

POLS 250 POLITICS AND POLITICAL INQUIRY I SPRING 2007

Sect. 3 TTh 12:15 – 1:30 pm Maybank 115

Professor Philip H. Jos 26 Coming St/Rm. 102/953-5704 (ph); 953-8140 (fax); jos@cofc.edu
Off. Hrs: Mon 12:15-1:15; Tues. 8-9:00; Thursday 2-3:00 & by appointment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is the first in a six credit hour sequence that is required of all Political Science majors. The primary objectives of the course are: (1) to develop an understanding of the Western tradition of political philosophy and to gain specific knowledge about the key concepts, theories, and political theorists within that tradition; (2) to develop an appreciation for the distinctive character of the philosophical approach to political inquiry; and (3) to appreciate the relevance of political philosophy to contemporary politics.

The course will be organized around four basic questions:

- What is possible through politics?
- What fundamental characteristics define humans? What are the implications for organizing political life?
- What is the relationship between individual rights, property, and human freedom?
- What is justice?

CONDUCT OF THE COURSE

The student will work with both primary and secondary literature in political philosophy to gain an understanding of how political philosophers create theories of politics and visions of political order in response to the crises and problems of their time. We will explore the basic contours of the Western political tradition and then begin a more or less chronological study of the ways in which various political thinkers have conceived of human nature and society and how their views of these matters shape their political beliefs and recommendations. For each political philosopher we consider, we will explore their most fundamental assumptions about the individual and society, highlight especially important concepts, and apply and critically assess their ideas by considering contemporary political issues.

Class sessions will include class discussions, small group discussions, and presentations by the instructor. Class attendance, preparation, and participation will be extremely important to success in this course. Some of the material we will cover is likely to be unfamiliar to you, many of the writers developed their perspectives in different times and cultural contexts, and you will be expected to grapple with ideas that cannot usually be understood after a quick read. Reading and interpreting original works by political philosophers, using texts and other commentaries on political ideas and theorists, participating in class discussion, listening carefully to class presentations, taking good notes on assigned readings and class presentations, and completing written work are all necessary to meet the objectives of the course.

REQUIRED READING

Wolff, Jonathan. 2006. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press.
Porter, Jene. 2000. *Classics in Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., Prentice Hall.

All other readings listed in this syllabus are available on *Electronic Reserve (ER)*. Go to the College of Charleston Library home page, click on Electronic Reserve Materials, search for my name, enter the password (all lower case).

Additions may be made to existing reading assignments but these will be relatively infrequent and generally consist of shorter newspaper or magazine articles. In addition, I strongly recommend that you read a daily newspaper, preferably the *New York Times*. Student rates offer a discount and the *Times* is available on the web at www.nytimes.com.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Examination #1	15%
Examination #2	15%
Examination #3	15%
Examination #4	20%
Exam Bonus	5%
Analytical Paper and Presentation	20%
Comments, Questions, Assessments of Analytical Papers	5%
Attendance/Participation/Convocation	5%

Grading Scale/Special Needs: 92 and above =A, 90-92=A minus, 88-89=B plus, 83-87=B, 80-82=B minus, 78-79=C plus, 73-77=C, 70-72=C minus, 68-69=D plus, 63-67=D, 60-62=D minus, 59 and below=F. If you are in the SNAPS program or have other *special needs* please let me know during the first week of class. Deadlines and expectations are subject to change but adequate notice of such changes will be given.

Examinations will consist of essay questions, short discussion questions, terms and other more narrowly focused questions. No one will be permitted to take an exam if they arrive more than 30 minutes late. *Make-up exams* will only be given if the student: notifies me of the difficulty at least an hour before class, agrees to take a make-up not later than *three* days after the regularly scheduled exam, and presents a *written, bonafide excuse*.

Exam Bonus. The value of your highest exam grade will be increased by five percentage points.

Analytical Paper and Presentation. This paper will require you to apply particular philosophical concepts and perspectives to a contemporary issue. Each topic carries with it a reading (that should be completed by all class members) that provides an overview of the issue. There are several options from which to choose, I will do my best to give you your most or second most preferred option. The papers are due on the day indicated in the course outline below (see the course outline for April 10, 12, 17, and 19). Approximate length: between 6 and 8 pages (typed, double-spaced). Papers will be graded on content, clarity of argument, organization, grammar, and style. You will be expected to discuss and/or present the ideas in your paper in class. Further information is contained on the assignment sheet attached to this syllabus.

Comments, Questions and Assessments of Analytical Papers. You must attend each of the April sessions where your classmates will be presenting their analytical papers. You are encouraged to participate in class discussions and during the class and you will be required to make written comments on the presentations and the substance of the ideas presented. A form for completing this task will be distributed at the beginning of each of these classes and must be turned in at the end of the class.

Attendance and Participation are essential to your success. Participation includes coming to class, participating in ways that reflects an understanding of the reading, and questions and comments made to other students when they are taking part in class discussions and making presentations to the class. In addition, you will be required to attend our Spring Convocation of Majors on *February 22nd*.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty will receive an XF for the course, indicating failure due to academic dishonesty. Unauthorized collaboration is a form of cheating and research conducted and/or papers written for other

classes cannot be used in whole or part for any assignment without obtaining prior permission from the professor. Plagiarism includes the verbatim repetition, without acknowledgement, of another author, borrowing without acknowledging a source, paraphrasing without acknowledgement, and allowing any other person or organization to prepare work which one then submits as his or her own. For to complete Honor Code see http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_infor/studenthandbook.html

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

1/9: An Overview of the 250/251 Sequence

***What is possible through politics?
Aristotle (384-322 BC) and Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)***

1/11: Aristotle

- *Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book One (J. Porter, pp. 101-107)
- *Aristotle, *The Politics*, Bk Three, ch. 3, 4 (Porter 137-138)
- *Aristotle, *Book Seven*, (J. Porter, 163-173).

1/16 Aristotle

- *Aristotle, *The Politics*, Bk.5, ch. 1, 8 (151-159)

1/18: Machiavelli

- *N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Ch. 5-8 (J. Porter, pp. 225-235)

1/23: Machiavelli

- *N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. 15-18, 21, 25 (J. Porter, 247-262)
- ****Study Guide Out***

1/25: EXAMINATION 1

***What fundamental characteristics define humans? What
are the implications for organizing political life?
Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and J.J. Rousseau (1712-1778)***

1/30 Hobbes: The State of War

- *Wolff, pp. 6-17.
- *Hobbes, *Leviathan*, excerpts, (J. Porter, pp. 284-292).
- **“Breakdown at Abu Gharib,” “Insurgency Prompts New Zeal,” *W. Post*, 5/17-23 (ER) (4).
- *Documents Say Abuse Not All For Intelligence,” *Post and Courier*, 5/22/04 (ER) (1).

2/1 Hobbes: The Social Contract

*Hobbes, *Leviathan*, excerpts, (J. Porter, pp. 299-313).

2/6 Rousseau: Human Nature

*Wolff, pp. 24-29.

*Rousseau, *Second Discourse on the Origin & Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (Porter 381-406).

2/8 Rousseau: Politics

*J. Wolff, pp. 77-84.

*Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Bk III and Bk IV excerpts (Porter 426-431).

*James Madison, *Federalist Paper #10*, (ER) (4)

***Study Guide Out**

2/13: EXAMINATION 2

***What is the Relationship Between Individual Rights,
Property, and Human Freedom?
John Locke (1632-1704) and Karl Marx (1818-1883)***

2/15 Locke: Natural Rights

*J. Wolff, pp. 17-23.

*Locke's *Second Treatise: An Essay Concerning the True Origin, Extent, and End of Civil Government* (J. Porter, pp. 329-352).

2/20 Locke: Consent and the Social Contract

*Locke, *Second Treatise*. (J. Porter, pp. 352-58)

*J. Wolff, pp. 39-46.

****2/20 LAST DAY TO DROP WITH A "W"**

2/22 Marx: Human Nature and Freedom

*Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, excerpts (J. Porter, pp. 547-557).

*J. Wolff, pp. 128-132.

*Marx, "On The Jewish Question," excerpts (ER) (5).

****2/22 CONVOCATION OF MAJORS: 7 pm Physicians Auditorium: James H. Kunstler**

2/27: Marx: On Property and Power

*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (J. Porter, pp. 568-586).

*Massing, M. 2001. From Protest to Program. *The American Prospect*, July 2 (ER) (5).

***Study Guide Out**

3/1: EXAMINATION 3

3/6 AND 3/8 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

What is Justice?
Rawls (1921-2003) Plato (427-347 BC) Sandel (1943-

3/13 John Rawls: Justice as Fairness

*Wolff, pp. 133-167.

3/15: John Rawls: Justice as Fairness

*Wolff, 168-176.

3/20 Plato: A Broader Conception of Justice

*Plato, *The Republic*, Bk 4 (44-50 in Porter); Bk. 2 (18-31 in Porter);

3/22 Plato: Just and Unjust Societies

*Plato, *The Republic*, Bk. 8 (73-89 in Porter).

3/27 Justice as Community

*Sandel, Michael J. 1996. "America's Search for a Public Philosophy" *The Atlantic Monthly*, (ER) (13).

*The Communitarian Platform "*For Individual Rights and Social Responsibility*, (ER) (9).

3/29 Perennial Questions and Contemporary Political Thought

*Glenn Tinder, "Why Engage in Political Thinking?" (ER) (11).

***Study Guide Out**

4/3 EXAMINATION 4

****4/5 NO CLASS**

***Applying Philosophical Perspectives to
Contemporary Issues***
Analytical Papers and Presentations

4/10 Eminent Domain (Papers and Presentations)

*"Property Rights: Should the Use of Eminent Domain Be Limited?" *CQ Researcher*, March 4, 2005.

4/12 Lobbying (Papers and Presentations)

*"The Lobbying Boom: Should the Influence Industry Be Regulated More Closely?" *CQ Researcher*, July 22, 2005.

4/17 Treatment of Detainees (Papers and Presentations)

*"Treatment of Detainees: Are Suspected Terrorists Being Treated Fairly?" *CQ Researcher*, August 25, 2006.

4/19 National Service (Papers and Presentations)

*"National Service: Should Community Service Be Required?" *CQ Researcher*, June 30, 2006.

Analytical Paper Expectations

Each of the options gives you a brief introduction to a contemporary issue that raises significant philosophical issues. The assignment requires that you apply the philosophical perspectives that we have developed to these current debates. Not all philosophers or concepts are equally relevant. Identify relevant ideas and explore them in ways that demonstrates your understanding of the perennial questions that underlie contemporary debates. There are many such questions that you might explore. Assume, for example, that one of the options included several newspaper and magazine articles that described the costs associated with globalization (lost jobs and declining wages in the U.S., unsafe conditions in factories overseas) and the difficulties in diplomatic negotiations in the World Trade Organization about appropriate responses. Such an option would raise a number of philosophical ideas and questions that we will have explored in class. Karl Marx develops ideas about how essential meaningful work is to humans, about how capitalism undermines freedom and about how class conflict results from exploitation of labor. The treatment of workers might be seen as a demonstration of a particular view of human nature (e.g. Hobbes) or a particular view of human society and the institution of private property (Rousseau). Efforts to address these problems might be defended on the basis of natural rights (Locke) or viewed as more or less likely based on one's understanding of conflict among nations, which raises larger questions about human nature and the nature of political power. You will be expected to develop such perspectives and defend your own conclusions regarding the issue or controversy. You will also be expected to discuss and/or present the ideas in your paper in class. Approximate length for the paper is between 6 and 8 pages (typed, dbl-spaced). Papers should conform to the POLS Reference Guide at <http://polisci.cofc.edu/PDF/POLSCitationGuide5-16-6.pdf>. Papers will be graded using the criteria below:

Poor-----to-----Excellent

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

Reflects an understanding of the contemporary debate
Uses philosophical concepts and perspectives in analyzing the controversy
Develops and defends own position
Presentation and/or discussion in class
Organization/Grammar/Style
Referencing

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Uses philosophical concepts and perspectives in analyzing the controversy
Develops and defends own position
Presentation and/or discussion in class
Organization/Grammar/Style
Referencing

