

POLITICAL SCIENCE 120 A: Introduction to *Political Thinking*

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/>

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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 where we will confront the basic dilemmas of consciousness

Our concern will be to sort out the choices and 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?

Have you ever heard that it isn't polite to speak about politics, religion or money? *Think again!*

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

Calendar	✓	Assignments
Tuesday, January 19		Documentary: <i>Pervert's Guide to Ideology</i> . 2012. Directed by Sophie Fiennes. Starring cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek.
		Text: Michel Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> (1975), selection distributed in class
Thursday, January 21		Discussion of the syllabus Documentary: <i>Philosophy – A Guide to Happiness: Socrates on Self-Confidence</i> (2000). Inspired and directed by Alain de Botton, author of <i>The Consolations of Philosophy</i> (2000).
		Distribution of copies for January 26
Tuesday, January 26		Final Day for Course Changes
		Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book VII, allegory of the cave (ca. 380 BCE) (copies)
Thursday, January 28		<i>Republic</i> , Book VII, the divided line (same text as January 26, continued)
Tuesday, February 2		Plato, <i>Apology</i> , read up to Stephanos 28b
Thursday, February 4		<i>Apology</i> , read to the end of the text
Tuesday, February 9		Plato, <i>Crito</i> (360 BCE)
Thursday and Tuesday, February 11 and 16		No class today. Instructor at academic conference.
Thursday, February 18		Plato review

		Prepare questions for review, page numbers for specific passages are helpful
Tuesday, February 23		EXAM 1: Examination in class on three texts by Plato
Thursday, February 25		Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> (1513/1532), the Chronology, Letter to Lorenzo the Magnificent, and chapters I to VI
		Documentary: Who's Afraid of Machiavelli? (2013)
Tuesday, March 1		<i>The Prince</i> , chapters VII to XIII
Tuesday, March 3		<i>The Prince</i> , chapters XIV to XX
SPRING BREAK		
Tuesday, March 15		<i>The Prince</i> , chapters XXI to XXVI and review entire text
Thursday, March 17		EXAM 2: Machiavelli examination
Tuesday, March 22		Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origins of Inequality</i> (1755), pages 1 to 20
Thursday, March 24		<i>Discourse</i> , pages 21 to 40
Tuesday, March 29		<i>Discourse</i> , pages 41 to 71
Thursday, March 31		Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> (1792), chapters 1 to 4

Tuesday, April 5		<i>Vindication</i> , chapters 5 to 8
Thursday, April 7		<i>Vindication</i> , chapters 9 to 13
Tuesday, April 12		Review: Rousseau and Wollstonecraft
Thursday, April 14		EXAM 3: Examination comparing theories of inequality in Rousseau and Wollstonecraft respectively
Thursday, April 19		Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848), Eric Hobsbawm's introduction
		Audiovisual: Karl Marx: Architect of the 20th century. Directed by Pablo Garcia. (2006)
Tuesday, April 21		<i>Manifesto</i> , pages 31 to 50
		Final engagement grade evaluations in class
Tuesday, April 26		<i>Manifesto</i> , pages 51 to 77
		Final engagement evaluations in class
Thursday, April 28		Final discussion
		Course evaluations

Evaluation

Assignment	Your grade	% of final grade	Date	Information
EXAM 1		25%	Tuesday 2/23	
EXAM 2		25%	Thursday 3/17	
EXAM 3		25%	Thursday 4/14	
ENGAGEMENT		25%	Ongoing	special evaluation at the end of the semester in class, see definition below

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

YOUR PHONE IS NEVER VISIBLE OR AUDIBLE IN THE CLASSROOM —BEFORE OR AFTER CLASS.

If you are a parent or a caretaker and must be reachable at all times, please let me know.

Before class, you need to prepare your mind and review our material. Be ready for direct questions on the material covered in recent classes. Memorize important definitions. Prepare questions on the text. 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. To learn more about how your intellectual habits shape your mind, consult Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (2010). Carr discusses neuroplasticity and other insights from neuroscience.

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.

Ask questions in class. This is your time to learn. Speak up. Don't worry about embarrassing yourself. When you are older, you will barely remember this class or the people in it. What will stay with you is your intellectual development and ability to speak up.

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

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

There are two unexcused absences for this course. Subsequent absences harm your engagement grade at the rate of 2% 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.

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.