

Political Science 211
Introduction to Political Theory

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Class: T/R 9:30-11:18
O. Hrs: T 1:30-2:30
2114 Derby Hall

This course presents an introduction to western political thought through the lens of leading theoretical approaches to the study of politics. We examine a series of provocative attempts by the “Great thinkers” to make sense of the most fundamental political questions that confront us as human beings: are there any trans-historical and cross-cultural “fundamentals” of human nature? If so, how do they constrain the possibilities of political affiliation? If not, does “anything go” or are there other ways to stabilize our social and political relations? How are we to understand history and the ways that our own society fit into it? How do various approaches to understanding politics prioritize the relationship between freedom, order, and equality? Though this course is fundamentally about “theory,” we will frequently engage related questions of practice with special reference to recent American political events.

There are four main course requirements:

1. *Participation.* I have high expectations for attendance and class preparation. In addition to you being expected to volunteer your views during discussion, you may be called upon at random. Some of these readings are dense and difficult, so I strongly encourage you to take notes as you read, and whenever possible, to read them twice and/or discuss them with classmates before the class session. *I do not expect you to come to class with all the "right" answers. However, I do expect you to come to class having thought seriously about our texts and the questions they raise.* "A" level participation involves demonstrating consistently high levels of engagement with the readings, as well as insightfully connecting them to each other, the course themes, other students' contributions, real politics, etc... General seminar participation will count for 25% of the final course grade.

In addition to general participation, each member of the class will be assigned the role of "point person" for one class session. This role involves turning in a formally written set of comments on the readings (about two pages), and making a short (about 5 minute) class presentation designed to spark discussion. Your discussion, presentation, and written responses for this session will count for 5% of your final grade.

2. *Quizzes.* There will be a number of short, unannounced quizzes to check for understanding. These will not be hard for students who keep up with the readings. The quizzes will count for 15% of the final grade.
3. *Midterm.* There will be an in-class midterm accounting for 20% of the final grade.
4. *Final Exam or Paper.* Students will have the option of taking a cumulative final exam or writing a paper (approx. 7-8 page paper). The final exam or paper will count for 35% of the final grade.

Course Materials

All course materials and readings will be available on Carmen.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic

misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

I require electronic copies of your paper because they will be run through a software program designed to detect plagiarism from the web, as well as a database of papers turned in at OSU. I do this *not* because I do not trust you. I believe that the vast majority of students are honest. I even believe that most students who plagiarize do so, not because they are generally dishonest, but because they panic in the end of term crush. I check for plagiarism to reassure students who do their own work that they are not chumps, and to help students who are tempted to plagiarize under pressure to avoid making a decision that they will come to regret.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

GEC Social Science Expected Outcomes

Social science develop students’ understanding of the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; of the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and of the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they are applied to the studies of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies.
2. Students understand the behavior of individuals, differences and similarities in the contexts of human existence (e.g., psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political), and the processes by which groups, organizations, and societies function.
3. Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

Schedule of Readings for Class Meetings

January 6 th	<i>Introduction</i>
January 8 th	<i>What is political theory?</i> Aristotle, “Political science” Isaiah Berlin, “The purpose of philosophy” Leo Strauss, “What is political philosophy?” William Connolly, “Essentially contestable concepts”
January 13 th	<i>Politics and human nature</i> Aristotle, “The state exists by nature” Thomas Hobbes, “The misery of the natural condition of mankind” John Locke, “The state of nature and the state of war” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The noble savage” Robert Owen, “Man’s character is formed for him” Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Man as a productive being”

- January 15th *The Social Contract*
 Thomas Hobbes, “Creating Leviathan”
 John Locke, “Express and tacit consent”
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Natural freedom and the freedom of the citizen”
 Immanuel Kant, “The hypothetical contract”
 David Hume, “The irrelevance of consent”
- January 20th *The State and Political Obligation*
 John Locke, “Political power”
 Max Weber, “The state and coercion”
 Robert Paul Wolff, “The conflict of autonomy and authority”
 Plato, “The duty of obedience”
 Henry David Thoreau, “The duty of disobedience”
 Martin Luther King, Jr., “An unjust law is no law”
 John Rawls, “Civil disobedience”
- January 22nd *Power & Freedom*
 Thomas Hobbes, “Of power”
 Michel Foucault, “Power/Knowledge”
 William Connolly, “Forms of power”
 Thomas Hobbes, “Of the liberty of subjects”
 Benjamin Constant, “The liberty of the ancients and the moderns”
 Isaiah Berlin, “Two concepts of liberty”
 Charles Taylor, “In defense of positive freedom”
 Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman, “The tyranny of controls”
 G.A. Cohen, “Poverty as a lack of freedom”
- January 27th *Democracy and Representation I*
 Marty Linsky, “Senator McGrail and Senator Johnson on the death penalty”
 James Fishkin and Bruce Ackerman, “Deliberation day”
 Hendrik Hertzberg, “The states we’re in”
- January 29th *Democracy and Presentation II*
 John Dunn, “Democratic theory”
 Plato, “Ruling as a skill”
 John Stuart Mill, “The democratic citizen”
 Aristotle, “Rule of the people and rule of law”
 James Madison, “The danger of faction”
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Deputies or representatives”
 Edmund Burke, “Speech at Bristol”
 Joseph Schumpeter, “Another theory of democracy”
- February 3rd *Democracy & Public Morality I*
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The general will” (36)
 Alexis de Tocqueville, “Tyranny of the majority” (44)
 John Stuart Mill, “One simple principle”(53)
 H.L.A. Hart, “The changing sense of morality” (56)
 John Rawls, “The idea of public reason” (ER)
 Michael Sandel, “Moral argument and liberal toleration” (ER)

- February 5th *Democracy & Public Morality II*
 Simone Sandy, “Tossing dwarfs in Illinois”
 Thomas Szasz, “The ethics of addiction”
 Emily Bazelon, “Why is prostitution legal?”
- February 10th *Midterm*
- February 12th *Democracy and Rights I*
 Jeremy Bentham, “Nonsense on stilts”
 Karl Marx, “The rights of egoistic man”
 Robert Nozick, “Rights as side-constraints”
 Ronald Dworkin, “Taking rights seriously”
 John Locke, “The futility of intolerance”
 Jeremy Waldron, “The Satanic Verses”
 Catherine MacKinnon, “Only words”
- February 17th *Democracy and Rights II*
 Nat Hentoff, “Free speech on the campus”
 Bruce Fein, “Shunning racial, religious bigotry”
 Hate speech policy
- February 19th *Distributive Justice I*
 John Locke, “Labor as the basis of property”
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The earth belongs to nobody”
 Herbert Spencer, “The right to the use of the earth”
 Karl Marx, “The true foundation of private property”
 Sigmund Freud, “Property and aggression”
 Robert Nozick, “Difficulties with mixing labor”
 Aristotle, “Reciprocity” and “Equality and inequality”
 David Hume, “The impossibility of equality”
 Karl Marx, “From each according to his abilities”
 F.A. Hayek, “The impossibility of planning”
- February 24th *Distributive Justice II*
 Liam Murphy and Thomas Nagel, “Tax travesties”
 George F. Will, “Legal theft in Norwood”
 Michael Kinsley, “Take my kidney, please”
- February 26th *Principles of Justice I*
 John Rawls, “A theory of justice”
 John Rawls, “Two principles of justice”
 Robert Nozick, “The entitlement theory”
 Michael Walzer, “Complex equality”
- March 3rd *Principles of Justice II*
 Milton Friedman, “Why America needs school vouchers”
 Michael Sandel, “Lemon aid”
 Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott, “\$80,000 and a dream”

March 5th

Gender

Iris Marion Young, "Displacing the distributive paradigm"

Plato, "Women as weaker partners"

Aristotle, "Separate spheres"

Mary Wollstonecraft, "The rights of women"

John Stuart Mill, "The subjection of women"

Carol Gilligan, "In a different voice"

Allison M. Jaggar, "Socialist feminism and the standpoint of women"

Susan Moller Okin, "Justice, gender, and the family"

March 10th

Race & Political Theory

Fanon: from *The Wretched of the Earth*

M. L. King Jr.: Letter from Birmingham Jail

Malcom X: The Ballot or the Bullet

Obama: Speech on Race in America

March 12th

Nationalism and Culture

Isaiah Berlin, "National sentiment" (102)

Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is patriotism a virtue?" (103)

Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz, "National self-determination" (105)

Will Kymlicka, "Justice and minority rights" (ER)

Brian Barry, "The abuse of 'culture'" (ER)

Susan Okin, "Is multiculturalism bad for women?" (ER)