

GVPT 100: Principles of Government and Politics
Autumn Semester, 2009
7:30-8:45, Tuesdays and Thursday, Tydings 2111

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"Modern Civil Society"

This course introduces students to the principles of government and politics, is a required course for majors of Government and Politics and counts as a core course for university requirements. GVPT 100 cannot be a comprehensive course; political science is an exceedingly large discipline and any such attempt would sacrifice quality on an altar of quantity. Thus we will be working thematically, analyzing what is general and applying it to what is particular.

We will be focusing on the following themes: the modern political project generally, the American experiment specifically, law and society, the modern city and modern societal ends. The "principles of government and politics" are first introduced in an analysis of modernity, being the general aims of modern political philosophy (Part One). These aims are then narrowed specifically to the American experiment, observing how modern arguments were interpreted and applied in practice over time to their contemporary form (Part Two). Finally, we consider what modernity has to offer man "beyond Locke's plums", that is, beyond mere mercantilism (Part Three).

Course Requirements:

Evaluation for credit will be based on two short essays (750-1000 words or 3-4 double-spaced pages), two in-class essay examinations and intelligent classroom participation. Short essays are each worth 20, midterm 20, final 30, and participation 10 percent of students' final grade.

Short essays are due October 1 and November 10. Late essays will be penalized 1/3 a letter grade (e.g. from A to A-) each day late. Essays more than seven days late will not be accepted.

The first in-class examination will be on October 22, the second, a final examination in December, date and time to be announced. No make-ups will be permitted.

Classroom conduct as well as academic honesty is strictly enforced as per UMD policy. The UMD policy respecting religious observances is followed; students are expected to report their intended absences no later than October 1. To be excused for any other absence, illness or otherwise, written documentation is required. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

Course Books:

Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*
Hamilton, Madison and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*
Mill, *On Liberty*
Ackerman, *We the People: Foundations*
Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*
Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*
Dostoevsky, *The Grand Inquisitor*
Hesse, *Steppenwolf: A Novel*

Reading Schedule:

Students are to have prepared reading selections before each class. Expect to be called on in class frequently. This comprises your 10 percent participation grade.

Introduction

Sept 1: Syllabus and Course Overview

Part One: Modern Political Philosophy

Sept. 3: Foundations of Modernity I: Human Nature

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 13-15

Sept. 8: Foundations of Modernity II: Commonwealth

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 17-18, 21

- Sept. 10: Comfortable Self-Preservation I: Property
Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapter 5
- Sept. 15: Comfortable Self-Preservation II: Ends of Political Society
Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapter 9, 19
- Sept. 17: Institutions for a Good Society I
The Articles of Confederation
The Constitution of the United States
Hamilton, *Federalist Papers*, Nos. 1, 9, 10, 15, 23
- Sept. 22: Institutions for a Good Society II
Hamilton, *The Federalist*, Nos. 47, 51, 63, 68, 70, 78
- Sept. 24: Individualism I: Individuality
Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 3
First Essay Topic Given
- Sept. 29: Individualism II: Society and the Individual
Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 4
- Oct. 1: Review
First Essay Due

Part Two: Modernity

- Oct. 6: Higher Lawmaking
Ackerman, *We the People: Transformations*, handout to be provided
- Oct. 8: The Federalists
Ackerman, *We the People: Foundations*, chapter 3
- Oct. 13: Reconstruction
Ackerman, *We the People: Foundations*, chapter 4
- Oct. 15: The New Deal
Ackerman, *We the People: Foundations*, chapter 5

- Oct. 20: Review
- Oct. 22: **First Examination**
- Oct. 27: Commercial Expansion and Urban Dissolution
Mumford, *The City in History*, chapter 14
- Oct. 29: Paleotechnic Paradise: Coketown
Mumford, *The City in History*, chapter 15
- Nov. 3: Suburbia--And Beyond
Mumford, *The City in History*, chapter 16
- Nov. 5: The Myth of the Megalopolis
Mumford, *The City in History*, chapter 17
Second Essay Topic Given
- Nov. 10: Review
Second Essay Due

Part Three: Beyond Locke's Plums

- Nov. 12: The Romantic I
Goethe, *Sorrows of Young Werther*, Book I
- Nov. 17: The Romantic II
Goethe, *Sorrows of Young Werther*, Book II
- Nov. 19: Discussion
- Nov. 24: The Socialist, Secular and Divine
Dostoevsky, *Grand Inquisitor*
- Nov. 26: Thanksgiving, No Class
- Dec. 1: The Existentialist I
Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, pp. 1-66
- Dec. 3: The Existentialist II
Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, pp. 66-147

Dec. 8: The Existentialist III

Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, pp. 147-finish

Dec. 10: Discussion

Dec. --: Informal Course Review

Date and Time to be Announced

Dec. --: **Final Examination**

Date and Time to be Announced