

Prof. K.H.Haddad, haddad@moravian.edu, Comenius 112, (610) 861-1559  
Office hours: Tuesdays 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.; Wednesdays 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.; and by appointment.  
POSC 120 A (T/TR, 1:10 to 2:20 p.m.) and 120 B (T/TR, 2:35 to 3:45 p.m.), Fall 2012

### **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THINKING (M3)**

We will start our studies with an exploration of thought and the conditions of consciousness with a series of short readings from Plato, William Deresiewicz, and Nicholas Carr respectively. After that, our main focus will be on five key texts that have shaped the history of political ideas: Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* (405 BCE), Plato's *Apology* and *Crito* (c. 399 BCE), Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532), Christine de Pisan's *Book of the Body Politic* (c. 1407), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1755). The questions we will ask of these texts are classic ones such as the following:

- How should I think about the world?
- What should I do? What should we do?
- How should we encounter one another?
- How should we arrange our lives together?
- Who should rule?
- What are the legitimate limits of political or state power?

These questions share a concern for norms. The emphasis falls on one recurring word: should. This means that normative political theory investigates situations in which knowing the facts will not suffice. Normative theory must address unclear, conflictual, or otherwise complex situations. This means that students of political theory must engage obligations and values as explicit sites of inquiry. To do this, we must attend to our texts with care. I invite you to find the connections between texts that have held the attention of political theorists over time and your present day experience of the personal and the political. True to the liberal arts tradition, our group will engage in close readings of the text as well as argumentative discussion. This course satisfies the Ultimate Questions (M3) requirements of the Learning in Common Curriculum (LinC) and is required for all Political Science majors.

#### **Course objectives:**

- 1) To reflect on the conditions and practices of consciousness
- 2) To gain critical distance from naïve realism
- 3) To expand and deepen an account of the political
- 4) To reflect on language usage inside and outside of the classroom
- 5) To acquire canonical and contemporary literacy in political theory
- 6) To ask critical questions regarding political matters
- 7) To improve verbal and written expression with reference to textual evidence

#### **Books for sale at the Moravian College Bookstore:**

- 1) Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (Hackett)
  - 2) Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (University of Chicago Press)
  - 3) Christine de Pisan, *Book of the Body Politic* (Cambridge University Press)
  - 4) Plato, *Trial and Death of Socrates* (Hackett)
  - 5) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (Hackett)
- Other required reading will be made available on reserve at Reeves Library or online.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Calendar	Project	% Final Grade
Ongoing	Engagement	25%
September 13	Essay	15%
October 16	Examination	20%
November 13	Examination	20%
December 13	Final paper	20%

Meetings	Readings and Assignments
Tuesday, August 28	Introduction to POSC 120 (syllabus)
Thursday, August 30	Introduction to political theory (subfield)
Tuesday, September 4	William Deresiewicz, "The End of Solitude" (2009) (copies)
Thursday, September 6	Nicholas Carr, <i>The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Your Brain</i> (2010), Chapter Seven: "The Juggler's Brain" (on reserve at Reeves Library)
Tuesday, September 11	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Book VII (Allegory of the Cave) (copies)
Thursday, September 13	In-class essay on habits of the mind, thinking and learning
Tuesday, September 18	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i> (405 BCE)
Thursday, September 20	<i>Lysistrata</i>
Tuesday, September 25	<i>Lysistrata</i>
Thursday, September 27	Plato, <i>Apology</i>
Tuesday, October 2	<i>Apology</i>
Thursday, October 5	Plato, <i>Crito</i>
	Fall Recess
Thursday, October 11	Fresh air political theory: bring your favorite quotation!
Tuesday, October 16	In-class examination on the works of Plato and Aristophanes
Thursday, October 18	Christine de Pisan, <i>Book of the Body Politic</i>
Tuesday, October 23	<i>Book of the Body Politic</i>
Thursday, October 25	<i>Book of the Body Politic</i>
Tuesday, November 30	Niccolò Macchiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> (first published in Italian, 1532), Chronology, Letter to the Magnificent Lorenzo de Medici, Chapters I-VI
Thursday, November 1	<i>The Prince</i> , Chapters VII-XIII

Tuesday, November 6	<i>The Prince</i> , Chapters XIV-XX
Thursday, November 8	<i>The Prince</i> , Chapters XXI-XVI
Tuesday, November 13	Comparison of the political implications of the two respective mirrors for princes
Thursday, November 15	In-class examination on the works of de Pisan and Macchiavelli
Tuesday, November 20	Introduction to the life and thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau
	Thanksgiving Recess
Tuesday, November 27	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origins of Inequality</i> (1755)
Thursday, November 29	<i>Discourse on the Origins of Inequality</i>
Tuesday, December 4	<i>Discourse on the Origins of Inequality</i>
Thursday, December 6	Course evaluations and review for the final exam
Thursday, December 13	Final paper due by 4 p.m. to Mrs. Ortiz in Comenius 206

What does an engagement grade represent?

- A. Critical, innovative and careful reading of all assignments; substantial notes or written preparation for discussion; frequent text-based contributions; contribution of discussion-shaping questions; careful engagement of the arguments of others; support of positive discussion dynamics.
- B. Complete and careful readings; consistent notes or written preparation for discussion; lively, substantial, and argumentative text-based contributions; contribution of independent questions; engagement of the arguments of others.
- C. Incomplete or superficial readings; minimal notes or written preparation for discussion; regular (at least once per meeting) discussion participation.
- D. Incomplete or missing readings; lack of notes or written preparation for discussion; mostly passive presence.
- F Persistent, vegetative state; low-level trance; slightly elevated body temperature.

## General Course Information

PLEASE TURN YOUR CELLPHONE OFF OR DOWN  
AND PUT IT AWAY BEFORE YOU ENTER THE CLASSROOM.

Our purpose is concentration and dialogue. Please protect the classroom as a space of learning. If you are a parent or a caretaker and thus need to be accessible at all times, please let me know.

1) I invite you to visit my office hours. Please be in touch with any questions and thoughts you may have about our work together. I am happy to help you with difficulties relating to your reading of our texts as well as challenges that may arise with regard to assignments. It is my pleasure to help you improve your enjoyment of and performance in this course.

2) 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).

3) Drinks are fine, but food or gum impedes your ability to participate in our discussion and is therefore not appropriate.

4) 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, reread, 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. Don't skim or rush. Avoid online resources in favor of a direct experience with the text.

7) 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 30 % of the assignment grade on the four-point scale.

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

9) Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling (610) 861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

10) This syllabus is subject to change.