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.

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. A few readings will be available on library reserve. 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’s *Apology* available at [http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html)


Declaration of Independence


Course Requirements:

**Writing Assignments: 35% of your course grade.**
In this course, students will be required to write two papers: the first will be worth 15% of your course grade and the second will be worth 20%. In each assignment, you will be provided with an essay question to address using textual evidence from one or more of the major authors covered in the course. I will distribute a more detailed paper handout that specifies my expectations for each assignment in the coming weeks.

**Due Dates:** All papers are due in my office by noon on the due date. Late papers will not be accepted.

First Writing Assignment: Monday, Sept. 28
Second Writing Assignment: Monday, Nov 16

**Participation: 20% 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, verbal participation, and reading quizzes.

**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.

**Reading Quizzes:** 10% of the course grade will be determined by 10 reading quizzes completed throughout the semester.

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

**Exams: 45% of your course grade.**
There will be two in-class, written examinations which will include some combination of short answer, identification, quotation source attribution, and essay questions. The midterm examination will account for 20% of your course grade and the final examination will account for 25%.

Midterm Examination: Thurs, Oct. 22, in class
Final Examination: Tues, Dec. 18, 10:15-12:15

Early finals will be offered only in those rare instances that fall under University policy.

**Grading:** All written assignments and the final exam will be graded using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading Quizzes will not conform to the above grading scale.
**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/a&s/AppealsDishonesty/GuidelinesDishonesty](http://www.uwyo.edu/a&s/AppealsDishonesty/GuidelinesDishonesty)

Accommodations for persons with documented disabilities require student registration with University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in SEO, room 330 Knight Hall, 766-6189, TTY 766-3073. Please make every effort to register and inform me of your needs as soon as possible.

*No electronic devices (excepting silenced cell phones) will be allowed in class unless first approved by the instructor. Text messaging will be treated in a similar manner to the passing of notes.*

***

**Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):**

**Week One:**
Tuesday, Aug 25: Introductions, Assessments, and Administration

Thursday, Aug 27: What is political theory?

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?

**FIRST READING QUIZ**

**Week Two:**
Tuesday, Sept 1: Introduction to Plato and the *Apology*
**Required:** Plato’s *Apology*

Thursday, Sept 3: Plato’s *Apology*, cont.
**Required:** Review Plato’s *Apology*

**SECOND READING QUIZ**

**Week Three:**
Tuesday, Sept 08: 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?

Thursday, Sept 10: 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?

THIRD READING QUIZ

Week Four:
Tuesday, Sept 15: 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 17: 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?

FOURTH READING QUIZ

Week Five:
Tuesday, Sept 22: 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?

FIFTH READING QUIZ

Thursday, Sept 24: PAPER WORKSHOP
Week Six:
Monday, Sept 28  FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE, BY NOON, IN MY OFFICE
*NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED

Tuesday, Sept 29: Viewing: MATRIX

Thursday, Oct 1: Introduction to Locke

Week Seven:
Tuesday, Oct 6: 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?

Thursday, Oct 8: 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?

SIXTH READING QUIZ

Week Eight:
Tuesday, Oct 13: 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 15: 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?

SEVENTH READING QUIZ
**Week Nine:**
Tuesday, Oct 20: The American Example
Required: Declaration of Independence
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/print_friendly.html?page=declaration_transcript_content.html&title=NARA%20%7C%20The%20Declaration%20of%20Independence%3A%20Transcription

Thursday, Oct 22: MIDTERM

**Week Ten:**
Tuesday, Oct 27: Viewing: Lost

Thursday, Oct 29: Viewing: Dangerous Liaisons

**Week Eleven:**
Tuesday, Nov 3: Introduction to Rousseau: The first critique of liberalism

Thursday, Nov 5: Reconciling Freedom and Obligation
Required: Rousseau: The Social Contract: Book I, Book II chapters I-V (p. 45-64)

Recommended: Crocker’s Introduction on Rousseau
Arnhart: Chapter Nine “Participatory Democracy”

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”?

**EIGHTH READING QUIZ**

**Week Twelve:**
Tuesday, Nov 10: Participatory Democracy and Public Opinion

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 12: Rousseau: Continued and Concluded

NINTH READING QUIZ

Week Thirteen:
Monday, Nov 16: SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE BY NOON
Tuesday, Nov 17: Required: Introduction to Marx

Thursday, Nov 19: Early Marx and Humanism
“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” Tucker 66-105
Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” Tucker p. 143-145

Questions to consider for class discussion: What is estranged labor? 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?

TENTH READING QUIZ

Week Fourteen:
Tuesday, Nov 24: Political Theory and Polemics

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?

BONUS READING QUIZ

Thursday, Nov 26: HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Week Fifteen:
Tuesday, Dec 1: Revolutionaries Compared

Thursday, Dec 3: Marx, continued and concluded.
Viewing: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

FINAL EXAM: Tues, Dec. 18, 10:15-12:15. Written examination, blue-book required.