

Political Science 2060
Introduction to Political Theory
Fall 2017

Professor: John Boersma

Office: 332 Stubbs Hall

Office Hours: Monday 11:30 – 12:30; Wednesday 12:00 – 1:00

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I. Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to the recurring questions and themes of political philosophy. The goal is to explore the theoretical bases of major ideas that have contributed to our current understanding of politics. Particular attention will be paid to the following themes: What is the role of virtue and justice in political life? What is one's purpose in life? How ought one live (Plato and Aristotle)? What is the relationship between the political life and the divine (Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas)? What is sovereignty (Augustine, Aquinas and Machiavelli)? What role do consent and liberty play in politics (Locke and Mill)? How do we maintain the political realm (De Tocqueville and C.S. Lewis)? Above all, the course will explore the nature of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, and their relation to political life.

II. Required Texts:

The following books are available for purchase at the LSU Bookstore and on various sites online. You **must** obtain a copy of these books. Please pay particular attention to the assigned *edition*.

Thomas R. West & Grace Starry West, trans., *Four Texts on Socrates* (Cornell)
[ISBN 9780801485749]

Robert C. Bartlett, trans., *Plato's Protagoras and Meno* (Cornell)
[ISBN 9780801488658]

Robert C. Bartlett & Susan D. Collins, trans., *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago)
[ISBN 9780226026756]

Dino Bigongiari, ed., *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Free Press)
[ISBN 9780684836416]

Harvey Mansfield, trans., *The Prince* (Dover Publications)
[ISBN 978-0486272740]

Mera J. Flaumenhaft, trans. *Mandragola* (Waveland Press)
[ISBN 978-0917974571]

Tom Crawford, ed., *Locke's Second Treatise* (Dover Publications)
[ISBN 978-0486424644]

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Dover Publications)
[ISBN 978-0486421308]

C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (HarperOne)
[978-0060652944]

III. Class Room Etiquette:

When evening comes, I return home and go into my study. On the threshold I strip off my muddy, sweaty workday clothes, and put on the robes of court and palace, and in this graver dress I enter the antique courts of the ancients and am welcomed by them. . . . Then I make bold to speak to them and ask the motives for their actions and they, in their humanity, reply to me. And for the space of four hours I forget the world, remember no vexations, fear poverty no more, tremble no more at death: I pass into their world.

- Machiavelli, *Letter to Francesco Vetorri*

IV. Policies:

Attendance – Attendance in class, both physical and mental, is the *sine qua non* of learning. In order to receive a passing grade, students must attend class. For every three unexcused absences, a student's grade will be docked a full letter grade.

Cheating – Students guilty of cheating on exams or plagiarizing their work will immediately be brought to the attention of the dean for disciplinary action. To avoid plagiarism, please make sure to cite your sources accurately and appropriately. Direct quotes must be put into quotation marks. When paraphrasing, the pages being referenced must be cited in a footnote. Please familiarize yourself with the latest volume of the Chicago Manual Book of style, which is available at the Middleton Library's Reference Desk.

Electronics – Please do not use your phone in class. Laptops may be used solely for the purpose of taking notes.

V. Assignments

Preparation, attendance and participation: It is critical that prior to each class you undertake a “ruminative reading” of the assigned text. Arriving to class with the text, questions, comments, and notes to facilitate our discussion of the reading is vital for your own education and that of your peers.

Quizzes: In order to encourage attendance and participation there will be a daily quiz consisting of questions covering the day’s assigned readings.

Tests: This course will have a two tests and a cumulative final exam that will cover the substance of our class and readings.

Paper: A research paper will be assigned near the beginning of the semester. Paper prompts will be provided on the moodle website. Grading and due dates of the paper will be as follows:

- A rough copy of the research paper will be due at the beginning of class on March 30 (completion of this rough draft will be worth 25% of the paper grade).
- I will redistribute the papers at the end of class on March 30, and you will be required to edit one another’s papers. The edited paper will be due on April 4 (completion of the editing process will be worth 25% of the paper grade).
- A final copy of your paper will be due on April 18 (the quality of your paper will be worth 50% of the paper grade).

VI. Evaluation

Daily Quizzes – based on the readings:	20%
Paper	20%
In-Class Test One	15 %
In-Class Test Two	15 %
Final	30%

VII. Grading Scale

A+: 97-100	A: 93-96	A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89	B: 83-86	B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79	C: 73-76	C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69	D: 63-66	D-: 60-62
F: 59>below		

VIII. Format

Opinion and Knowledge

Jan. 12 – No Class

Jan. 17 – Introduction

Read: Leo Strauss, “What is Political Philosophy” (on *Moodle*)

Jan. 19 – Plato – Euthyphro

Read: Entire Dialogue

Jan. 24 – Plato’s Apology

Read: Entire Dialogue

Jan. 26 – Plato’s Crito

Read: Entire Dialogue

What is Virtue?

Jan. 31 – Plato’s Protagoras

Read: 309a – 339a

Feb. 2 – Plato’s Protagoras

Read: 339a – 362a4

Feb. 7 – Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics

Read: Books I and II

Feb. 9 – Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics

Read: Book III

Feb. 14 – Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics

Read: Books IV (4) and VI (6)

Feb. 16 – Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics

Read: Books VIII (8) and IX (9)

Feb. 21 – Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics

Read Book X (10)

Feb. 23 – IN CLASS TEST

READING BREAK (aka Mardi Gras)

Medieval Political Thought

Mar. 2 – Augustine’s City of God

Read: Book XIX (19) – (on *Moodle*)

Mar. 7 – Augustine on the Compatibility of Christianity and Politics

Read: Letter 91 (*Moodle*)

Read: Letter 138 (*Moodle*)

Read: Letter 189 (*Moodle*)

Read: Against Faustus the Manichean (*Moodle*)

Mar. 9 – Thomas Aquinas – Political Writings

Read: Question 90, art. 1 – 4 (p. 3 – 10)

Read Question 91, art. 1 – 4 (p. 11 – 18)

Read: Question 93, art. 1 – 2 (p. 29 – 33)

Read: Question 94, art. 1 – 6 (p. 42 – 54)

Read: Question 95, art. 1 – 2 (p. 55 – 59)

Read: Question 97, art. 1 – 4 (p. 78 – 85)

Mar. 14 – Thomas Aquinas – Political Writings

Read: Question 57, art. 1 – 2 (p. 96 – 100)

Read: Question 58, art. 1 – 3 (p. 105 – 111)

Read Question 58, art. 6 – 8 (p. 115 – 120)

Read Question 104, art. 1 (p. 159 – 160)

Read: Question 104, art. 4 – 6 (p. 167 – 172)

Read: On Kingship (pp. 175 – 195)

New Modes and Orders

Mar. 16 – Machiavelli’s Prince
Read: Ch. 1 – 12

Mar. 21 – Machiavelli’s Prince
Read: Ch. 13 – 26

Mar. 23 – Machiavelli’s Mandragola
Read: Entire Play

Apr. 27 – C.S. Lewis – The Abolition of Man
Read: Entire Book

FINAL – Tuesday, May 2nd @ 10:00 – 12:00

The Birth of Liberalism

Mar. 28 – Locke – Second Treatise
Read: Chapters 1 – 5

Mar. 30 – Locke – Second Treatise
Read: Chapters 7 – 12
ROUGH DRAFT OF PAPER DUE (25%)

Apr. 4 – Locke – Second Treatise
Read: Chapters 13 – 19
EDITED PAPER DUE (25%)

Apr. 6 – IN CLASS TEST

STUDY BREAK (aka Spring Break)

Democracy and its Maintenance

Apr. 18 – John Stuart Mill – On Liberty
Read: Chapter 1 (Introductory); Chapter
4 (Of the Limits to the Authority of
Society over the Individual)
FINAL PAPER DUE (50%)

Apr. 20 – Tocqueville – Democracy in America
Ch. 1 – 6

Apr. 25 – Tocqueville – Democracy in America
Ch. 7 – 9