

POLITICAL SCIENCE 2004: SURVEY OF WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT
Maymester 2011

Instructor: Jason Robles

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:30-12:00 and by appointment (Ketchum 5B)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a survey of the history of western political thought. We will cover some of the more significant works of political theory across several 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, 2nd Edition (Basic Books)

Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett)

Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Oxford)

Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Yale)

Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Yale)

Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses* (Yale)

Mill, *On Liberty* (Yale)

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:

- Class Participation/Discussion (10%)
- First Midterm (30%)
- Second Midterm (30%)
- Final Examination (30%)

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.).

RELIGIOUS AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS: If you have conflicts with exams or attendance due to religious obligations and/or if you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me **NO LATER THAN MAY 12**. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. The University's policies on disability accommodations can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

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. The University's policies on classroom decorum can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>. **THE USE OF PERSONAL COMPUTERS AND/OR CELL PHONES DURING CLASS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

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SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

- * Indicates handout
† Indicates optional/suggested reading

PART I—Ancient Political Theory and the Renaissance

- 5/9 Plato, *Apology*
 ———, *Crito*
 ———, *Republic*, Book I, 327-354c
 ———, Book II, 357-376d
- 5/10 Plato, *Republic*, Book III, 414b-436d
 ———, Book IV, 439c-445e
 ———, Book V, 449-476d
 ———, Book VII, 514-521c
 ———, Book VIII [†]
- 5/11 Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, Ch. 1-2
 ———, Book III, Ch. 7-11, 13
- 5/12 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Ch. 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, 15-18, 25-26
- 5/13 **FIRST MIDTERM**

PART II—Early Modern and Late Modern Political Thought

- 5/16 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 13-15, 17-21, 29, 30
- 5/17 Locke, *Second Treatise*, §§ 4-37, 87, 92, 95-100, 117-142, 211-288, 240-243
 Hume, *Of the Original Contract*
- 5/18 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*
 ———, *Social Contract* (Selections TBA)
- 5/19 **SECOND MIDTERM**

PART III—The American “Experiment”

- 5/20 Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence* (“Original Rough Draught”) [*]
 ———, *Declaration of Independence* (Adopted by Congress, July 2, 1776) [*]
 ———, “Letter to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825” [*]
 Publius, *Federalist*, #1, 9, 10, 14, 39, 48, 49, 51, 57, 78 [*]

- 5/23 Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience* [*]
 Lincoln, "Address before the Young Men's Lyceum" (January 27, 1838) [*]
 ———, "Speech in U.S. House on the War with Mexico" (January 12, 1848) [*]
 ———, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act" (October 16, 1854) [*]
 ———, "Message to Special Session of Congress" (July 4, 1861) [*]
 ———, "Letter to Erastus Corning et al." (June 12, 1863) [*]
 ———, "Gettysburg Address" (November 19, 1863) [*]
 ———, "Second Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1865) [*]

PART IV—Nineteenth Century Political Thought

- 5/24 Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. 1-3
- 5/25 Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. 4-5
 Feinberg, "A Ride on the Bus" [*]
- 5/26 **FINAL EXAM**