

PSCI 2004: Introduction to Western Political Thought

Summer A-Term 2018 • M-F 12:45 – 2:20pm • ECON 205

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Office hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 11:30am-12:30pm, or by appointment

Course description:

This course serves as an introduction to political theory. Taking as the core problem of politics the need for people to organize themselves within society in pursuit of common as well as individual objectives, the course examines the various norms and values offered as worthy of collective pursuit and the manner in which these norms are employed in the design of politics and society.

In the first part of the course, we will survey the development of Western political thought from ancient Athens through major Western political thinkers of the 19th Century, identifying key questions that they raise and pairing each thinker with more modern readings offering some contrasting perspectives on those questions. In the second part of the course, we will take the analytical tools we have acquired and apply them to understanding several additional traditions that have spun off from the Western canon, including socialism, feminism, and environmentalism.

The course is intended to offer critical perspectives on a range of historical and normative political ideals, and does not advocate any particular ideological position or value system.

Texts:

There are eight course texts available from the CU bookstore. Used copies of these texts should also be readily available online. The versions stocked in the CU bookstore were selected as being the most accessible and economical hard copies, but other versions or collections are also acceptable—just be sure that the books you acquire contain the full text of each of the following works:

Plato, *Apology* and *Crito* (often collected as *The Last Days of Socrates*)

Henry David Thoreau, *on Civil Disobedience*

Plato, *The Republic*

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government*

J. J. Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (also called the *Second Discourse*), and *The Social Contract*

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

Additional readings will be available on D2L as the course progresses.

Course requirements:

Class preparation: Lectures and discussions both will focus on the readings assigned on the syllabus for that day. I expect you to come to lecture having completed the required reading assignment. If you have the time and inclination, you are also encouraged to explore the 'recommended' readings, where applicable. To be more fully prepared and get the most out of class, I suggest that while you read the texts you write down one or more questions that you have about the day's readings (whether about the meaning of the text or about its political implications), and raise these questions in class.

Participation: Your participation is essential to the success of this course, both for you and for your fellow students. Student participation involves both speaking and listening skills. In other words, you are encouraged to speak often, providing comments and asking questions—but you should also be listening to your peers and responding thoughtfully to their comments. Participation means demonstrating familiarity and critical engagement with the course materials as well as demonstrating intellectual curiosity. The point is not to have understood everything before coming to class, but instead to show up ready to raise and address questions, difficulties, and issues that arise while exploring the course material.

In order to give you an ongoing idea of where your grade stands, weekly participation grades will be posted on D2L. If you are dissatisfied with your grade and would like to find ways to improve it, please talk to me for ideas!

Attendance: Attendance at all class sessions is essential for success in this course. The lectures will convey information not directly contained in the readings, and model the critical/analytic skills you are expected to develop. The discussions provide you with the opportunity to put these skills into practice yourself. Students may miss two class sessions for any reason. Each additional unexcused absence reduces your attendance grade by half a letter grade (5%). Students must have a passing grade in attendance in order to pass the course. (This means that missing more than ~1/3 of the class sessions will result in a failing grade for the entire course.)

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to figure out what you missed. This means that you should not simply email me asking what you should have learned in class. I will not respond to any such emails, as they are not in compliance with the policy stated here. Instead, your first tasks are to complete all the readings, get class notes from a fellow student, and review any lecture slides posted on D2L. After this, if you still have remaining questions about the material, then you should come and see me in office hours to discuss your questions.

Reading quizzes: Once a week, at the beginning of class, we will have a brief (~5 minute) quiz on a main idea from the day's readings. The specific day of the quiz will not be announced beforehand. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. (Note that if you are absent, a make-up quiz will not be offered except in extraordinary circumstances—it will instead count as your dropped quiz grade.)

Term Paper: Students will be assigned to write one analytical essay (6 to 8 pages) on a course-related topic of their choosing. Topics must be approved by the instructor; you should submit your topic by email on or before 5pm Wednesday, June 20th. Further details on the paper assignment, as well as tips for writing analytical papers, will be provided in class. Late papers shall be accepted only at the discretion of the instructor, and with an appropriate penalty.

Final Exam: The final exam will be held on Friday, July 6th. It will comprise several short-answer questions and one longer essay. Further details on the exam, as well as a study guide, will be provided in class. All students must take the final exam during its scheduled slot, except as allowed under CU's final exam policy.

Breakdown of final grade components:

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 30% (6% per week)

5 Quizzes: 10% (2.5% per quiz, lowest quiz dropped)

Paper: 25%

Exam: 25%

University and course-specific policies:

Disability, religious, and other accommodations: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671 and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

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. Students needing to miss class or exams for religious observances must inform the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester. http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Classroom behavior and student professionalism: Students and faculty share responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which opinions are expressed. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. For further information, see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code for details.

Discrimination and harassment: The CU-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 and the above referenced policies can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

Honor code: All students of the CU-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 (honor@colorado.edu);

303-725-2273). Students 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). Further details can be found at www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>.

Excused absences: Excused absences include absences due to religious observances and documented personal, family, or medical emergencies. Whenever possible, students should inform their instructor in advance of such absences in order to make necessary arrangements. Absences resulting from discretionary events (such as non-emergency health care, non-essential travel, etc.) cannot qualify as excused. The instructor reserves the right to distinguish excusable from non-excusable reasons for missing class or exams, or requiring an extension for written work. If you can expect to miss more than 1/3 of class sessions due to any combination of excused and/or unexcused absences, you are strongly encouraged to withdraw from the course.

Grading policies: Grade appeals must be submitted no earlier than 24 hours, and no later than 7 days, after receipt of the grade. Your concerns should be presented in writing, with detailed reasons explaining why you believe the grade is unfair or incorrect. Be advised that in all cases of grade appeals, the professor reserves the right to raise, maintain, or lower the grade upon review. Students dissatisfied with the result of an appeal to the professor may then appeal to the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Political Science, in accordance with the Department's grade appeals policy.

If instead you are merely seeking clarification of a grade or suggestions on how to improve your performance in the future (rather than appealing for a grade to be revised), then the above policies do not apply. Feel free to come to my office hours to discuss such things at any time.

Wild card topics:

Note that the reading schedule reserves two “wild card” days at the end of the semester. These are intended to give us an opportunity to apply the insights gained from the course to additional topics outside the traditional Western canon. The students as a whole will decide on what topics we will cover. Nominations for our wild card topics can be submitted to the instructor by email at any time prior to 5pm Friday, June 22nd. We will hold a vote to select our final topics, during class on Tuesday, June 26th.

Some suggested areas to think about would be: Western political philosophies not otherwise covered in this course (examples: anarchism, conservatism, fascism); contemporary/emerging philosophies (examples: alt-right/neoreactionary thought; transhumanism; afro-futurism); or non-Western traditions (examples: ubuntu; Confucianism; Hindu thought; Iroquois governance). Topics are not limited to these examples, and any student can nominate any aspect of political thought for consideration.

Important deadlines:

- 5pm Wednesday, June 20th: submit paper topic (by email)
- 5pm Friday, June 22nd: submit wild card topic nominations (by email) (optional)
- Tuesday June 26th: vote on wild card topics (in class)
- 5pm Monday, July 2nd: final paper due (in D2L Dropbox)
- Friday, July 6th: final exam (in class)

Readings and lecture schedule:

This schedule is provisional, and may be updated at any time throughout the course. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on the course D2L site.

Lectures will focus on the readings assigned for a given day. Separate discussion days (where applicable) will focus on both the readings assigned for that day, and the lecture from the preceding day. All texts should be read in advance of the indicated class.

Week 1: June 4-8

June 4: Introduction (no readings assigned)

June 5: Socrates (lecture)

Required: Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*: “Apology” and “Crito”
Recommended: The rest of *The Last Days of Socrates*
Selection from I.F. Stone, “The Trial of Socrates” (D2L)

June 6: Socrates (discussion): must we obey the laws?

Required: Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience”

June 7: Plato (lecture)

Required: Plato, *The Republic*: Books 1-2 and 4-6
Recommended: The rest of *The Republic*

June 8: Plato (discussion): what is justice?

Required: Summary of Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (D2L)
Selection from Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (D2L)

Week 2: June 11-15

June 11: Niccolò Machiavelli (lecture)

Required: Machiavelli, *The Prince*: chapters 2-3, 6-8, 15-18, and 25
Recommended: The rest of *The Prince*

June 12: Niccolò Machiavelli (discussion): can the ends justify the means?

Required: Ursula Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (D2L)
Michael Walzer, “Political Action: the Problem of Dirty Hands” (D2L)
Recommended: Plato, *The Republic*, Book 3 (on the “noble lie”)

June 13: Thomas Hobbes (lecture)

Required: Hobbes, *Leviathan*: Book 1 chs. 6, and 13-14; Book 2 chs. 17-21, and 29
Recommended: The rest of *Leviathan* Book 1 after chapter 6, and the rest of Book 2

June 14: Thomas Hobbes (discussion): why do we have a government anyway?

- Required: Petyr Kropotkin, "Mutual Aid" (D2L)
Emma Goldman, "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For" (D2L)
- Recommended: Robert Nozick, from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (D2L)

June 15: John Locke (lecture)

- Required: Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*: chs. 1-4, 7-9, and 18-19
- Recommended: The rest of the *Second Treatise*

Week 3: June 18-22

June 18: John Locke (discussion): when does government become tyranny?

- Required: Hume, from "Of the Original Contract" (D2L)
Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration" (D2L)
- Recommended: Burke, from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (D2L)
Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence" (D2L)

June 19: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (lecture)

- Required: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*: Book 1; Book 2 chs. 1-4 and 8-10;
Book 4 ch. 1
- Recommended: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*: Part 2
The rest of the *Discourse on Inequality*
Judith Shklar, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Equality" (D2L)

June 20: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (discussion): how important is equality?

- Required: *American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality* (D2L)
Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapter 5

FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE AT 5PM

June 21: John Stuart Mill (lecture)

- Required: Mill, *On Liberty*: chapters 1 and 2
- Recommended: The rest of *On Liberty*. Chapter 5 is strongly recommended!

June 22: John Stuart Mill (discussion): what is freedom?

- Required: Jeremy Waldron, "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom" (D2L)
T.H. Green, selection from "On Freedom of Contract" (D2L)
- Recommended: Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" (D2L)

NOMINATIONS DUE FOR WILD CARD TOPICS (5pm by email)

Week 4: June 25-29

June 25: Socialism I: communism (lecture + discussion)

- Required: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" (D2L)
Karl Marx, "Estranged Labor" (D2L)
- Recommended: V. I. Lenin, selections from *State and Revolution* (D2L)

June 26: Socialism II: democratic socialism (lecture + discussion)

- Required: *Port Huron Statement* (D2L)
Van Parijs, “A Basic Income for All” (D2L)
Norberto Bobbio, “Democracy as it Relates to Socialism” (D2L)
- Recommended: Milton Friedman, from *Capitalism and Freedom* (D2L)

VOTE ON WILD CARD TOPICS

June 27: Feminism I: liberal feminism (lecture + discussion)

- Required: Mary Wollstonecraft, from *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (D2L)
Betty Friedan, “Our Revolution is Unique” (D2L)
- Recommended: Susan Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*
Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*

June 28: Feminism II: radical and intersectional feminisms (lecture + discussion)

- Required: Shulamith Firestone, from *The Dialectic of Sex* (D2L)
Audré Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex” (D2L)
- Recommended: Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism”
Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”
Maria Lugones & Elizabeth Spelman, “Have We Got A Theory For You!”

June 29: Environmentalism I: anthropocentric environmentalism (lecture + discussion)

- Required: Al Gore, from *Earth in the Balance* (D2L)
Nordhaus and Shellenberger, “The Death of Environmentalism” (D2L)
Rachel Carson, from *Silent Spring* (D2L)
- Recommended: Thomas Malthus, “An essay on the principle of population” (D2L)

Week 5: July 2-6

July 2: Environmentalism II: biocentric and radical environmentalisms (lecture + discussion)

- Required: Petra Kelly, “Thinking Green!” (D2L)
Bron Taylor, “Deep Ecology” and “Radical Environmentalism” (D2L)
Murray Bookchin, “Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology” (D2L)
- Recommended: Paul W. Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature” (D2L)

FINAL PAPERS DUE AT 5PM

July 3: Wild card subject I: TBD

- Required: TBD

July 4: NO CLASS (Independence Day)

July 5: Wild card subject II: TBD

- Required: TBD

July 6: FINAL EXAM