Course Description:

What is modernity? This course seeks to offer some preliminary answers to this question through the reading of some of the core political thinkers of the 17th to the 19th centuries. Over the course of the semester we will examine how different authors sought to appropriate natural science for the study of politics, society, and human nature; examine some of the similarities among modern thinkers, especially as compared to ancient thinkers; explore some of the general themes common to modern thinkers, particularly those contributing to liberalism; and seek to understand how modern theorists critiqued and built upon one another’s thought. Our studies will focus on the concept of the individual and his or her relation to larger communities particularly through concepts such as freedom, rights, obligation, and justice. By the end of the semester, this inquiry should provide students with a stronger foundation for thinking through some of the challenges facing contemporary liberal democracies. While there will be some lecture, for the most part, this course is discussion based and will require significant student participation.

Required Readings:


If you are purchasing your books somewhere other than the UW Bookstore, please purchase the above editions.
Course Requirements:

**Participation: 10%**

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. This course is designed to be a discussion seminar—each student will bear a significant burden in ensuring the success of the course. Course participation includes preparation, attendance, verbal participation, and course assignments.

Attendance is required—students are allowed one absence. For each following unexcused absence the student’s participation grade will drop one third of a letter grade (i.e. from an A to an A-). Students are also allowed to miss one participation assignment. Failure to complete a participatory assignment (after the one excused) will result in a one-third of a letter grade reduction to the participation grade. The participation grade is then subject to additional adjustments (either up or down) depending upon the student’s verbal participation in the course.

**Exams: 60%**

There will be two in-class examinations, each worth 30% of your course grade, with some combination of multiple choice, identification, and essay questions. A blue book is required.

- First Exam: Thursday, Feb 17
- Second Exam: Thursday, Apr 7

**Writing Assignment: 30%**

In this course, students will be required to write a 12-15 page research paper worth 30% of the course grade. The paper will examine a core concept of political theory through both the primary works of theorists covered in the course and secondary works on the topic. Toward this end, students must submit a “Secondary Article Review”; a Draft Thesis and Literature Review; and a Final Research Paper. A more detailed paper handout that specifies my expectations for the assignments will be distributed in the coming weeks.

Due Dates: Failure to submit any one of the final paper assignments on time will result in a ten point deduction to the final paper. Late final papers WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

- Secondary Article Review, Due: In class, Thursday, Feb 3
- Draft Thesis, Literature Review Due: In class, Thursday, Mar 17
- Final Paper, Due: Thursday, May 5, to E-Companion Drop Box

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

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

Participation assignments may use this scale but more often will be assessed as either acceptable/unacceptable. Students will be informed of the grading method to be used for each assignment.
**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)

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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.*

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**Tentative Course Schedule:**

**Week One**
Thurs. Jan, 13: Introductions

**Week Two**:
Thurs. Jan 20  
**Required:** Power and Order

**Participation Assignment**: Bring in two (TYPED) questions for class discussion.

**Week Three**:
Thurs. Jan 27  
**Required:** The Social Contract

**Participation Assignment**: In-class exercise

**Week Four**:
Thurs. Feb 3  
**Required:** Human Nature, Revisited
Rousseau: *The Second Discourse*, entire (pp. 69-148)

**Participation Assignment**: Bring in two (TYPED) questions for class discussion

**Final Paper Assignment**: Secondary Article Review, due
Week Five:
Thurs. Feb 10  The Social Contract, Reconsidered
Required: Rousseau: *The Social Contract*, Bk I, Bk II, Bk III, Bk IV ch.1-3, 7-9

Participation Assignment: Quotation Interpretation: Choose a quotation and interpret it—giving its significance for the larger reading—in one, single-spaced, typed page (your interpretation should range from ½ to a full page).

Week Six:
Thurs. Feb 17  First Exam

Week Seven:
Thurs. Feb 24  Human Nature, again

Participation Assignment: Quotation Interpretation: Choose a quotation and interpret it—giving its significance for the larger reading—in one, single-spaced, typed page.

Week Eight:
Thurs, Mar 3  Liberty and Justice

Participation Assignment: Ten Concepts (in class exercise)

Week Nine:
Thurs, Mar 10  Freedom and Autonomy
Required: Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, entire (3-79)

Participation Assignment: Bring in two (TYPED) questions for class discussion.
Week Ten:
Thurs, Mar 17  Liberty in Mass Society
Required:  Mill, *On Liberty*, entire (67-175)

Participation Assignment: Five main points of the reading summarized and typed in no more than two single spaced pages.

Final Paper Assignment: Draft Thesis, Literature Review Due, Meet in Research Groups

Week Eleven:
Thurs, Mar 24  SPRING BREAK

Week Twelve:
Thurs, Mar 31  A Philosophy of the Future
Required:  Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, entire (1-181)

Participation Assignment: Choose one of Nietzsche’s aphorisms (pp. 58-73) and interpret it in one single-spaced, typed page

Week Thirteen:
Thurs, Apr 7  Second Exam

Week Fourteen:
Thurs, Apr 14  What is Modernity?

Participation Assignment: Bring in two (TYPED) questions for class discussion.

Final Paper Assignment: PAPER WORKSHOP: Individual Meetings

Week Fifteen:
Thurs, Apr 21  What is Modernity?
Required:  Visual Representation

Participation Assignment: Write a one-page, single spaced essay that relates some aspect of the film to ideas covered in the course. Submit to E-companion drop box by Thursday, Apr 28.
**Week Sixteen**
Thurs, Apr 28  Independent Research for Final Paper

**Week Seventeen:**
FINAL PAPER DUE: Thurs, May 5, TO E-COMPANION DROP BOX
ADDENDUM TO POLS 4650/5650

MODERN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: 5650

ADDITIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT REQUIREMENTS
In addition to those assignments and expectations outlined in the syllabus above, graduate students taking this course will have the following responsibilities:

1. Writing Assignment: For the research paper, graduate students will be expected to write a 15-20 page paper.

2. For exams, graduate students will be expected to provide a higher level of sophistication in their responses.

3. In class participation, graduate students will be expected to perform at a higher level and to work assiduously at fostering robust, and civil, discussion.