

# Political Science 120: Introduction to Political Thinking (LinC M3), Fall 2015

The text selections for this course reflect the IN FOCUS theme year's concentration on poverty and inequality. Students are encouraged to attend IN FOCUS events this year in support of their studies in Political Science. For more information, please see <http://home.moravian.edu/public/infocus/NEW/poverty/>

**A: Tuesday/Thursday, 10:20 to 11:30 a.m., Comenius Hall 111**

**B: Tuesday/Thursday, 1:10 to 2:20 p.m., Comenius Hall 111**

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR PHONE INAUDIBLE AND INVISIBLE  
INSIDE THE CLASSROOM BEFORE AND AFTER CLASS.  
CARETAKERS AND PARENTS PLEASE SPEAK WITH ME ABOUT EXCEPTIONS.**

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Office hours:  
Wednesdays, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.;  
Thursdays, 2:45 to 3:45 p.m.;  
and also by appointment.

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?  
What is justice?  
Who gets what and why?  
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
- 8) To acquire note taking skills and to create a commonplace book

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) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (Hackett)
- 4) Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Prometheus)

Calendar	Assignments
Tuesday, September 1	<p>Documentary: Pervert's Guide to Ideology. 2012. Directed by Sophie Fiennes. Starring cultural theorist Slavoj Zizek, author of <i>The Sublime Object of Ideology</i> and <i>Enjoy Your Symptom!</i></p> <p>Text: Michel Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> (1975), selection distributed in class</p>
Thursday, September 3	<p>Discussion of the syllabus</p> <p>Documentary: Philosophy – A Guide to Happiness: Socrates on Self-Confidence. Inspired and directed by Alain de Botton, author of <i>The Consolations of Philosophy</i>.</p> <p>Distribution of copies for September 8</p>
Tuesday, September 8	<p>Plato, <i>Republic</i>, Book VII, allegory of the cave (ca. 380 BCE) (copies)</p>
Thursday, September 10	<p><i>Republic</i>, Book VII, the divided line (same text as September 8, continued)</p>
Tuesday, September 15	<p>Plato, <i>Apology</i>, read up to Stephanus 28b</p>
Thursday, September 17	<p><i>Apology</i>, read to the end of the text</p>
Tuesday, September 22	<p>Plato, <i>Crito</i> (360 BCE)</p> <p><b>Voices of Diversity: Moravian College Faculty and Staff Speak</b> 11:45 to 12:45 in Prosser Auditorium</p> <p>An informal panel discussion featuring members of the MC faculty and staff whose national or ethnic origins are different than that of the majority white communities in which they now live.</p> <p>Organized and sponsored by Dr. John Reynolds, Political Science</p>
Thursday, September 24	<p>Plato Review</p>

Tuesday, September 29		<b>Plato examination in class, 20%</b>
Thursday, October 1	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> (1513/1532), read the Chronology, Letter to Lorenzo the Magnificent and chapters I to VI	
	Documentary: Who's Afraid of Machiavelli? (2013)	
Tuesday, October 6	<i>The Prince</i> , read chapters VII to XIII	
<b>Wednesday, October 7</b>	<b>Marx in Soho</b> <b>7:00 p.m. in Prosser Auditorium</b>	
<b>Highly recommended</b> event for this course as we will be studying the work of Karl Marx and Friederich Engels.	This live show dramatizes contemporary issues of class and economic inequality in the context of Marx's life and work.  Sponsored by the Political Science Department, the English Department, and the Theater Program.	
Thursday, October 8	<i>The Prince</i> , read chapters XIV to XX	
<b>Tuesday, October 13</b>		<b>NO CLASS – FALL RECESS</b>
Tuesday, October 15	<i>The Prince</i> , read chapters XXI to XXVI and review entire text	
	Review	
Thursday, October 20		<b>Machiavelli examination in class, 20%</b>
Thursday, October 22	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origins of Inequality</i> (1755)	
	Documentary: The Birth of the Individual in Modern Society. Directed by Maria Popova.	
Tuesday, October 27	<i>Discourse</i> , pages 1-20	

Thursday, October 29	<i>Discourse</i> , pages 21 to 40
Tuesday, November 3	<i>Discourse</i> , pages 41 to 71
	Review
Thursday, November 5	<b>Rousseau examination in class, 20%</b>
Tuesday, November 10	Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> (1792), chapters 1 to 4
Thursday, November 12	<i>Vindication</i> , chapters 5 to 8
Tuesday, November 17	<i>Vindication</i> , chapters 9 to 13
Thursday, November 19	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848), Eric Hobsbawm's Introduction
	Documentary: Karl Marx: architect of the 21st century. Directed by Pablo Garcia. (2006)
Tuesday, November 24	<i>Manifesto</i> , pages 31 to 50
<b>Thursday, November 26</b>	<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>
Tuesday, December 1	<i>Manifesto</i> , pages 51 to 77

	Review and course evaluations
Thursday, December 3	<b>Cumulative examination in class</b>
Tuesday, December 8	No class today, special office hours by appointment
Thursday, December 10	Final discussion about poverty and inequality Last opportunity to improve engagement grade
	Examinations returned

Course component	Calendar	% of Final Grade
Engagement	Ongoing	20%
Exam 1 (Plato)	Tuesday, September 29	20%
Exam 2 (Machiavelli)	Thursday, October 20	20%
Exam 3 (Rousseau)	Thursday, November 5	20%
Exam 4 (cumulative with primary focus on Wollstonecraft, Marx and Engels)	Thursday, December 3	20%

### 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.

## **Basics for POSC 120 A and B**

Come and talk. You are always welcome to come to office hours. No appointments needed. Bring your questions.

Value other students and their ideas. Learn names and engage others in discussion. Recognition is half of justice.

Ask questions in class. This is your time to learn. Speak up.

Before class, you need to prepare your mind and review our material. After class, you need to give your mind a moment to consolidate memories. If you pick up your phone right away, it will be harder to remember and develop your thoughts from class. It is in your own best interest to develop good mental habits and to support your own learning process. Best activity after class: share thoughts with a classmate or sit somewhere quiet for fifteen minutes and take notes. Right after class, your mind is full of information. Capture or develop that information instead of erasing it by rushing on to the next thing.

Expect to spend 140 minutes preparing for each 70-minute class meeting. Full preparation for class entails careful readings, possible multiple readings, taking notes and formulating questions for class discussions in writing, looking up all unknown words in a dictionary, reviewing earlier class notes and being prepared to show your knowledge of material covered in past class meetings. Come prepared to participate and be aware that I call on students who do not raise their hands. You are responsible for course material throughout the semester. As I said before, I welcome your questions in class.

There are two unexcused absences for this course. Subsequent absences harm your engagement grade at the rate of 1% of your final grade per missed class.

Do not eat or chew gum. Drinking is permitted.

For the sake of equity, please do not ask for special treatment.

Any form of cheating on an examination will result in a failing grade for that examination.

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 Ms. Laurie Roth or Ms. Dana Wilson, Assistant Director of Academic and Disability Support located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or call (610) 861-1401.

Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

This syllabus is subject to change.