifesto* (pp. 73-84)

Wednesday, November 8 – Read part II of *The Communist Manifesto* (pp. 84-92)

Friday, November 10 – Read parts III and IV of *The Communist Manifesto* (pp. 92-102)

Monday, November 13 – **In-class quiz on *The Communist Manifesto***

Wednesday, November 15 – Introduction to Hannah Arendt. Read part I of *On Violence* (pp. 105-133)

Friday, November 17 – Read part II of Arendt’s *On Violence* (pp. 134-155)

Monday-Friday, November 20-24 – NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK.

Monday, November 27 – **In-class quiz on *On Violence***

Wednesday, November 29 – Read Arendt’s *Lying in Politics* (pp. 3-47)

Friday, December 1 – Read or review Arendt’s *Lying in Politics*

Monday, December 4 – **In-class quiz on *Lying in Politics***