

Political Science 2060
Introduction to Political Theory
Spring 2018

Professor: John Boersma
Office: 332 Stubbs Hall
Class Time: MWF 2:30 – 3:20
Office Hours: MW 3:30 – 4:30 and by appointment
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I. Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to the recurring questions and themes of political philosophy. The goal is to explore the theoretical bases of major ideas that have contributed to our current understanding of politics. Particular attention will be paid to the following themes: What is the role of virtue and justice in political life? What is one's purpose in life? How ought one live (Plato and Aristotle)? What is the relationship between the political life and the divine (Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas)? What is sovereignty (Augustine, Aquinas and Machiavelli)? What role do consent and liberty play in politics (Locke and Mill)? How do we maintain the political realm (Burke, De Tocqueville and C.S. Lewis)? Above all, the course will explore the nature of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, and their relation to political life.

“LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.”

II. Required Texts:

The following books are available for purchase at the LSU Bookstore and on various sites online. You **must** obtain a copy of these books. Please pay particular attention to the assigned *edition*.

Thomas R. West & Grace Starry West, trans., *Four Texts on Socrates* (Cornell)
[ISBN 9780801485749]

Robert C. Bartlett, trans., *Plato's Protagoras and Meno* (Cornell)
[ISBN 9780801488658]

Robert C. Bartlett & Susan D. Collins, trans., *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago)
[ISBN 9780226026756]

Dino Bigongiari, ed., *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Free Press)
[ISBN 9780684836416]

Harvey Mansfield, trans., *The Prince* (Chicago)
[ISBN 978-0226500447]

C.B. Macpherson, ed., *Locke's Second Treatise* (Hackett Classics)
[ISBN 978-0915144860]

J.G.A. Pocock, ed., *Edmund Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Hackett Classics)
[ISBN 978-0872200203]

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Dover Publications)
[ISBN 978-0486421308]

C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (HarperOne)
[978-0060652944]

III. Class Room Etiquette:

When evening comes, I return home and go into my study. On the threshold I strip off my muddy, sweaty workday clothes, and put on the robes of court and palace, and in this graver dress I enter the antique courts of the ancients and am welcomed by them. . . . Then I make bold to speak to them and ask the motives for their actions and they, in their humanity, reply to me. And for the space of four hours I forget the world, remember no vexations, fear poverty no more, tremble no more at death: I pass into their world.

- Machiavelli, *Letter to Francesco Vetorri*

IV. Policies:

Attendance – Attendance in class, both physical and mental, is the *sine qua non* of learning. In order to receive a passing grade, students must attend class.

Cheating – Students guilty of cheating on exams or plagiarizing their work will be brought to the attention of the dean for disciplinary action. To avoid plagiarism, please make sure to cite your sources accurately and appropriately. Direct quotes must be put into quotation marks. When paraphrasing, the pages being referenced must be cited in a footnote. Please familiarize yourself with the latest volume of the Chicago Manual Book of style, which is available at the Middleton Library's Reference Desk.

Electronics – Please do not use your phone in class. Laptops may be used solely for the purpose of taking notes.

V. Assignments

Preparation, attendance and participation: It is critical that prior to each class you do the reading and be ready with notes, comments or questions to facilitate class discussion. Attendance is mandatory.

Quizzes: In order to encourage attendance and participation there will be a daily quiz consisting of questions covering the day's assigned readings.

Tests: This course will have two tests and a cumulative final exam that will cover the substance of our class discussions and readings.

Paper: A research paper will be assigned near the middle of the semester. Paper prompts will be provided on the moodle website. Please feel free to consult with me about any aspect of your paper. Due dates for the paper will be as follows:

Paper Assigned – March 21st

Paper Due – April 20th

Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 10% per class late

VI. Evaluation

Daily Quizzes – based on the readings:	20%
Participation/Attendance	10%
Paper	30%
In-Class Test One	10%
In-Class Test Two	10%
Final	20%

VII. Grading Scale

A+: 97-100	A: 93-96	A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89	B: 83-86	B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79	C: 73-76	C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69	D: 63-66	D-: 60-62
F: 59>below		

VIII. Format

Opinion and Knowledge

- January 10 – Introduction to the Course
Syllabus; Political Philosophy and History
- January 12 – What is Political Philosophy?
Read: Leo Strauss, “What is Political Philosophy” pg. 343 - 355 (on Moodle)
- January 15 – NO CLASS → Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 17 – Plato’s *Euthyphro*
Read: Euthyphro – Entire Dialogue
- January 19 – Plato’s *Euthyphro/Apology*
Read: Apology – Entire Dialogue
- January 22 – Plato’s *Apology*
Read: Apology – Review Dialogue
- January 24 – Plato’s *Apology/Crito*
Read: Crito – Entire Dialogue

Virtue

- January 26 – Plato’s *Protagoras*
Read: Protagoras – 309a – 339a
- January 29 – Plato’s *Protagoras*
Read: Protagoras – 339a – 362a4
- January 31 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book I
- February 2 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book II
- February 5 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book III
- February 7 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book IV
- February 9 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*

Read: Book V

February 12 – NO CLASS → Mardi Gras

February 14 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book VI

February 16 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book VII

February 19 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book VIII

February 21 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book IX

February 23 – Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
Read: Book X

February 26 – **TEST ONE**

Early Christian/Medieval Thought

February 28 – Greek and Christian Thought
Read: Tertullian – “Prescription Against Heretics” (*On Moodle*)
Read: St. Basil the Great – “Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature” (*On Moodle*)

March 2 – Augustine’s Two Cities
Read: Pope Gelasius I – “Famuli Vestrae Pietatis” (*On Moodle*)
Read: Augustine’s City of God, Part 1 (*On Moodle*)

March 5 – Augustine’s Two Cities
Read: Augustine’s City of God, Part 2 (*On Moodle*)

March 7 – Thomas Aquinas On Law
Read: *The Political Ideas of Thomas Aquinas*:
Question 90, art. 1 – 4 (p. 3 – 10)
Question 91, art. 1 – 4 (p. 11 – 18)
Question 93, art 1 – 2 (p. 29 – 33)
Question 94, art. 1 – 6 (p 42 – 54)
Question 95, art 1 – 2 (p. 55 – 59)

March 9 – Thomas Aquinas On Law
Read: *The Political Ideas of Thomas Aquinas*:
Questions 96; 97; 104

March 12 – Aquinas on Regime Type
Read: Thomas Aquinas – Political Writings:
Question 95 art. 4
Question 105 art. 1
On Kingship

New Modes and Orders

March 14 – Machiavelli's *Prince*
Read: Ch. Epistle Dedicatory – Ch. 8

March 16 – Machiavelli's *Prince*
Read: Ch. 9 – 17

March 19 – Machiavelli's *Prince*
Read: Ch. 18 – 26

March 21 – Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*
Read: The Leviathan: Ch. 13-14; 17-18
- **Final Paper Assigned**

March 23 – Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*
Read: The Leviathan: Ch. 21; 29

March 26 – NO CLASS – Spring Break

March 28 – NO CLASS – Spring Break

March 30 – NO CLASS – Spring Break

Liberalism and Its Limits

April 2 – John Locke's *Second Treatise*
Read: Ch. 1 – 5

April 4 – John Locke's *Second Treatise*
Read: Ch. 7 – 12

April 6 – John Locke's *Second Treatise*
Read: Ch. 13 – 19

April 9 – **TEST TWO**

April 11 – Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
Read: pg. 1 – 35

April 13 – Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
Read: 43–56; 67–70; 73–78
Read: "Declaration of Independence" (*On Moodle*)

April 16 – J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*
Read: Ch. 1 (Introductory Chapter)

April 18 – J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*
Read: Ch. 2

April 20 – Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*
Read: Part 1 (*On Moodle*)
- **Final Paper Due**

April 23 – Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*
Read: Part 2 (*On Moodle*)

April 25 – C.S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man*
Read: Chapters 1 and 2

April 27 – C.S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man*
Read: Chapter 3

May 2 - **FINAL EXAM @ 5:30 – 7:30 pm**