

POLI 150: Intro to Political Thought

Fall 2017

Instructor: John Altick, PhD

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Office Hours: Bell 315 Wed 3pm & by appointment

**Welcome to Introduction to Political Thought.** The aim of this course will be to examine essential questions of & ways of thinking about 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 other key questions / concepts / political practices. This is a political philosophy course and as such will be occasionally 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 Requirements:** There will be **four equally weighted components: 2 tests, a book report, & a presentation.** Tests will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, short-answers, and one short essay. 10-15 minute Presentation & 6-10 pg paper will be on a primary political philosophy text of your choice & a theme / topic of your choice relating to political philosophy (interchangeable, just one of each). Details of tests and presentation will be discussed in lecture. A letter grade will be given to each component, and your overall grade will be a simple averaging of the letter grades assigned to each assignment.

**Course Readings:** Introduction to Political Theory & additional assigned readings

Schedule:

1. Introduction: What is politics?
2. The State & other forms of Political Organization. Chp 1 & additional readings
3. Freedom & Equality. Chp 2-3 & additional readings
4. The Law & Justice. Chp 4 & additional readings
5. Political Regime Types: chp 5 & 13 & additional readings
6. Social Contract Tradition: Liberalism & Democracy. Chp 8, 6, & additional readings
7. Marxism & Socialism: Chp 10 & additional readings
8. Feminism, Radical-Democracy & other contemporary post-modern political thought chp 14 & additional readings
9. **Midterm week of 10/2**