

GVPT 100 – Summer 07'
Principles of Government & Politics:
Machiavellism
Benli M. Shechter

This course will focus primarily on Machiavelli's *The Prince* and on his *Discourse on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*. As often is the case in the hotly contentious world of politics (and political theory) – where so much is at stake – these classics have come to mean all things to all men. To America's founding fathers Machiavelli was seen as a liberal, favoring mixed government as the road to freedom and political stability. Yet to Rousseau, the reputed intellectual father of the French Revolution, Machiavelli was much more; to be sure, says the revolutionary democrat, he was a republican. Others, still, find in Machiavelli something of a budding nationalist; and even a primitive communist! Nevertheless, today, there is a general consensus that Machiavelli was the founder of modern political thought, having created a wholly new way of conceiving of the political realm, and that he was a political realist. Therefore in choosing to focus on Machiavelli we gain a general introduction to the study of politics. We learn of political science and methodology, nationalism, liberalism and republicanism, all the while also learning how to read a book in thorough detail. In a sense, then, this course is not just a mere introduction to the principles of government and politics. It, too, is a course in reading and critical thinking; an introduction on how to study, and be a student, in the University. The course concludes with a look to theories of socialism and communism (and fascism), and to some of its foremost critics.

Required Texts:

Niccolo Machiavelli, *Mandragola*
Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses*
"Supplementary Packet"

Schedule of Readings:

July 17	Introduction: What is Politics? Wish; or Power? Excerpts from James Burnham's <i>The Machiavellians</i> (packet)
July 19	Machiavelli and the Role of Conspiracy in Politics: <i>Mandragola</i>
July 24	Political Science and Methodology: <i>The Prince</i> (chapters 1-14)
July 26	Nationalism: <i>The Prince</i> (chapters 15-26)
July 31	Machiavellism in Film: 'The Godfather'
August 2	Class Discussion/Midterm Exam

- Aug. 7 Liberalism:
The Discourses (First Book, intro, chpts. 1-6, 9-15)
- Aug. 9 *The Discourses* (First Book, chpts. 16-21, 29-37, 45-46, 55-60)
- Aug. 14 Republicanism:
The Discourses (Second Book, intro, chpts. 1-8, 10-13, 19-20, 23, 32-33)
- Aug. 16 *The Discourses* (Third Book, chpts. 1-4, 6, 16, 25, 28-30, 41, 47, 49)
- Aug. 21 Socialism/Communism:
Manifesto of the Communist Party (packet)
- Aug. 22* Critiques of Socialism/Communism/Fascism:
'Animal Farm' (Film)
- Aug. 23 Selected readings from *Bakunin*, *Machajski*, *Nomad* (packet)
Final Exam/Term Paper

Grading Policy:

There will be one open-book, mid-term, exam that will count as 30 percent of your final grade; and a 15-page term paper, or final exam, that will count as 50 percent. Grades will be determined by two criteria: quality (accuracy) and quantity (completeness). There will also be a minor presentation that will count as 10 percent. The remaining 10 percent will be determined by class participation and attendance.

Special Needs and/or Problems:

I will be happy to accommodate students who require special arrangements. Those students should identify themselves to me early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. This includes students with documented disabilities.

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 4:00-5:00 pm or by appointment, bmshechter@gvpt.umd.edu, TYD 1135 E.