

Introduction to Political Theory

POLI 2060-01
Classroom: 100 Tureaud
Class Days: Monday-Wednesday-Friday
Class Time: 1:30-2:20

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Office Hours: 3-5 MWF & by appointment
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Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to introduce undergraduate students to the most important questions and themes in political philosophy: What is justice? What is the role of virtue and ethics in political life? Who should rule? What is the best regime? Is political life natural? What role should religion and friendship have in politics? How should one live one's life? These questions are examined through close textual analysis of several fundamental texts in the canon of Western Civilization. The course is divided into three segments: Classical political thought (Plato and Aristotle), Patristic and Medieval political thought (Tertullian, Basil the Great, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Thomas Aquinas), and Modern political thought (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and *The Federalist Papers*).

This particular course is a general education elective. It is intended to help the student engage in the pursuit of wisdom. It raises questions of what is truth and how truth is to be attained by exposing the student to a diversity of historical and philosophical perspectives. The class aims to improve the student's knowledge, skills, and disposition through textual analysis, intensive reading, and various written exercises. As a social science general elective, this class focuses on the philosophical aspects of global interdependence, with particular emphasis on the theoretical underpinnings of various economic forces, social organizations, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic differences.

Required Books

The following books are available for purchase at CO-OP and the LSU Bookstore. You must obtain a copy of these books. Pay particular attention to the assigned *editions*.

Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. [ISBN: 978-0801485275]

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins [ISBN: 978-0226026756]

Thomas Aquinas, *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Dino Bigongiari [ISBN: 978-0684836416]

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield, 2nd Edition [ISBN: 978-0226500447]

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edward Curley [ISBN: 978-0872201774]

John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*, ed. Peter Laslett [ISBN: 978-0521357302]

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Charles R. Kesler and Clinton Rossiter [ISBN: 978-0451528810]

The following works are available on Moodle:

Plato's *Apology*, Tertullian's *Prescription against Heretics*, Saint Basil the Great's *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature*, Saint Augustine's *City of God*, Saint Gregory the Great's *Life of St. Benedict*

Grading System and Class Requirements

Reading Assignments: 20%

Term Paper: 20%

Mid-Term Examination: 20%

Comprehensive Final Examination: 40%

Reading Assignments: Reading assignments will be posted on Moodle. At least once a week, students will be responsible for answering the assigned questions based on the required reading. The reading questions will address the major themes of the reading. They must be handed in to the professor on the day that they are due *at the beginning of class*. See the reading schedule below for due dates.

Term Paper: The term paper will be a 4-6 page essay in 12 point Times New Roman font (at least 1200 words). A prompt with essay topics will be given in early September. The term paper will be due on Friday, November 7. The paper must be e-mailed to the professor by the end of the day. Late papers will receive a lower grade. For citation and format, familiarize yourself with the latest volume of the Chicago Book of Style, which is available at the Middleton Library's Reference Desk. Grammar and syntax, or the lack thereof, will affect your grade.

Mid-Term Examination: This test will be a combination of objective questions and essay questions. It will be given in class on Monday, October 13.

Comprehensive Final Exam: This test will be on all assigned material. It will be administered at the appointed university time: Friday, December 12 from 10:00 A.M. to 12 P.M. Noon.

The following grading scale will be used in this class:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 59 or lower

***All late assignments, including the term paper, will be docked a letter grade for every day they are late.

*** There will be *no* make-ups for the mid-term examination or final exam, unless for severe emergency.

Notice on Attendance

In order to receive a passable grade, students are required to attend class. For every three (3) unexcused absences, the student's grade will be lowered a full-letter grade. Examples of excused absences, which will not endanger a student's grade, are familial emergencies and duties (e.g. a sudden death, attending a wedding, etc.) and severe illness. It should be noted that missing class for a Saturday football game is unacceptable and will not be excused, unless you are on the team or representing LSU in an official capacity, in which case please provide documentation. Even with excused absences, the student is responsible for learning the material covered in class and for making up any missed work.

Students must read the assigned daily readings. They should be ready to discuss the subject at hand. Bring the assigned book to class.

Please do not be tardy. If you are late, please enter the classroom as quietly as possible and sit at the first available seat in order to avoid being a distraction to your professor and to your fellow classmates.

Fundamental Points

Cheating and Collusion: Students guilty of cheating exams or colluding on the reading assignments will immediately be brought to the dean for disciplinary action. Students, of course, are free to study with each other, but they cannot give each other verbatim answers to the reading assignments.

Classroom Conduct: Disruptive actions, including talking out turn, texting, passing notes, not paying attention, etc. will not be tolerated. Be attentive and courteous to your professor and your fellow colleagues.

Electronics: Laptops, phones, I-Pads, e-readers, and other electronics may not be used, unless they are either for the purpose of taking notes or using these devices to download the assigned books.

Food: Students must refrain from eating in the classroom. A discreet drink is permissible.

Moodle: To access the course's Moodle page, please sign into your My LSU account. Contact the professor immediately if you cannot access it.

Plagiarism: Students guilty of plagiarism will immediately be brought to the attention of the dean for disciplinary action. There is a no tolerance policy about plagiarism, i.e. no "second chances." In order to avoid cases of plagiarism, please make sure to cite accurately and appropriately your sources. (Direct quotes must be put into quotation marks, with the appropriate quoted page number provided in a footnote. When paraphrasing, the pages being

referenced must be cited in a footnote.) Familiarize yourself with the latest volume of the Chicago Book of Style, which is available at the Middleton Library's Reference Desk.

Reading Assignments

Week 1:

Monday, August 25: Introduction to Course

CLASS SEGMENT I: CLASSICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT

Wednesday, August 27: Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, p. 63-97 [available on Moodle]
Assignment #1 on Plato's *Apology* Due [available on Moodle]

Friday, August 29: Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 25-49 (447a-466a)

Week 2:

Monday, September 1: No Class – Labor Day

Wednesday, September 3: Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 49-70 (466a-481b)
Assignment #2 on Plato's *Gorgias* Due [available on Moodle]
****Final Day for Dropping without grade of "W"*

Friday, September 5: Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 70-103 (481b-505d)

Week 3:

Monday, September 8: Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 103-129 (505e-527e)
Assignment #3 on Plato's *Gorgias* Due [available on Moodle]

Wednesday, September 10: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 1-25 (Book 1)

Friday, September 12: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 26-41 (Book 2)
Assignment #4 on Aristotle's *Ethics* Due [available on Moodle]

Week 4:

Monday, September 15: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 42-66 (Book 3)

Wednesday, September 17: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 67-88 (Book 4)
Assignment #5 on Aristotle's *Ethics* Due [available on Moodle]

Friday, September 19: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 89-114 (Book 5)

Week 5:

Monday, September 22: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 115-134 (Book 6)
Assignment #6 on Aristotle's *Ethics* Due [available on Moodle]

Wednesday, September 24: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 135-162 (Book 7)

Friday, September 26: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 163-187 (Book 8)
Assignment #7 on Aristotle's *Ethics* Due [available on Moodle]

Week 6:

Monday, September 29: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 188-209 (Book 9)

Wednesday, October 1: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 210-235 (Book 10)
Assignment #8 on Aristotle's *Ethics* Due [available on Moodle]

Friday, October 3: No class – Fall Break

CLASS SEGMENT II: WHAT HATH ATHENS TO DO WITH JERUSALEM?

Week 7:

Monday, October 6: Tertullian, *Prescription against Heretics*, Chapters 1-2, 6-12, 14, 21, 35 [available on Moodle]

Saint Basil the Great, *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature* [available on Moodle]

Wednesday, October 8: Saint Augustine, *City of God*, Book 19 [available on Moodle]

Assignment #9 on Church Fathers Due [available on Moodle]

Friday, October 10: Saint Gregory the Great, *Life of Saint Benedict* [available on Moodle]

Week 8:

Monday, October 13: **MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

Wednesday, October 15: Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, p. 3-28 (ST I-II Q. 90-92)

Friday, October 17: Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, p. 29-64 (ST I-II Q.93-95)
Assignment #10 on Saint Thomas Aquinas Due [available on Moodle]

Week 9:

Monday, October 20: Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, p. 65-95 (ST I-II Q. 96-97, 105a1; ST II-II Q. 42)

Wednesday, October 22: Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, p. 96 - 142 (ST II-II Q. 57, 58, 66)

Assignment #11 on Saint Thomas Aquinas Due [available on Moodle]

CLASS SEGMENT III: MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Friday, October 24: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 3-33 (Chapters 1-7)

Week 10:

Monday, October 27: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 34-71 (Chapters 8-18)

Wednesday, October 29: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 71-105 (Chapters 19-26)
Assignment #12 on Machiavelli Due [available on Moodle]

Monday, October 31: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 6-37 (Chapters 1-7)

Week 11:

Monday, November 3: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 38-74 (Chapters 8-12)
Assignment #13 on Hobbes Due [available on Moodle]

Wednesday, November 5: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 74-105 (Chapters 13-16)

Friday, November 7: **No class – TERM PAPER DUE via E-Mail by 11:59 P.M.**
*****Final day for dropping class**

- Week 12:
- Monday, November 10: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 106-127, 453-468 (Chapters 17-19, 46)
Assignment #14 on Hobbes Due [available on Moodle]
- Wednesday, November 12: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, p. 267-302 (Chapters 1-5)
- Friday, November 14: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, p. 303-330 (Chapters 6 & 7)
- Week 13:
- Monday, November 17: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, p. 330-363 (Chapters 8-11)
Assignment #15 on Locke Due [available on Moodle]
- Wednesday, November 19: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, p. 364-397 (Chapters 12-16)
- Friday, November 21: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, p. 397-428 (Chapters 17-19)
Assignment #16 on Locke Due [available on Moodle]
- Week 14:
- Monday, November 24: Hamilton et al., *The Federalist*, p. 27-66 (Papers 1-8)
- Wednesday, November 26: No class – Thanksgiving Break
- Friday, November 28: No class – Thanksgiving Break
- Week 15:
- Monday, December 1: Hamilton et al., *The Federalist*, p. 66-79, 94-108 (Papers 9-10, 14-15)
Assignment #17 on Federalist Due [available on Moodle]
- Wednesday, December 3: Hamilton et al., *The Federalist*, p. 134-153, 243-251, 297-314 (Papers 21-23, 40, 47-49)
- Friday, December 5: Hamilton et al., *The Federalist*, p. 317-333, 374-388, 414-421, 463-471 (Papers 51-53, 62-63, 69, 78)
Assignment #18 on Federalist Due [available on Moodle]

The final examination is on **Friday, December 12** from **10 A.M. – 12 P.M. Noon**.