

PLEASE PUT AWAY YOUR PHONE BEFORE YOU ENTER THE CLASSROOM.

Political Science 120: Introduction to Political Thinking (LinC M3), Fall 2013

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This course meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:20 to 11:30 a.m. in Comenius Hall 114. I invite you to visit my office hours on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to noon, on Thursdays from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. or by appointment. If you would like to make an appointment, please contact me via e-mail. I recommend that all students make use of office hours.

We will begin our study of political thinking in the depths of Plato's cave. Our concern will be to sort out the consequences of how we think about politics.

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) Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (University of Chicago Press)
- 2) Plato, *Trial and Death of Socrates* (Hackett). This anthology contains *Apology* and also *Crito*.
- 3) Nancy S. Love, editor, *Dogmas and Dreams: A Reader in Modern Ideologies*. Fourth Edition. (CQ Press)

Assignment	Calendar	Description	% of final grade
Engagement	Ongoing	see below	25
Exam 1	February 13	Plato texts	25
Exam 2	March 18	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>	25
Exam 3	April 15	Foundations of liberalism	25

Calendar

Tuesday, January 14	1) Introduction, explanation of syllabus
Thursday, January 16	2) Introduction to the subfield of political theory
Tuesday, January 21	3) Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , The Cave
Thursday, January 23	4) The Divided Line
Tuesday, January 28	5) William Deresiewicz, "The End of Solitude"
Thursday, January 30	6) Plato, <i>Apology</i>
Tuesday, February 4	7) <i>Apology</i> continued
Thursday, February 6	8) Plato, <i>Crito</i>
Tuesday, February 11	9) Comparison of the character of Socrates in <i>Plato</i> and <i>Crito</i> respectively
Thursday, February 13	10) In-class examination (1)
Tuesday, February 18	11) Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Chronology Letter to the Magnificent Lorenzo de Medici, Chapters I-VI
Thursday, February 20	12) Machiavelli: <i>The Prince</i> (film, 2006)
Tuesday, February 25	13) <i>The Prince</i> , Chapters VII-XIII
Thursday, February 27	14) <i>The Prince</i> , Chapters XIV-XX
	Spring Recess
Tuesday, March 11	15) <i>The Prince</i> , Chapters XXI-XVI
Thursday, March 13	16) Review
Tuesday, March 18	17) In-class examination (2)
Thursday, March 20	18) Lecture on liberalism

Tuesday, March 25	19) John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Civil Government</i>
Thursday, March 27	20) Locke, continued
Tuesday, April 1	21) John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i>
Thursday, April 3	22) Mill, continued
Tuesday, April 8	23) Comparison of Locke and Mill's account of the individual
Thursday, April 10	24) Benedict Anderson, <i>Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism</i>
Tuesday, April 15	25) In-class examination (3)
Thursday, April 17	26) Edward W. Said, "Origins of Terrorism"
	Easter Recess
Tuesday, April 22	27) Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?"
Thursday, April 24	28) Benjamin R. Barber, "Jihad Vs. McWorld"

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 PUT AWAY YOUR SILENCED PHONE
BEFORE YOU ENTER THE CLASSROOM.
YOUR PHONE SHOULD NEVER BE VISIBLE OR AUDIBLE IN 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.

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.

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).

Drinks are fine, but food or gum impedes your ability to participate in our discussion. No food in the classroom, please.

Expect to work five 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.

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.

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>

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.

This syllabus is subject to change.