

POLS 3000E – Introduction to Political Theory

Asynchronous Sessions

First Short Session, June 4 - July 3

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 30 to 45 minutes.

Texts

All texts are available as pdf's in the "Course Content" section on the class' eLC page and at [this link](#).

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 **two short answer prompts, each requiring a 250 word response and a 500 word response to your choice of sets of provided prompts** (roughly 4 pages double spaced combined between short answers and essay; 12 point font). **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 **two 500 word (roughly 2 double spaced; 12 point font) page papers covering works encountered in the course which will account for 20% of the total grade.** There are seven opportunities to write, and you may choose any two from Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx and Mill. **At least one paper should be completed before the midterm** (Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, or Locke). 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. Papers that meet the length requirements and are predominantly summaries of the relevant work will receive an 8/10. Those that go beyond and bring in personal analysis or connection will receive higher scores. [Here](#) are universal prompts to help get started.

Online Participation

Since we are not meeting in person, online participation is a required component of the course. **For 20% of your total grade, you are required to make 7 substantive comments on modules over the course of the class with at least 4 before the midterm. Comments must be at least 120 words 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 and provide time to edit them. Look [here](#) for examples of strong original posts and replies.

If you post more than 4 comments before the midterm, they will all count toward your overall total. 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.

I try to ensure that every comment has a thoughtful response, whether from other students or from myself. 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 Monday, June 9th. 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

AI Policy

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is prohibited for any and all coursework.

Calendar

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced. All page numbers refer to the digital documents provided on the eLC page.

Thursday,	June 4	Intro/Constant - "Liberty of the Ancients Compared..."	read text (pages 1-14)
Friday,	June 5	Plato - The Republic - Books 1-5	read books 1 (pages 154-187), 8-9 (383-440)
Monday,	June 10	Plato - The Republic - Books 6-10	Plato Paper Due*
Tuesday,	June 11	Machiavelli - The Prince - Chapters 1-12	read chapters 1-17 (pages 15-57)
Wednesday,	June 12	Machiavelli - The Prince - Chapters 13-26	Machiavelli Paper Due*
Thursday,	June 13	Hobbes - Leviathan - Chapters 1-13	read chapters 13-21 (pages 71-126)
Friday,	June 14	Hobbes - Leviathan - Chapters 14-31	Hobbes Paper Due*
Monday,	June 17	Locke - 2nd Treatise - Chapters 1-7, Midterm Posted	read chapters 2-10 (pages 97-151)
Tuesday,	June 18	Locke - 2nd Treatise - Chapters 8-19	Locke Paper Due*
Wednesday,	June 19	Juneteenth	
Thursday,	June 20	Midterm Due	
Friday,	June 21	Rousseau - Social Contract - Book 1 - Book 2: Chapter 5	read books 1-3.11 (pages 34-97)
Monday,	June 24	Rousseau - Social Contract - Books 2: Chapter 6 - Book 4	Rousseau Paper Due*
Tuesday,	June 25	Marx - Communist Manifesto - Chapter 1	read chapters 1-2, 4 (pages 14-27, 34)
Wednesday,	June 26	Marx - Communist Manifesto - Chapters 2 and 4	Marx Paper Due*
Thursday,	June 27	Mill - On Liberty - Chapters 1-2, Final Posted	Read Chapters 2-4
Friday,	June 28	Mill - On Liberty - Chapters 3-5	Mill Paper Due*
Monday,	June 29	Rawls - Theory of Justice Summary	read text (pages 1-15)
Tuesday,	June 30	Final Office House (Virtual)	Time TBD
Thursday,	July 2	Final Due	

*2 papers required, including one on Plato, Machiavelli, or Hobbes, or Locke