

# **Poli 2060: Introduction to Political Theory**

MWF: 12:30-1:20pm. Coates 103  
Office hours: Stubbs 324, by appointment

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## **Content and Objectives**

This course provides an introduction to the history of political thought, from ancient into modern times. It focuses heavily on four of the most representative political philosophers: Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, and Marx. The aim of the course is to introduce the class to the fundamental issues in political thought. We will begin with ancient texts and work our way to modern political thought so that students may situate themselves in modern politics. First, we will examine a few creation myths with the aim of framing a cosmological analysis. In turning to Aristotle, we will see how he applied these same questions to Greek cities and their institutions. Next, we will turn to the New Testament and a few of the most influential theologians. Through Machiavelli and Locke, we will examine the origins of modern thought, including such notions as *realpolitik*, capitalism, divided government, and the conquest of nature. Lastly, through Marx, the Fascists, the New Deal architects, and the Libertarians, we will consider the major responses to the success and failures of classical liberal thought.

## **Integrated Learning Statement for 2060: Inquiry and Analysis**

Integrated learning allows students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations and demonstrate a sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students' practical and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the BOR Area of *Social/Behavioral Sciences* and provides students experience with the ILC proficiency of *Inquiry and Analysis*.

## **Required texts**

**Please use the assigned editions, available for purchase at the LSU bookstore.** Aside from providing accurate translations, they will allow you to follow the references I make in class and allow me to check the references you make in your papers.

Aristotle. *Politics*. Trans. Carnes Lord. Second Edition. University of Chicago Press: 2013.

Machiavelli, Niccolo. *The Prince*. Trans. Harvey C. Mansfield. Second Edition. University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Locke, John. *Second Treatise on Government*. Ed. Richard Cox. Harlan Davidson Inc., 1982.

## Syllabus

Jan. 19: Introduction

Jan. 21: *Enuma Elish* - excerpt (Moodle), *Epic of Gilgamesh* (Moodle)

Jan. 24: *Genesis* (Moodle)

Jan. 26: Aristotle, *Politics*, pp. 1-24

Jan. 28: Aristotle, 38-45, 62-77

Jan. 31: Aristotle, 77-96, 108-109

Feb. 2: Aristotle, 114-17, 175-78, 187-197

Feb. 4: Aristotle, 197-216

Feb. 6: *Gospel of Mark* 1-20 (Moodle)

Feb. 9: *Mark* continued, *Philippians* (Moodle)

Feb. 11: St. Augustine, *City of God* (Moodle)

Feb. 14: Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (Moodle), Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Moodle)

Feb. 16: Machiavelli, *Prince*, pp. 3-19

Feb. 18: Machiavelli, pp. 20-38 **Paper Proposal due at Midnight**

Feb. 21: Machiavelli, pp. 38-57

Feb. 23: Machiavelli, pp. 57-70

Feb. 25: Machiavelli, pp. 70-91

Mar. 2: Machiavelli, pp. 91-111

Mar. 4: Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, pp. 1-20

Mar. 7: Locke, 21-41. **Midterm paper is due.**

Mar. 9: Locke, 42-62

Mar. 11: Locke, 63-83

Mar. 14-18: **Spring Break**

Mar. 21: Locke, 84-104

Mar. 23: Locke, 105-125

Mar. 25: Locke, 125-140. Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence*

Mar. 28: Marx, *Estranged Labor* (Moodle)

Mar. 30: Marx, excerpt from *Capital* (Moodle)

Apr. 1: Marx, *Communist Manifesto* (Moodle)

Apr. 4: Marx, *Communist Manifesto* continued

Apr. 6: Schmitt, *Political Theology*, (Moodle)

Apr. 8: Schmitt, continued.

Apr. 11: Mussolini, *A Speech to the People of Rome* (Moodle)

April 13: Eugene V. Debs, *Canton Speech* (Moodle)

Apr. 15: Debs, *Canton Speech* continued

Apr. 17: FDR, *Commonwealth Club Address* (Moodle)

Apr. 20: Berle Jr, *The Social Economics of The New Deal* (Moodle); Berle Jr. & Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (Moodle)

Apr. 23: Hayek, *Equality, Value, and Merit* (Moodle) **Paper Proposal due at Midnight**

Apr. 25: Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Moodle)

Apr. 27: Rothbard, *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto* (Moodle)

Apr. 29: Rothbard, continued

May 2: TBD

May 4: TBD

May 6: **Final Class – Paper Workshop**

May 11: **Final Paper is due at midnight**

## Grading

15%: Attendance

Attendance is essential to overall success in the course, so all enrolled students are expected to attend every class. **Attendance will become mandatory after the final drop date has passed.** Only one unexcused absence is permitted for each student: if you are able to excuse your absences, please do so! Every additional absence will cost one attendance mark. **A failing attendance grade (i.e. more than eight unexplained absences) will automatically result in a failing course grade.**

15%: Lecture Questions

A 100-word response to the Lecture Questions is due at the beginning of each class. Responses should be 12pt font, double spaced, and submitted in person. There are a total of 40 Lecture Questions, however, only 30 Lecture Question responses are required. Choose wisely which 10 Lecture Questions to skip. Lecture Questions are available on Moodle.

30%: Mid-term paper

An essay of at least 1,200 words will be due on March 7. You are encouraged to formulate your own topic and may come to office hours in order to do so. Paper topics must be approved and writing on an unapproved topic will result in the loss of one letter grade. Paper proposals should be formulated in one paragraph and will be due on February 18.

40%: Final exam

An essay of at least 2,000 words will be due on May 11. You are encouraged to formulate your own topic and may come to office hours in order to do so. Paper topics must be approved and writing on an unapproved topic will result in the loss of one letter grade. Paper proposals should be formulated in one paragraph and will be due on April 23.

### *Grading scale:*

97-100: A+ 93-96: A 90-92: A-

87-90: B+ 83-86: B 80-82: B-

77-80: C+ 73-76: C 70-72: C-

67-70: D+ 63-66: D 60-62: D-

Under 60: F

## Class Rules

For attendance, see the official policy at <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/policiesprocedures/policies-procedures/22/>

**Bring your books to class.** They will be the primary focus of the lectures, which might be difficult to follow without them.

Please do not eat full meals during class: however, snacks and beverages are permitted. Please do not leave in the middle of class except for an emergency.

**Violation of class rules might cost you attendance marks.**