

**Political Science 2400: Online – No Classroom
Introduction to Political Theory**

Professor Michael Neblo
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Class Time: Flexible
O. Hrs: T 10:30-11:30
2058 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. In addition to developing familiarity with the content of the basic concepts in political theory, the course is designed to help students develop the ability to apply those concepts analytically to contemporary politics, and to synthesize them into a more coherent system.

There are four main course requirements:

1. *Lectures.* Video lectures and accompanying PowerPoint slides (for note-taking) will be posted on Carmen, under Content, twice each week by the end of the day on Tuesday and Thursday.
2. *Quizzes.* There will be an almost weekly (see schedule below) quiz to check for understanding. The quizzes together will count for 20% of the final grade.
3. *Midterm.* There will be a midterm accounting for 35% of the final grade.
4. *Final Exam.* The cumulative final exam will count for 45% of the final grade.

The midterm and final will both consist of three sections tracking the main course goals: 1) a short answer section assessing basic conceptual content knowledge, 2) an analytical application essay, and 3) a conceptual synthesis essay. An exam review lecture will be posted to explain in more detail.

Course Materials

All course materials and readings will be available on Carmen.

Communication and Discussion

I will use emails and News items on Carmen to communicate with students in the class. Please check Carmen frequently throughout the semester.

You should feel free to email Prof. Neblo with any questions about course materials or logistics. Please treat your email as a professional correspondence and be as clear and specific as possible. Because of the online format of this course, we receive many emails and can only respond effectively if we understand your inquiry. Prof. Neblo will be available for both office and online (via Skype) office hours.

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).

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/>.

This course fulfills the GEC-R and GE Social Science/Organizations & Politics requirement.

Goals: Students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of organizations and politics.
2. Students understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts.
3. Students comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.
4. Students will acquire basic knowledge across the major field of political theory.
5. Students will develop analytic, synthetic, and critical thinking skills that will enable them to rigorously evaluate competing arguments and to appraise value-based claims.

Schedule of Readings

1/9	<i>Introduction</i>
1/11	<i>Political Theory & the Modern Politician</i> Weber: Politics as a Vocation Clinton: Announcement Speech McCain: Announcement Speech Obama: Announcement Speech
1/16	<i>The Historical Contingency of Democracy</i> Madison et. al.: from The Federalist Papers Tocqueville: from Democracy in America
1/18	<i>Human Limits and the Critique of Democracy</i> Burke: Speech to the Electors of Bristol Schumpeter: from Socialism, Capitalism, and Democracy

- 1/23 *The Nature of Politics*
Aristotle, excerpts from *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*
- 1/25 *Democracy as Social Thinking: Deliberation*
Habermas: The Public Sphere
Fishkin: Giving the People Voice
- 1/30 *Democracy as Social Control*
Michel Foucault, excerpts from “*Society Must Be Defended*”
and *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*
- 2/1 *Foundations of Justice*
Plato, *Republic* Book 1 and part of Book 2
- 2/6 Justice and the Good
John Stuart Mill, excerpts from Chapters 1, 2, and 5 of *Utilitarianism*
- 2/8 *Justice & the Social Contract (I)*
Rawls: from A Theory of Justice
- 2/13 *Justice & the Social Contract (II)*
Nozick: from Anarchy, State, Utopia
- 2/15 *Global Justice*
Thomas Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice”
- 2/20 *Review for Midterm: No New Readings*
- 2/22 **The MIDTERM EXAM will be available on Carmen between Thursday, Feb. 22nd, at 8am and Friday, Feb. 23rd, at 11:59pm.**
- 2/27 *Politics, Human Nature, & Religion (I)*
St. Augustine from The City of God
St. Thomas Aquinas Politics & Law
- 3/1 *Politics, Human Nature, & Religion (II)*
Martin Luther The Christian in Society
John Calvin God and Political Duty
- 3/6 *Politics, Religion, & Toleration*
John Locke Letter Concerning Toleration
John Kennedy Speech on Religion
Mitt Romney Speech on Religion
- 3/8 *The Limits of Toleration*
Marcuse Repressive Tolerance
- 3/12-16 **SPRING BREAK**
- 3/20 *Equality I*
Rousseau: Discourse on Inequality

	Burke:	Reflections on the Revolution in France
3/22	<i>Equality II</i> Walzer:	In Defense of Equality
3/27	<i>Power</i> Gaventa:	from Power & Powerlessness
3/29	<i>Natural Freedom</i> John Stuart Mill:	from On Liberty
4/3	<i>Contingent Freedom</i> Isaiah Berlin:	Two Concepts of Liberty
4/5	<i>Freedom as Negation</i> Philip Pettit,	“Freedom as Antipower”
4/10	<i>Freedom as an Historical Accomplishment</i> Habermas:	Three Normative Models of Democracy
4/12	<i>Class & Political Theory</i> Marx: Reagan: Edwards:	Various Selections Against Class Warfare The Two Americas
4/17	<i>Gender & Political Theory</i> de Beauvoir: Wollstonecraft: de Pizan	from The Second Sex Vindication of the Rights of Women The City of Ladies
4/19	<i>Race & Political Theory</i> Fanon: M. L. King Jr.: Malcom X: Obama:	from The Wretched of the Earth Letter from Birmingham Jail The Ballot or the Bullet Speech on Race in America

The FINAL EXAM will be available on Carmen between Wednesday, April 25, at 8 a.m. and Thursday, April 26th, at 11:59pm.

<i>Quiz Schedule:</i>	1/22 Weber through Schumpeter	1/29 Aristotle through Fishkin
	2/5 Foucault & Plato	2/12 Mill & Rawls
	2/19 Nozick & Nagel	3/5 Augustine through Calvin
	3/9(19) Locke through Marcuse	3/26 Rousseau through Walzer
	4/2 Gaventa & Mill	4/9 Berlin & Pettit
	4/20 Habermas through Obama	