

POLS 4020: Political Philosophy: Hobbes to Nietzsche

University of Georgia, Department of Political Science

Spring 2024

M W F 11:30am-12:20pm

Baldwin 102

Instructor: Harrison Frye

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Office Hours: M W 2:00-3:00pm, and by appointment

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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
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. Assignments and Grading

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

1. Class Quizzes: 20%
2. Two Papers: 60% (30% each)
3. Group Project: 20%

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.

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+

Papers

There will be two papers (1300-1500 words) due throughout semester. Details are available on the Assignments portion of the eLC page.

Revision Policy

You can always re-write a paper in response to my comments for a different grade. You must get revisions back to me within two (2) weeks of receiving comments.

Group Project

At the end of the semester, I have scheduled a week dedicated to group presentations. You will present as a part of 5-person group. The presentation should explain how an idea or theory from one of the authors we cover this semester provides insight into a contemporary issue, event, problem, etc. Your focus can be political, social, or cultural – I am leaving this open-ended to allow you and your group to engage with whatever interests you. My intention is for you to engage the course material on your own terms in a way that hopefully not only advances your understanding of the course material, but also helps you (and by extension your peers) better understand the world around us.

The presentation should be 10 minutes long, allowing for 5 minutes of Q&A. You should use slides and have a formal bibliography at the end of your slide-deck.

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- How clear is your presentation?
- Does the presentation show a good understanding of the relevant course material?
- Are the claims about the present explained well and grounded in evidence?
- Is the connection between the course material and the contemporary issue well thought-out?

In addition to my own observations, I will use self-reporting to judge individual contributions.

You are responsible for forming a group. Once you have identified your group, please select one person to e-mail me (hpfrye@uga.edu) your group roster to me with all members cc'd by April 1 at 5:00pm.

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.

Unless explicitly stated, artificial intelligence-based technologies, such as ChatGPT, must not be used to generate responses for student assignments.

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:

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. If you need an extension for any foreseeable reason, let me know at least 48 hours before the due date of the assignment.

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 – Jan. 8
Add/Drop – Jan. 8-12
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Jan. 15
Paper 1 Due – Feb 23
Spring Break – March 4-8
Withdrawal Date – March 21
Groups Formed – April 1
Paper 2 Due – April 17
Group Presentations – April 22-27
Classes End – April 29

5. Course Schedule

All readings marked with a * are available on eLC.

Date	Class Material Covered
Mon., Jan. 8	No Readings (Introductory class)
Wed., Jan. 10	Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Introduction (NB: not the editor's introduction), Chapters I, III-VI, XI
Fri., Jan. 12	<i>Leviathan</i> , XIII
Mon., Jan. 15	No Class – MLK, Jr. Day
Wed., Jan. 17	<i>Leviathan</i> , XIV-XV
Fri., Jan. 19	<i>Leviathan</i> , XVI-XIX
Mon., Jan. 22	No Class
Wed., Jan. 24	<i>Leviathan</i> , XX, XXI, XXVI (paragraphs [1]-[39]), XXVII
Fri., Jan. 26	<i>Leviathan</i> , VII, XXVI (paragraphs [40]-[41]), XXIX, XXX, XLIII (paragraphs [1]-[2], [22]-[23]), Review and Conclusion
Mon., Jan. 29	John Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters I-IV

Wed., Jan. 31	<i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters VI (only §57), VII-VIII David Hume, <i>Political Writings</i> , “Of the Original Contract” (164-173, stop at end of first paragraph)
Fri., Feb. 2	<i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapter V *Excerpt from <i>First Treatise</i>
Mon., Feb. 5	<i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters IX-XI, XVIII-XIX
Wed., Feb. 7	<i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> (entire, excepting postscript)
Fri., Feb. 9	<i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , cont. * Proast, J. “The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration, Briefly Consider’d and Answer’d”
Mon., Feb. 12	J. J Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality</i> , Preface, Part One (read note XV)
Wed., Feb. 14	<i>Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality</i> , Part Two (read last paragraph of note IX)
Fri., Feb. 16	<i>The Social Contract</i> , Book I-II
Mon., Feb. 19	<i>The Social Contract</i> , Book III, Chapters 1-2, 4-5, 10, 12, 15-16, 18
Wed., Feb. 21	<i>The Social Contract</i> , Book IV, Chapters 1-2, 7-9
Fri., Feb. 23	No Class – Paper #1 Due
Mon., Feb. 26	*Hume, D., <i>Treatise of Human Nature</i> , 3.1.1-3.1.2
Wed., Feb. 28	<i>Political Writings</i> , “A Treatise of Human Nature,” 3.2.1-3.2.2, 3.2.5
Fri., Mar. 1	<i>Political Writings</i> , “A Treatise of Human Nature,” 3.2.7-10
Mon., Mar. 4	No Class – Spring Break
Wed., Mar. 6	No Class – Spring Break
Fri., Mar. 8	No Class – Spring Break
Mon., Mar. 11	<i>Political Writings</i> , “That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science,” “Of Parties in General,” “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth”
Wed., Mar. 13	<i>Political Writings</i> , “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” “Of Commerce”
Fri., Mar. 15	J. S. Mill, <i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“Utilitarianism”), II (pp. 120-126 [finish paragraph on 126], pp. 135-139 [start at the bottom of 135]), V
Mon., Mar. 18	<i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“On Liberty”), I
Wed., Mar. 20	<i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“On Liberty”), II
Fri., Mar. 22	<i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“On Liberty”), III
Mon., Mar. 25	<i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“On Liberty”), IV, V (just the paragraph connecting p. 102-103)
Wed., Mar. 27	<i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“Considerations on Representative Government”), II-III
Fri., Mar. 29	<i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“Considerations on Representative Government”), VII-VIII
Mon., Apr. 1	<i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> (“The Subjection of Women”), I-II [NB: Groups formed by this date!]

Wed., Apr. 3	Kaerl Marx, <i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “On the Jewish Question” (stop at p. 47)
Fri., Apr. 5	<i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” (start at, “Estranged Labor” p. 76 and stop at “The Meaning of Human Requirements” p. 93)
Mon., Apr. 8	<i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “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)
Wed., Apr. 10	<i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “Capital, Volume One,” Part V, Chapter XXV
Fri., Apr. 12	<i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “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
Mon., Apr. 15	<i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “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),
Wed., Apr. 17	Paper #2 Due – No Class
Fri., Apr. 19	No Class (work on presentations)
Mon., Apr. 22	Group Presentations
Wed., Apr. 24	Group Presentations
Fri., Apr. 26	Group Presentations
Mon., Apr. 29	Review and Conclusion