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POLS 2460
T/Th 9:35-10:50, ENG 2102
Final Exam: Tuesday, Dec 19, 10:15-12:15

**UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
FALL 2017**

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to several primary concepts in and approaches to the study of political theory through the works of a few major political theorists. Through the selected authors and texts, we will discuss different understandings of concepts such as justice, political obligation, liberty, and authority within the larger framework of the question “what is the good life?” In addition to focusing upon particular concepts, like those listed above, the inclusion of both ancient and modern theorists will allow us to compare the quite different conceptions of human nature, society, and government that ground these theorists’ works. By reflecting upon these different treatments of political concepts, this course aims to improve students’ analytical skills, to develop their normative reasoning, and to both broaden and deepen their understanding, and hopefully appreciation, of political life.

Course Objectives:

- To introduce students to core concepts and their different treatments in classic texts in the history of political theory
- To introduce students to key practices of political theory including close reading, interpretation, and analysis
- To advance students’ reading, writing, critical thinking, oral and digital communication skills
- To fuel an enthusiasm for learning

Required Texts: Students will need to purchase the editions of the texts selected below. Each is available at the bookstore. Different editions vary significantly. Since we will refer to the text frequently in class, substituting another edition will make it difficult to follow along and keep pace. Where possible, for reasons of cost and accessibility, I have assigned readings available on the web. Please print these documents and **bring the text we are discussing to class.**

Plato. *Republic*. 1992. Translated by G. M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. 0872201368

John Locke. 1988. *Two Treatises of Government*. Ed. Peter Laslett. Student Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 0521357306

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. 1978. *On the Social Contract*. Ed. Roger Masters and translated by Judith Masters. New York: St. Martin’s Press. 0312694466

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd Edition. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton. 0-393-09040-X

Hannah Arendt. 1968. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace. 978-0-15-670153-2

Course Requirements:

Two Writing Labs: for a total of **30%** of your course grade.

Students will be required to participate in two online writing labs designed to introduce students to the core practices of political theory and to advance students' digital awareness and writing and critical thinking skills. To this end, all students will be assigned to a writing lab group in which they will participate. The first writing lab will account for 10% of your course grade and the second for 20% of your course grade; I will distribute explicit instructions regarding expectations and a grading rubric. On the course day that the writing lab is listed, we will NOT meet in class. Instead, the writing lab will occur over several days online.

Writing Lab 1: Close reading and finding textual evidence. **Notes DUE Thursday, Sept 28 in class, in-class participation required; final report due to WyoCourses, Tuesday, Oct 3, 11:59pm**

Writing Lab 2: Writing an essay. **Notes Due Thursday, Nov 10 in class, in-class participation required; final essay due to WyoCourses, Tuesday, Nov 14, 11:59pm**

UW Writing Center. The Writing Center in Coe 302 is able to help writers at any stage of the writing process. With a focus on teaching and learning, the Writing Center is not a "fix-it shop," but they help writers identify, articulate, and implement improvements and corrections to their writing. Drop in to see if a consultant is available, or schedule an appointment online at uwyo.edu/writingcenter

Participation: 10% of your course grade.

In addition to introducing you to the substantive material, this course also seeks to improve your critical thinking skills and to develop your ability to communicate ideas and deliberate with others. Since this is an *introductory* course, there will be some lectures. However, there will also be significant opportunity for class discussion and participation. Course participation includes preparation, attendance, and verbal participation.

Attendance Policy: Students will be allowed two absences. Thereafter, all unexcused absences will result in a one-third of a letter grade reduction in the student's *participation* grade. Absences for documented medical reasons, documented emergencies, and UW sanctioned events will be excused.

Preparation and Verbal Participation: 10% of the course grade will be based on the student's verbal participation and engagement in the course.

Exams: 60% of your course grade.

There will be one in-class midterm written examination which will include some combination of short answer, identification, quotation source attribution, and essay question which will account for 25% of your course grade. There will also be a take-home final exam that will account for 35% of your course grade.

Midterm Examination: IN CLASS, Thursday, Oct 19

Final Examination: Due no later than Tuesday, December 19, 12:15pm to WyoCourses

Grading: Each of the **exams** will be graded using the following scale:

93-100	A	77-79	C+
90-92	A-	73-76	C
87-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-86	B	67-69	D+
80-82	B-	63-66	D
		60-62	D-
		< 60	F

Writing Labs may NOT conform to the above grading scale. Grading scale will be identified on detailed assignment.

Final Course grades will be determined by the following scale:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
< 60	F

The University of Wyoming in Fall 2014 implemented a new grading system that allows instructors, *at their discretion*, to award plus and minus grades as well as the standard letter grades of A, B, C, D, and F. This policy is detailed in UW Regulation 6-722: <http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/files/docs/uw-reg-6-722.pdf>. Due to other University and College policies linked to students' grade point averages and to minimum performance required in particular classes, in this course, plusses and minuses will NOT be awarded in final course grades.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty (including plagiarism and all other offenses listed under University Regulation 802 rev 2) **will not be tolerated**. Any violations of University policy will be handled through University procedures explained at <http://www.uwyo.edu/pols/courses/index.html>. Regardless of its percentage of all course work, an act of academic dishonesty on an assignment or examination will result in a course grade of F.

If you have a physical, learning, sensory or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and possibly provide documentation of your disability to Disability Support Services (DSS), room 109 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or udss@uwyo.edu. Visit their website for more information: www.uwyo.edu/udss."

Texting in class will not be tolerated.

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):

Week One:

Thursday, Aug 31: Syllabus Distributed: Introductions

Week Two:

Tuesday, Sept 5: Introductions, What is political theory?

Required reading: Michael Oakeshott. "What is Political Theory?" from *What is History and Other Essays*. 2004. Imprint Academic.
Colin Farrelly. "What is Political Theory?" from *In Search of Enlightenment*. 2006. <http://colinfarrelly.blogspot.com/2006/04/what-is-political-theory.html>
On WyoCourses.

Questions to consider for class discussion: What is political theory? How is it different from political science? What is the relationship between theory and practice? Why should we study political theory? How does it contribute to a liberal education?

Thursday, Sept 7: Introduction to Plato / What is justice?

Required: Plato: Book I (all). READ CAREFULLY!

Recommended: Grube: Introduction to Plato's *Republic*

Questions to consider for class discussion: What is the distinction between power and force? How do Cephalus and Polemarchus define justice? How does Socrates refute their understandings? How does Thrasymachus define justice? What is at stake with each definition?

Week Three:

Tuesday, Sept 12: Close Textual Analysis

Required: Daley, Anthony. 1995. "On Reading: Strategies for Students" *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 28: 89-100.
Kain, Patricia. 1998. "How to Do a Close Reading" *Harvard University Writing Center*. On WyoCourses.

Close Textual Analysis Exercise

Thursday, Sept 14: What is justice? Is it evident in the ideal city?

Required: Review Book I, Read Book II (all)

Questions to consider for class discussion: How does Glaucon define justice? What kind of a good is justice according to Glaucon? And, according to Socrates? Is there a one to one correlation between the individual and the city? Why does Socrates draw this analogy?

Week Four:

Tuesday, Sept 19: Education and the Ideal Political Regime

Required: Plato: Book III paragraph 412a- end; and IV (all)

Questions to consider for class discussion: Why is the education of the guardians so important? What is the "noble falsehood" that Socrates tells? What is it designed to do? What is the relationship between

public opinion and law? What are the four cardinal virtues? Where does Socrates identify each in the city and in the soul?

Thursday, Sept 21: Knowledge and Power
Required: Plato: Books V, VI (all)

Questions to consider for class discussion: What are the “three waves” of opposition to Socrates’s ideal city? Can the good city come into existence? What are the obstacles to achieving the ideal city in practice? Can theory and practice be reconciled? What is the appropriate relationship of these in political life?

DISTRIBUTE WRITING LAB #1

Week Five:

Tuesday, Sept 26: Education and the Ideal Political Regime Reconsidered
What is happiness? What is the good life?
Required: Plato: Book VII par. 514-521, Book IX par. 571- 583a

Questions to consider for class discussion: What is happiness according to Plato? What is the good life? How is it that we can attain the good life? Do you find this to be an attractive idea? How do Plato’s core ideas of virtue, happiness, and knowledge relate to one another?

Thursday, Sept 28: WRITING LAB #1: Identifying Textual Evidence and Using Quotations
Required: Participation

Week Six:

Tuesday, Oct 3: Introduction to Locke
Learning Locke’s Concepts
Required: Locke: *Second Treatise*, Chapters I-IV (p. 267-285)

Recommended: Laslett’s Introduction pgs.79-122

Questions to consider for class discussion: What is John Locke trying to achieve with *The Second Treatise*? What distinguishes the state of nature from the state of war? What are people like in the state of nature? How does Locke define natural equality? What is the law of nature? How do we know the law of nature? What is Locke’s “strange Doctrine”? How does Locke define liberty?

Required: **Individual Writing Lab Reports Due to WyoCourses by 11:59pm**

Thursday, Oct. 5: On Property and the Purpose of Man,
Required: Locke: *Second Treatise*, Chapter V, p.285-302 (reminder, READ CAREFULLY!)

Questions to consider for class discussion: How does Locke justify the taking of private property in a world that was given to humans in common?

Week Seven:

Tuesday, Oct 10: Political Society

Required: Locke: *Second Treatise*, Chapter VII (318-330), Chapter IX (350-353)

Questions to consider for class discussion: What distinguishes political society from the state of nature? Why is an absolute monarchy inconsistent with Locke's conception of civil society? What is the role of the state? What is the end of civil/political society?

Thursday, Oct 12: Dissolution of Society and Government, Right to Resist
Required: Locke: Chapters XVIII, XIX, Declaration of Independence (398-428)

Questions to consider for class discussion: What distinguishes the dissolution of society from that of government? Why is this an important question? When are the people justified in resisting government? Why is this not a dangerous doctrine according to Locke?

Week Eight:

Tuesday, Oct 17: Review and Recap for Exam

Thursday, Oct 19: **MIDTERM: In class, blue-book required.**

Week Nine:

Tuesday, Oct 24: Introduction to Rousseau
Required: Rousseau: *The Social Contract*: Book I, Book II chapters I-V (p. 45-64)

Recommended: Crocker's Introduction on Rousseau

Questions to consider for class discussion: What is Rousseau's main goal in *The Social Contract*? What is the difference between an aggregation and an association? How does an individual's "particular will" differ from the "general will"? What distinguishes the "will of all" from the "general will"? How does Rousseau define the term liberty? What are the obstacles to achieving the general will? What does Rousseau mean when he claims "that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the entire body; which means nothing else than that he shall be forced to be free"?

Thursday, Oct 26: Reconciling Freedom and Obligation
Required: Rousseau: *The Social Contract*: Book II chapters VI-XII, Book III chapters I-IV, and XII-XVIII, (p. 65-78, 78-86, 91-107)

Questions to consider for class discussion: How does Rousseau resolve the problem of implementing an ideal political order among citizens raised under imperfect institutions? How are the sovereign, the subject, and the government related for Rousseau? What are the necessary conditions for a democracy to form? What does Rousseau expect of a citizen? Why is public opinion so important to the success or failure of a regime? What is censorship according to Rousseau?

Week Ten:

Tuesday, Oct 31: Participatory Democracy and Public Opinion
Required: Rousseau: *The Social Contract*: Book II chapters VI-XII, Book III chapters I-IV, and XII-XVIII,
 (p. 65-78, 78-86, 91-107)

Questions to consider for class discussion: How does Rousseau resolve the problem of implementing an ideal political order among citizens raised under imperfect institutions? How are the sovereign, the subject, and the government related for Rousseau? What are the necessary conditions for a democracy to form? What does Rousseau expect of a citizen? Why is public opinion so important to the success or failure of a regime? What is censorship according to Rousseau?

Thursday, Nov 2: **WRITING LAB #2 DISTRIBUTED**

Week Eleven:

Tuesday, Nov 7: Rousseau: Continued and Concluded
Required: Rousseau: *The Social Contract*: Book IV chapters I-IX
 (p. 108-132)

Thursday, Nov 9: WRITING LAB #2

Week Twelve:

Tuesday, Nov 14: Introduction to Marx
 Early Marx and Humanism
Required: "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," Tucker 66-105

Required: **Writing Lab #2 Due to WyoCourses, 11:59pm**

Thursday, Nov 16: Early Marx and Humanism
Required: Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," Tucker p. 143-145

What are the different expressions it takes? How does Marx's conception of private property differ from that of Locke? How does Marx conceive of the relationship between humans and the natural world? What might productive labor look like? What is his argument against idealism? What do you think of Marx's provocative statement in the 11th Thesis?

Week Thirteen:

Tuesday, Nov 21: Political Theory and Polemics
Required: Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," Tucker p.473-500

Questions to consider for class discussion: How have the bourgeoisie revolutionized the world? What is the basis for commonality/community for Marx? How does the bourgeoisie create its own demise? How does Marx position himself in relation to his historical materialism? Should we expect the struggle towards communism to take the same shape in all nations?

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Week Fourteen:

Tuesday, Nov 28: Marx, Continued and Concluded

Thursday, Nov 30:

Required:

Introduction to Arendt

The Origins of Totalitarianism, “Preface to the First Edition, Preface to Part One, Preface to Part Two, and Preface to Part Three” (vii-xxiii)

Week Fifteen:

Tuesday, Dec 1:

Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, “The Political Emancipation of the Bourgeoisie, 123-157

Thursday, Dec 3:

Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, “Race-Thinking Before Racism” 158-84, and “The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man” 267-304

Week Sixteen:

Tuesday, Dec 6:

Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, “Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government” 460-482

Thursday, Dec 7:

Course Evaluations, Review, Final Exam Distributed

Final Exam Due:

Tuesday, December 19, **12:15pm** through WyoCourses