

**Poli 202: Introduction to Political Theory – Spring, 2019**  
**TWF 9:30-10:20**  
**BWC A104**

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Office: DTB A310  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30

Course Outline

In this course we will engage in a close study of several key texts from the history of western political thought. We will do so with three goals in mind:

- 1) We will seek to place these texts in their historical context, understanding the way in which they responded to the particular political problems of their times, and contributed to the cultural, political and social trends of their world.
  
- 2) Even as we place these texts in their historical context, we will also seek to understand the way in which they are relevant to our own time. This is true both in terms of the way they engage with fundamental political questions (How is a political community founded? What does a state owe the citizen, and what do citizens owe the state? What does freedom look like, and what responsibility does the state have in preserving it?) and the way they contribute to political traditions still in effect today (Liberalism, Marxism/Communism, Anarchism, Feminism, Post-Colonialism/anti-colonialism).
  
- 3) Finally, in reading these texts, we will develop our ability to think critically about politics. By looking at the widely varied ways these different texts think about politics, define central concepts, and clash with one another, we will get a better sense of the diversity of political thought, and learn to question the received wisdom of the present day, as well as our own preconceived notions.

Requirements

Your course grade will be based on four separate elements.

*Midterm Exam*

The midterm will be an essay exam based on Plato and Machiavelli. It is intended to show a strong grasp of the texts, as well as indicate some critical consideration of how the two thinkers relate to one another.

*Research Paper*

A 2000-word paper (including citations and bibliographies), based on a topic chosen from a list I will distribute. While the paper will focus on texts and thinkers from the class, you will also be expected to incorporate secondary sources and outside research on the subject. If you have concerns about how to track down secondary sources such as journal articles or books, please speak to one of our reference librarians, or to me. The paper is an opportunity for students to show critical and original thought in evaluating

and applying the theories we have been studying. It will incorporate two of the thinkers we will be studying. The paper will be due on the last day of class.

#### *Final Exam*

Cumulative, but with an emphasis on material since the midterm. Again, this exam is intended to demonstrate a strong grasp of the texts we have studied, as well as indicate critical thought about the ways in which they compare and contrast, as well as their broader implications.

#### *Tutorial Participation*

Students will participate in weekly tutorial sections, to provide an opportunity for more in-depth discussions of the course material. They are expected to show up having read the week's assigned course readings and attended lecture, and prepared to discuss the issues that they raised. They will be graded on their attendance and participation. **Students with more than 3 unexcused absences from tutorial will not be allowed to write the final.**

#### *Grade Breakdown*

Midterm Exam	25%
Research Paper	35%
Final Exam	30%
Tutorial Participation	10%

#### *Incomplete Policy*

Failure to submit a research paper or sit the final exam will result in a grade of 'N'.

#### *Late Policy*

Late assignments will be penalized 5% a day. Extensions will only be granted in cases of illness or family emergency.

#### *Grading Policy*

For details of UVic's new grading policy, see <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html>

#### *Academic Integrity*

For details of UVic's academic integrity policy, see <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/GRAD/FARe/PoAcI.html>

#### Required Texts

Plato [The Trial and Death of Socrates](#)

Machiavelli [The Prince](#)

Benjamin Constant [Political Writings](#)

Karl Marx [The Communist Manifesto](#)

Emma Goldman [Anarchism and Other Essays](#)

Aimé Césaire [Discourse on Colonialism](#)

**Links to additional readings will be available on the course website.**

### Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

## **Class Schedule**

### Week 1

Jan. 8: Introduction

Jan. 9: Plato "Euthyphro" pp.3-20

Jan. 11 Plato "Apology" pp.21-42

### Week 2

Jan. 15: Continued

Jan. 16: Cont.

Jan. 18: Plato "Crito" and "Phaedo" pp.43-58

### Week 3

#### **Tutorials start this week**

Jan. 22: Cont.

Jan. 23: Cont.

Jan. 25: Machiavelli *The Prince* pp.1-107

### Week 4

Jan. 29: Cont.

Jan. 30: Cont.

Feb. 1: Cont.

### Week 5

Feb. 5: Cont.

Feb. 6: **Midterm**

Feb. 8: -Special Lecture – Essay Writing and Political Theory AND Introduction to Benjamin Constant "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns" pp. 308-329

### Week 6

Feb. 12: Constant "Principles of Politics Applicable to All Representative Governments" pp.170-200

Feb. 13: Constant "Principles" pp. 201-221

Feb. 15: Constant "Principles" pp. 261-295

### Week 7

Feb. 19: **Class Cancelled – Reading Break**

Feb. 20: **Class Cancelled – Reading Break**

Feb. 22: **Class Cancelled – Reading Break**

### Week 8

Feb. 26: Constant "Principles" pp. 295-305

Feb. 27: Cont.

Mar. 1: Marx and Engels "The Communist Manifesto" and "Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*"

Week 9

Mar. 5: Cont.

Mar. 6: Cont.

Mar. 8: Marx "On the Jewish Question"

Week 10

Mar. 12: Cont.

Mar. 13: Cont.

Mar. 15: Goldman "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For"

Week 11

Mar. 19: Cont.

Mar. 20: Goldman "The Psychology of Political Violence"

Mar. 22: Cont.

Week 12

Mar. 26: Goldman "Woman Suffrage" "Love and Marriage"

Mar. 27: Goldman "The Traffic in Women"

Mar. 29: Cesaire "Discourse on Colonialism" pp. 31-78

Week 13

Apr. 2: Cont.

Apr. 3: Cesaire "Letter to Maurice Thorez" and "Culture and Civilization"

Apr. 5: Cont. **Research Paper Due at Beginning of Class**