# POLITICAL SCIENCE 2004: SURVEY OF WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT
**Spring 2009**

Instructor: Jason Robles
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 10:00-12:00, or by appointment (Ketchum 5B)
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is, as the title suggests, a broad exploration of the history of western political thought. We will cover some of the more significant works of political theory across broad historical time periods (Antiquity, the Middle Ages/Renaissance, Early Modernity, and Late Modernity). The course is not intended to offer a comprehensive survey of the entire history of western political thought, as this would neither be possible, nor desirable in a single semester. You will, nonetheless, become acquainted with the major theories that figure into the tradition. This course is foundational and, as such, serves as a gateway to more advanced study in political theory.

We will examine some of the so-called "perennial" questions in political philosophy: What is justice? From where do our moral and political obligations derive? What is the proper role of government? What is authority? What is freedom? To what extent can society or government impinge on the freedom of individuals? What do free government and self-government entail? More importantly, what is necessary to the security of free government?

We will also explore possible answers to these (and other) questions via the texts of some major political thinkers since antiquity. We shall study these texts with an eye not only to historical context, but also to contemporary relevance. Thus, the aim of this course is twofold: on one level we seek to gain an understanding of the *history* of western political thought, that is, an understanding of the development of particular ways of thinking about the individual's relation to politics and society; on another level we will explore possible ways in which each of these texts illuminates or helps us to approach problems of *contemporary* political significance.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

Plato, *Republic*, trans. Allan Bloom, 2ed. (Basic Books)
Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett)
Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Oxford)
Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part One* (Oxford)
Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Penguin)
Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Yale)
Rousseau, *The Discourses and other Early Political Writings*, trans. Gourevitch (Cambridge)
Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings*, trans. Gourevitch (Cambridge)

A copy of each text has been placed on reserve in Norlin Library. For students interested in supplemental secondary literature, the following texts have also been placed on reserve in the library (please see me for relevant *suggested* reading in these volumes):

Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*
Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., *History of Political Philosophy*

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

- First Midterm, **FEBRUARY 16** (10%)
- Second Midterm, **MARCH 20** (20%)
- Paper (5-7 pages), **DUE APRIL 24** (30%)
- Final Examination, **MAY 2** (40%)

Note: You must pass each component in order to receive a passing grade for this course.

**COMMUNICATION:** The University of Colorado considers email an *official* form of communication. You are responsible for checking your *colorado.edu* account regularly to ensure receipt of important course information (e.g., schedule changes, review materials, etc.).

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services to me in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322. The University's policies on disability accommodations can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

**RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please notify me **NO LATER THAN JANUARY 23** if you will require such accommodations. The University's policies on religious accommodations can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

**CLASSROOM DECORUM:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. The University's policies on classroom decorum can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). See the Honor Code websites at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/ for more information.

**DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT:** The University's policies on sexual harassment and amorous relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Anyone who believes they have been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) or the Office of Judicial Affairs. More information can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh. The University's policy on Discrimination and Harassment can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS:**

**WEEK 1—Introduction; Plato**

1/12 Introduction; What is political philosophy?

1/14 *Apology*

1/16 *Crito*

**WEEK 2—Plato**

1/19 NO CLASS

1/21 *Republic* (Book I, 327-354c)

1/23 *Republic* (Book II, 357-376d)

**WEEK 3—Plato & Aristotle**

1/26 *Republic* (Book III & IV, 414b-436d; 439c-445e)

1/28 *Republic* (Book V & VII, 449-476d; 514-521c)

1/30 Aristotle, the *Politics* (Book I, Ch.1-2; Book 3, Ch.7-11, 13)

**WEEK 4— Machiavelli**

2/2 Introduction

2/4 *The Prince* (Ch. 1-3, 5-6, 8-9)

2/6 *The Prince* (Ch. 15-18, 25, 26)

**WEEK 5—Shakespeare**

2/9 *Henry IV Part One* (Act I)

2/11 *Henry IV Part One* (Acts II-III)

2/13 *Henry IV Part One* (Acts IV-V)

**WEEK 6—Hobbes**

2/16 MIDTERM 1

2/18 *Leviathan* (Ch. 13, 14, 15)

2/20 *Leviathan* (Ch. 17-21, 29, 30)

**WEEK 7—Locke & Hume**

2/23 *Second Treatise* (§§ 4-24, 87, 92, 95-100, 123-142, 211-288, 240-243)

2/25 *Second Treatise* (§§ 25-37, 117-122); Robert Nozick (Selections TBA)

2/27 Hume, *Of the Original Contract*

**WEEK 8—Rousseau**

3/2 *First Discourse* (Selections TBA)

3/4 *Second Discourse* (Part I)

3/6 *Second Discourse* (Part II)

**WEEK 9—Rousseau**

3/9 *Social Contract* (Books I & II [Selections TBA])

3/11 *Social Contract* (Books III & IV [Selections TBA])

3/13 *Government of Poland* (Selections TBA)

**WEEK 10—Kant**

3/16 *Perpetual Peace* (Selections TBA)

3/18 *Metaphysics of Morals* (Selections TBA)

3/20 MIDTERM 2

**WEEK 11—Spring Break**

**WEEK 12—The American "Experiment" (18th Century American Political Thought)**

3/30 Introduction; *Declaration of Independence* (Other readings TBA)

4/1 *Federalist* 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 39, 48-51, 57

4/3 *Anti-Federalist* (Selections TBA)

**WEEK 13—Thoreau, Lincoln, & the Second Founding (19th Century American Political Thought)**

4/6 Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*

4/8 Lincoln (Selections TBA)

4/10 Lincoln (Selections TBA)

**WEEK 14—Tocqueville**

4/13 *Democracy in America* (Selections TBA)

4/15 *Democracy in America* (Selections TBA)

4/17 *Democracy in America* (Selections TBA)

**WEEK 15—Mill**

4/20 *On Liberty* (Ch.1)

4/22 *On Liberty* (Ch.2)

4/24 *On Liberty* (Ch.3); PAPER DUE

**WEEK 16—Mill**

4/27 *On Liberty* (Ch.4)

4/29 *On Liberty* (Ch.5); Feinberg, "A Ride on the Bus"

5/1 Conclusion, Review

**FINAL EXAM**

"...[on] giving instruction as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it. As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed. The teaching of the concept, which is also history's inescapable lesson, is that it is only when actuality is mature that the ideal first appears over against the real and that the ideal apprehends this same real world in its substance and builds it up for itself into the shape of an intellectual realm. *When philosophy paints its gray in gray*, then has a shape of life grown old. By philosophy's gray in gray, *it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.*"

G.F.W. Hegel, Preface to *Philosophy of Right* (1821)