

POLS 4020: Political Philosophy: Hobbes to Nietzsche

University of Georgia, Department of Political Science

Fall 2024

T Th 9:35am-10:50am

Baldwin 102

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Office Hours: T TR 1-2pm

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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:

Locke, J. *The First Treatise* [excerpt]

Marx, "Notes on James Mill" [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: 15%
2. Two Exams: 60% (30% each)
3. Group Project: 25%

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:

7-9 Passes: A

6 "" : A-

5 "" : B+

4 "" : B

2-3 "" : C+

1 "" : D+

Class Examinations

There will be two closed-book, in-class examinations in this course. The first examination covers material from the first half, the second from the second half. Each examination will be split into two parts. The first part of the examination will involve short answer questions that test comprehension and fluency with the course material. The second part will be an essay question that requires you to take a stance on an issue. This essay question will draw on our class discussions. More details will be provided in class.

You are responsible for bringing a blue book to class on the day of each examination. Exam books can be purchased at the UGA Bookstore.

Makeup Policy

Makeups for examinations will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If you foresee missing an examination for a valid and exceptional reason, please let me know at least 48 hours in advance. In cases of emergency occurring within this 48-hour window, inform me as soon as possible.

On Revision

As noted, part of each examination is an essay question requiring you to argue a position related to the course material. I will provide you with a grade and comments on how to improve your response. You can type up your answer and revise it in response to those comments. I will regrade your response and that grade will replace that portion of your exam grade.

To take advantage of this opportunity, please upload two files to eLC under assignments within two weeks of receiving your graded examination (under the assignment module, there will be Exam 1 Essay Revision and an Exam 2 Essay Revision pages). First, upload a picture of your original essay along with my comments. Second, upload your typed up revised answer as a Word .Docx or PDF (include a header with your name, the date, and the question you answered).

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 will be no longer than 10-minutes and 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.

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 October 31st at 5:00pm. A one-paragraph group project proposal from each group will be due October 7th in class.

A document outlining expectations in more detail is available on eLC under assignments (see “Group Presentation”).

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:

Fall Semester Begins - August 14

Add/Drop - August 14-20

In-Class Exam 1 - October 1

Withdrawal Date - October 21

Fall Break - November 1

Groups Formed - October 31

Group Project Proposal Due - November 7

In-Class Exam 2 - November 12

Group Presentations - November 19-21

Thanksgiving Break - November 27-29

Classes End - December 3 (no class due to Friday schedule)

5. Course Schedule

All readings marked with a * are available on eLC.

Date	Class Material Covered
Thu., Aug. 15	No Readings (Introductory class)
Tue., Aug. 20	Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Introduction (NB: not the editor's introduction), Chapters I, III-VI, XI
Thu., Aug. 22	<i>Leviathan</i> , XIII-XV
Tue., Aug. 27	<i>Leviathan</i> , XVI-XX
Thu., Aug. 29	<i>Leviathan</i> , XXI, XXVI (paragraphs [1]-[39]), XXVII, XXIX, XXX, Review and Conclusion
Tue., Sep. 3	John Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters I-III, VI§57, VII-VIII David Hume, <i>Political Writings</i> , "Of the Original Contract"
Thu., Sep. 5	<i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapter V *Excerpt from <i>First Treatise</i>
Tue., Sep. 10	<i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters IX-XI, XVIII-XIX
Thu., Sep. 12	Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , entire. * Proast, J. "The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration, Briefly Consider'd and Answer'd"
Tue., Sep. 17	J. J Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality</i> , Parts One and Two (read note XV and last paragraph of note IX)
Thu., Sep. 19	Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Book I-II
Tue., Sep. 24	Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Book III, Chapters 1-2, 4-5, 10, 12, 15-16, 18, Book IV Chapters 1-2
Thu., Sep. 26	Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Book IV, Chapters 7-9
Tue., Oct. 1	In-Class Exam 1
Thu., Oct. 3	David Hume, <i>Political Writings</i> , "A Treatise of Human Nature," 3.2.1-3.2.2, 3.2.5
Tue., Oct. 8	<i>Political Writings</i> , "A Treatise of Human Nature," 3.2.7-10 [optional: re-visit "Of the Original Contract"]
Thu., Oct. 10	<i>Political Writings</i> , "That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science," "Of Parties in General," "Of the Independency of Parliament" "Of Refinement in the Arts"
Tue., Oct. 15	J. S. Mill, <i>On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Writings</i> , "On Liberty", I-II
Thu., Oct. 17	Mill, "On Liberty," III-IV, V (just the paragraph connecting p. 102-103)
Tue., Oct. 22	Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government", III, VII-VIII
Thu., Oct. 24	Mill, "The Subjection of Women," I-II, IV
Tue., Oct. 29	<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) *Marx, "Notes on James Mill" [excerpt]

Thu., Oct. 31	<i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “Capital, Volume One,” Part I, Chapter I (skip section starting at p. 314 and ending at p. 319, start again at “Fetishism of Commodities...”); Part II, Chapter VI, Part III, Chapter VII, Section 2 (pp. 351-361)
Tue., Nov. 5	<i>Marx-Engels Reader</i> , “On the History of His Opinions (Preface to <i>A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</i>),” (entire), “The Communist Manifesto,” (sections I, II, IV) “Critique of the Gotha Program,” (sections I & IV)
Thu., Nov. 7	Class Overview (Group Project Proposal Due in Class)
Tue., Nov. 12	In-Class Exam 2
Thu., Nov. 14	Work on Presentations
Tue., Nov. 19	Group Project Presentations
Thu., Nov. 21	Group Project Presentations
Tue., Nov. 26	Writing time for those working on revisions
Thu., Nov. 28	Thanksgiving Break (No Class)
Tue., Dec. 3	No Class because of Friday Schedule

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.*