

Political Science 2004
Survey of Western Political Thought
Summer 2017

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Course Description:

This course introduces students to the history of Western political theory through selected readings from a few major authors. We begin with two Platonic dialogues: the *Apology*, which is about the trial of Socrates, and a companion dialogue, *Crito*, which is about whether citizens have an obligation to obey the law. Both dialogues also raise general questions about the relationship between philosophy and politics. We turn next to Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which challenges the classical Greek and Christian emphasis on the importance of a virtuous or just ruler. Machiavelli argues that a ruler with "virtu" also should know how to use violence and cruelty when necessary. Finally, we consider Book One of *Utopia*, in which Thomas More as a Christian statesman tries to find a middle way between Socratic and Machiavellian views about the relationship between the philosopher and political life.

We then shift from the ancient problem of how to "tame the Prince" or make a ruler virtuous to the early modern problem of establishing a strong, unified, modern state. We examine the development of the "social contract" tradition in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. In particular, we consider the problem of finding a form of government that can reconcile freedom and authority. Among other topics, we will discuss David Hume's attack on the idea that legitimate government rests on consent and Rousseau's attack on representative government. We then look at how social contract themes (together with older notions of virtue) are developed in early American political thought. More specifically, we will consider what Hamilton, Madison, Thoreau, and Lincoln thought about the dangers posed to republican government by majoritarian tyranny, slavery, and secession.

Finally, we move to late modernity and the one of the main problems facing modern mass societies, namely, defending individual freedom against social pressures to conform to prevailing opinion and practice. We focus on John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, which presents the classic modern defense of individual freedom of thought and action.

By the end of this course, students should have some familiarity with a few of the major figures in the history of political thought, as well as a deeper appreciation of the grounds of political obligation, freedom, and authority.

Course Requirements: Students must finish **ALL** requirements to pass this course.

Attendance: 10%. Failure to attend five days without an excuse of the sort officially approved by CU results in failure of the course.

Participation: 10%. Participation includes completing the reading for each class, active

and helpful participation in class discussion, and making class presentations and completing study questions on time when they are assigned. Simply attending every class and occasionally offering a comment will earn you no more than a “C.” More active and informed participation is required for a higher grade.

Exams. Two, short answer/essay in-class exams, 40% each of the final grade. The final will be cumulative, but focus primarily on the material covered in the second half of the course.

Note that the instructor may **change** the assignments, as well as their relative weight for the final grade, e.g., add or delete quizzes, exams, papers, as deemed fit. There will be **NO** extra-credit assignments. To repeat, no extra credit.

Classroom Policy

Mutual respect among and between students and instructor is expected at all times. If a student is disruptive of the educational atmosphere of the classroom, he or she will be asked to leave and will be referred to the Dean's Office if disruptions continue.

Religious Observances

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. In this class, contact me *during the first three days of this course* to arrange accommodation. For more details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has 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) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating (using unauthorized materials or giving unauthorized assistance during an exam or other academic exercise) and plagiarism (using another person's words or ideas without appropriate citation) are serious offenses. At a minimum, they will result in 'F' for the assignment and they may result in 'F' for the course, depending on the instructor's

judgment of the severity of the offense. It is University policy that cheating and plagiarism *must* be reported to the Honor Council, which will decide upon additional sanctions. If you have *any* question about proper citations or acknowledgment of source material, ask your instructor or visit the Honor Council website.

Honor Code

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, aiding academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). 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). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

Office Hours

My office is in Ketchum 151. I'll be available to meet Tues and Wednesday at 1:00, but not after class. If you can't make these times, we can arrange to meet by appointment.

Required Readings

Books:

All books have been ordered at the University Books Store in the UMC and at the bookstore on the Hill. They are:

Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*

Machiavelli, *The Prince*

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*

John Stuart Mill, *Basic Writings: On Liberty and Utilitarianism*

Excerpts from Books and Articles (listed below on reading schedule and D2L).

There are also a number of excerpts and articles that are required reading for the course and that will be available **on D2L**. These readings are listed in the syllabus below, but are no longer linked (again, they are all on D2L).

You are **required** bring books and articles to class. I do not include websites for all texts for several reasons: 1) translations in the public domain for some of these texts are of poor quality; 2) excerpts are difficult to identify for some texts on line. It is preferable to

have books that you can mark up and bring to class.

Reading Schedule

To be done by date listed.

Approximate pages and difficulty of material are indicated; plan accordingly

Anything that is not in one of the required books will be on D2L

All lectures are also posted on D2L. In some cases, “handouts” of the lectures are also posted.

June

5 **Introduction** to course

6 **Philosophy versus Politics?**

The first dialogue in your book, *Euthyphro*, is NOT a required reading. Of course, you are encouraged to read it, as it is interesting in itself and as background for the *Apology* and *Crito*, but we will not discuss it in class.

Study Questions for *Apology* and *Crito* (ApologyQs-on D2L) 1 page. You don't have to turn in answers to these questions but I will ask you about them in class and they will guide your reading if you look through them before starting the dialogues and then try to answer them as you read the dialogues

Plato, *Apology*, 28 pages, deceptively easy, read carefully

I.F. Stone, "When Free Speech Was First Condemned, ("[Stone](#)" no link, on D2L), 6 page interview, an easy read, but don't buy everything Stone says at face value.

Total: 35 pages

7 **Why Obey the Law? The Problem of Political Obligation**

Hand in reading questions just for the *Crito*, *Phaedo*, not the *Apology*. 1 page, see above ("ApologyQs")

Plato, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, 18 pages, deceptively easy, read carefully

Total: 18 pages

8 **Machiavelli's Critique of Classical Political Thought**

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, 15-18, 25-26, Appendix

Total: 47 short pages

9 **Thomas More: Christian Realist?**

Utopia, Part I

Watch clips from “Man for All Seasons,” possibly “Wolf Hall”

12 **Thomas More: the Problem of Dirty Hands**

Utopia, Part I

Michael Walzer, “The Problem of Dirty Hands” (Walzer_Dirty in D2L)

Study Questions, Walzer (Look under “Study Questions” on D2L)

Use study questions as a guide; not an assignment to hand in.

13 **Thomas Hobbes: The State of Nature, "Solitary, Poor, Nasty, Brutish and Short"**

Richard Tuck, "Thomas Hobbes: the skeptical state (Tuck-Hobbes).

Twelve short pages, easy

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapt. 8, 13, Chapt. 14 (paragraphs 1-8, 18-20, 23-33), Chapt. 15 (1-3, 35-41) ("[Hobbes1-A.pdf](#)"). More difficult reading.

Total: 20 pages

Texts of *Leviathan* also available:

<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>

or <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>

14 **Hobbes: The Social Contract and Leviathan, “A mortal god”**

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapt. 17 (1-2, 6-7, 12-15); Chapt. 18 (1-10, 16, 20); Chapt. 19 (1-2,4-7); Chapt. 20 (1-3); Chapt. 21 (1-18, 21-22); Chapt. 29 (1-10); Chapt. 30 (1-4).

All in "Hobbes2-A.pdf". 24 pages, difficult

Total: 24 pages

15 **John Locke: A Kinder, Gentler State of Nature?**

Dunn, "John Locke: The Politics of Trust" ("Dunn.pdf"), 10 short pages, easy

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*. Note that Locke's work is organized by numbered sections and that the following are section, not page numbers. I repeat: are **not** page numbers. Sections 4-24, 87-92, 95-100, 123-142, 211-228. 240-243 (28 pages, difficult). Locke1pdf.

Total: 38 pages

Also available: <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>

16 **No Class: Review**

19 **In-Class Review**

20 **In-class Exam**

21 **Locke and Hume on Consent**

Second Treatise, Sections 117-122 (4 pages, read carefully) at LockeConsent

Hume, excerpts from "Of the Original Contract" 3 pages (Hume)

Locke on Property

Second Treatise, Sections 25-37 (7 pages, read carefully) at LockeProperty

Robert Nozick, "The Lockean Theory of Acquisition," "The Proviso" ("NozickA"), 9 pages

22 **Rousseau: The General Will or How to Reconcile Freedom and Authority**

Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Bks 1 and 2, p. 49 - 100

Total: 51 very small pages

Rousseau: The Law Giver, the Attack on Representative Government and the Civil Religion

The Social Contract, Bk 3 (chapters 1-6, 10-18); Bk 4 (skip chapters 4 and 5); pages 101-122, 131 - 157, 170 - 188, Penguin, Cranston, ed.

Total: 64 very small pages

23 **Federalist papers and the American Experiment**

Federalist Papers, numbers 1, 9, 10, 48-51 ("FederalistA.pdf"). Scroll through article to find these numbered essays.

Optional: 3, 6, 39

Total: 33 pages, difficult

Also available <http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/federalist>

26 **Thoreau, Lincoln, and Obedience to Law**

Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" from *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*, 18 pages, easy. Note this selection is not a pdf but in a required book of essays for the course.

Thoreau also available at <http://eserver.org/thoreau/civil1.html>

All of the Jaffa and Lincoln reading below are at "LincolnA.pdf" The next set of readings is also at this link.

Handout, "Compromises Concerning Slavery", which summarizes the next piece by Harry Jaffa, so use them together;

Harry Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, "Appendices: Some Historical Background to the Lincoln-Douglas Debates," 12 pages, moderately difficult

Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions"
Lincoln, "The Right to Rise Up" (1 page)
"It is for Us the Living" (1 page)

12 pages, very clear

Peter Wehner, "The Man the Founders Feared," *New York Times*, March 19, 2016

Optional: Lincoln readings in between these assignments is optional, but strongly encouraged

Total: 30

27 **Lincoln, Secession, and the Union**

Lincoln, "The Right to Rise Up" (1 page)

Lincoln, "This Question of Slavery Extension" 11 pages, very clear
"Secession or Rebellion?"(10 pages)
"My Paramount Object" (1 page)
"Ours Is A Case of Rebellion" (10 pages)

("LincolnA.pdf")

"It is for Us the Living" (1 page)
"With Malice Toward None" (2 pages)
Total: 36 pages

("LincolnA.pdf" see above)

Donald Trump, "The Art of Address," *New York Times*, March 2016

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/03/opinion/donald-trump-the-art-of-the-address.html?em_pos=medium&emc=edit_ed_20160404&nl=the-edit&nl_art=3&nid=51902373&ref=headline&te=1

28 **The Concept of Liberty**

Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients and the Moderns," (last pages slightly out of order)

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Freedom"(Berlin.pdf) Read p. 118 - 141 and 162 172. To put it another way, only sections 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8 are required (sections 4, 5, 6, optional).

Total: 33 pages

29 **The History of Liberty, Social Tyranny, and the Harm Principle**

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 1 and 3

Total: 35 pages, difficult

Mill also available <http://www.constitution.org/jsm/liberty.html>

30 **Freedom of Thought and Expression**

Mill, *On Liberty*, Book 2, approx. 40 pages, difficult

Total: 40 pages

3 **Liberty of Action**

Mill, *On Liberty*, Book 4

Total: 20 pages

4 No class: Celebrate Our Independence!

5 **Liberty of Action: more applications**

Mill, *On Liberty*, Book 5, 22 pages

Feinberg, "A Ride on the Bus" ("Ride.pdf"), 2 pages, easy

Total: 24 pages

6 **Review**

7 **Final Exam**