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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m., and by appointment.

Political Science 120: Introduction to Political Thinking

Comenius Room 114, Tuesday and Thursday from 1:10 to 2:20 p.m.

This fall, we will focus on three pivotal texts in the history of political thought. Our readings will be patient and close with plenty of time for discussion supported by textual evidence. We begin with the study of justice and the politics of thought itself in ancient Greece with our reading of Plato's *Republic* (approx. 380 BCE). How does *how we think* impact how we think about *justice*? Plato's text shows that how we *know* is critical to our politics. Our second text takes us to the cusp of two eras of Western political thought. Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince* (1513) is an example of early modern political theory, theory that still bears traces of medieval genres such as mirrors for princes, and also radically foresees a shift in political concerns away from religious discourse. With Machiavelli, we must consider whether he was serious in writing his variously maligned and admired handbook for princes or whether it is in fact a form of satire. Is he arguing that statecraft is stagecraft backed up with the sword? Or, is he warning us by describing a worst possible form of political leadership? Why are we as citizens of the United States both horrified and seduced by *The Prince*? We will consider what it means to approach politics in three different modes: moral, immoral, and amoral. Our course concludes with the study of the German Jewish political theorist Hannah Arendt's report on the trial of Adolf Eichmann. *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) offers a portrait of a political actor who fails to consider the world from the point of view of others and, in his mindless careerism, becomes guilty of crimes against humanity. The three texts are chosen to inspire thoughtful reading and critical discussion with reference first and foremost to the text and historical events, but also to personal experiences and contemporary politics.

Course Objectives

- To engage canonical texts that represent important points of reference for political theorists
- To cultivate a vast store of complex questions about politics
- To understand important political questions and arguments
- To investigate taken for granted thoughts and attitudes about politics
- To see connections between individual experiences and collective arrangements
- To sharpen oral, aural, and writing skills relating to textual analysis and argumentation
- To consider power relationships and consequences beyond the state
- To contribute to a culture of contemplation and discussion
- To acquire cultural literacy

Books available for purchase at the Moravian College Bookstore

- Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Penguin)
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Chicago)
- Plato, *The Republic of Plato* (Transl. Allan Bloom, Basic Books)

Please do not purchase different editions or translations as you will have trouble following along with work in class. It is a mistake to save a few dollars and to end up with a lesser version of the book and never to be on the same page with the group. Additional readings may be assigned.

Tuesday, September 1	Introduction
Thursday, September 3	Introduction to Political Theory
Tuesday, September 8	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book I
Thursday, September 10	Book II
Tuesday, September 15	Book III
Thursday, September 17	Examination on Books I and II
Tuesday, September 22	Sheldon S. Wolin, <i>Politics and Vision</i> , Chapter Two: "Plato: Political Philosophy versus Politics," pp. 27-53 (available on reserve at Reeves Library)
Thursday, September 24	Book IV
Tuesday, September 29	Book V
Thursday, October 1	Book VI
Tuesday, October 6	Book VII
Thursday, October 8	Book VIII
Thursday, October 15	Book IX
Tuesday, October 20	Examination on Books VII and VIII
Thursday, October 22	Book X
Tuesday, October 27	Niccolò Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Dedicatory Letter and I-VI
Thursday, October 29	VII-XIV
Tuesday, November 3	XV-XXI
Thursday, November 5	XXII-XXVI and Appendix

Tuesday, November 10	Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , pp. 1-55
Thursday, November 12	pp. 56-111
Friday, November 13	Plato/Machiavelli paper due at 4 p.m. to Mrs. Ortiz in Comenius 206
Tuesday, November 17	pp. 112-161
Thursday, November 19	pp. 162-205
Tuesday, November 24	Witness to the Holocaust: The Trial of Adolf Eichmann (1987)
Tuesday, December 1	pp. 206-252
Thursday, December 3	pp. 253-297
Tuesday, December 8	Review and course evaluations
Wednesday, December 16, 1:30 p.m.	Final examination in our usual classroom

Evaluation

Text-based and critical contributions to discussion	25%
Examination 1, 9/17	15%
Examination 2, 10/20	20%
Paper, due 11/13	20%
Final examination 12/16	20%

It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades. The most important part of our shared work is the discussion in class. Although I will prepare introductory lectures on each author and text, there will be ample time for discussion. Students are required to prepare questions and comments based on their independent reading of the text. Note that these texts are demanding and may require multiple readings. Be prepared: reading notes will be examined in class occasionally. Please either mark your text or take notes on paper. You should be able to find important passages, including passages you did not understand. I will ask for page numbers so the group can follow your comments and read passages out loud. I encourage you to bring difficult passages to the group's attention so we can work on them together. Speak up and ask questions. Attendance does not equal participation in this course.

How this course works

Office hours: I set aside time every week to meet with individual students in my office. You do not need an appointment. Please feel free to stop by during my posted times or to make an appointment, if you have class during those times. I am happy to help you with any academic questions you may have.

We will discuss written assignments two weeks in advance. I will offer instructions on how to prepare for examinations in the class preceding the examination date.

Expect to work six hours on average outside of class per week. The workload varies, and the texts can be challenging. Give yourself plenty of time to read, review, and take notes on texts. Our interest is in deep readings and in gaining a solid toolkit of political theory questions, concepts, and arguments. Please also note that the syllabus is subject to change. Changes will be announced promptly.

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a learning disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

I strongly discourage late assignments, except in appropriately documented emergency situations. For the sake of equity, please do not ask for special treatment. Late work is penalized at 50% of the assignment grade.

Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment in this class. Please see Moravian College Student Handbook for an account of academic honesty. See <http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm>

Be diligent in your studies and attend class. Undocumented absences beyond the first will harm your engagement grade at the rate of 5% of your total course grade (per absence).

As this is an academic setting in which the goal is thoughtful discourse, neither food consumption nor mobile phone noise (or activity of any kind) is permitted.

Please support a culture of intellectual discussion and enjoy your study of political theory.