Welcome to Introduction to Political Thought. The aim of this course will be in the broadest sense to examine the essence of, and the essential concepts related to, the political realm of human affairs. The course will be a combination of surveying the history of political thought beginning in Ancient Greek thought through to the present but will be primarily oriented around essential political philosophical themes and concepts. We will examine such essential concepts as what the logic of politics is (definition of politics), whether or not politics is necessary/inherent to the human condition (is man essentially a political animal?), whether politics is desirable, political subjectivity, justice, freedom, equality, the state, the law, power, legitimacy, authority, the social contract, sovereignty, and others. This is a political philosophy course and as such will be occasionally rather abstract and highly conceptual in seeking to understand the essential concepts of politics and how politics is practiced in the real world. This is a critical-thinking based course and active participation in class discussions will be expected and required.

Course Readings: Readings will be primarily primary texts supplemented by an introductory level political philosophy text. The introductory text is essentially to serve as another aid aside from lecture in understanding the concepts we uncover in the primary readings and lectures. There will be some primary texts available on-line and through OAKS.
1. An Introduction to Political Philosophy, Jonathon Wolff.
3. Concept of the Political, Carl Schmitt
4. Disagreement, Jacques Ranciere
5. OAKS readings

Course Requirements: There will be three equally weighted tests along with an equally weighted in-class presentation. Tests will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, short-answers, and one short essay. Details of tests and presentation will be discussed in lecture. A letter grade will be given to each test and the presentation, and your overall grade will be a simple averaging of the letter grades assigned to each assignment. The presentation will be explained in lecture.

Schedule:

Introduction: Concept of the Political and over-view of material.
Reading: Wolff, chp 1
PART ONE (approx 1-2 weeks): Origins/History of Political Philosophy
2. Wolff, chp 3 pg 66-77

Readings: 1. Wolff, chp 1-2
2. ET, Hobbes, Leviathan
3. ET, Locke, Second Treatise of Government
4. Wolff, pgs. 77-93

TEST ONE: FEB 20

PART THREE (approx 1-2 weeks): Marxism
Readings: ET, Marx and Engels, pgs. 566-595

PART FOUR (approx 2-3 weeks): Concept of the Political
Readings: 1. Ranciere, chp 1-3.

TEST TWO: MARCH 25

PART FIVE (approx 2-3 weeks): Modern Democratic and Liberal Traditions, Theories of Justice, & Critics
2. Wolff, pgs. 104-114
3. ET: Rawls, A Theory of Justice
4. Wolff, chp 5
5. ET: Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia
6. ET: Habermas, pgs. 764-777
7. ET: Foucault, Power/Knowledge

PART SIX (only if there is time remaining in the course): Post-Modernism
Readings: to be assigned

PRESENTATIONS: APR 15-19

FINAL: May 1st