

Introduction to Political Theory

Constitutionalism: Ancient, Modern, and Contemporary

GVPT 241 – Summer Session I
June 2 – July 11, 2008

Instructor: Jeremy Janow
Office: 3104D Tydings Hall
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 11am – 12pm.
Email: jjanow@gvpt.umd.edu

Class Hours: Mon. & Wed. 12:30pm – 3:50pm
Classroom: 1111 Tydings Hall

Course Description

This course is intended as an introduction to political philosophy, and we will be reading important texts in the canon of political thought. The brevity of a summer course limits the scope that any course can take, and accordingly we will focus on a few authors and a selection from their seminal works. Additionally, we will look at how these philosophers address a key aspect of political philosophy: the constitution of good political orders. We will see that this is not a simple question, as there are many diverse and interconnected elements that must be considered together to begin to address such a question. These include, but are not limited to: human nature and the possibility for human improvement, citizenship, political leadership, political equality, and institutional design. The texts we will read, discuss, and analyze together will help us begin to see how we can develop a holistic understanding of politics as well as what a constitutional approach to politics and political theory can offer.

In the course of developing an understanding the complexities of constitutional theorizing, the class will give you an introduction to the history of political ideas, to main concepts used by political philosophers, and how to look at the world from the perspective of a political theorist. The reading, writing, and speaking assignments will improve your ability to read and think critically and will facilitate your ability to express yourself to various audiences.

Required Texts

There are 4 required texts for the course, which are available for purchase at the bookstore. Most are available in the library on reserve. In addition to this, two required readings are available through the library's online course reserves.

There are also recommended books listed below. These are available for purchase in the bookstore and are also available in the library. The extra materials in these books will not be referenced directly in class, but they may be beneficial to those students who have an interest in studying political theory. Students are NOT required to purchase these books for this class.

* Please note that I have listed the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for all texts below, to aid in acquiring them from alternative sources. ** We will be referencing the required texts frequently, so please make sure to obtain the specific editions listed below.

Required Texts

Aristotle. *The Politics*. Translated by Carnes Lord. ISBN: 022626698

Niccolò Machiavelli. *The Prince*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield. ISBN: 0226500446

Thomas Hobbes. *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*. ISBN: 0872201112

Harvey Mansfield. *A Student's Guide to Political Philosophy*. ISBN: 1882926439

Online Course Reserve Texts

Jeremy Waldron. "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom". *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*. Pages: 432-448. ISBN: 1405130652

Niccolò Machiavelli. *Discourses on Livy* (selections). ISBN: 0226500365

The required selections from the above texts are available on the class ELMS site. www.elms.umd.edu. Click on course tools, and then course reserves.

Recommended Texts

Niccolò Machiavelli. *Discourses on Livy*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield. ISBN: 0226500365

Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit eds. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*. ISBN: 1405130652

Edward Bryan Portis. *Reconstructing the Classics: Political Theory from Plato to Weber*. ISBN: 0872893391

Course Requirements and Grading

Students are expected to attend class regularly, complete all of the assigned reading before class, actively participate in class, and turn in assignments on time.

Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

20% active participation

10% pop quizzes

15% in class presentation(s)

30% essay

25% final

As the success of this class depends on your active participation, you will be expected to come to class well prepared. You should have read the material carefully, preferably more than once, taken notes, and formulated your own thoughts and questions. In addition, you should participate frequently and thoughtfully in the class discussion. Unexcused absences will detract from your ability to actively participate in class, and will be assessed accordingly.

As an incentive to do these preparations, there will be unannounced quizzes that will simply test your comprehension of the reading assignment. These will be short essay questions, which require an accurate description of the text as well as some analysis.

The presentation(s) will consist of giving a brief, critical summary and analysis of the readings for the day to the class. In addition, presenters should prepare questions for class discussion. Presenters will share the responsibility with the instructor for ensuring an interesting and lively discussion. The number of presentations each student must do will be determined by class enrollment and will be organized and assigned the first week of class.

The essay will be on a topic handed out in class and will require an argument based on analysis of the readings for class. Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced, and between 8-10 pages. Papers will be graded on the extent to which they fulfill the assignment and the accuracy, clarity, and thoughtfulness with which they are written. Late papers will be penalized a half letter grade per day late. Due: July 2nd.

The final will test your understanding of and ability to analyze material from the books and lectures. It will be in essay format. Be prepared to recall and apply what you have learned and to write clear, thoughtful, and well-supported answers to challenging questions. The final exam will be held on the last day of class: Wednesday, July 9th.

Academic dishonesty will be treated seriously in this class and will be reported as necessary. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the information and resources that the University provides in this area the first week of class. Please visit the Student Honor Council website <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/students.html> and the library website <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/honesty.html>.

The University and your instructor will provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. *Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs at the beginning of the semester.* The instructor will then consult with the department chair and/or Disability Support Services. They will help to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations.

Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs, and will be given the opportunity to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in religious observances. *It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance.* Notice should be provided as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period, June 6th.

Course Schedule

Introduction

Class 1: Mon. June 2

Jeremy Waldron. "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom". *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*. Pages: 432-448. (Available on ELMS - online course reserve)

Harvey Mansfield. *A Student's Guide to Political Philosophy*. Pages: 1-9.

* Note: students are expected to come to the first class having read the above.

Part I: Imagined Republics?

Class 2: Wed. June 4

Aristotle – *The Politics*: Books I & II, Pages 27-85
Mansfield. *Student's Guide*. Pages: 9-16

Class 3: Mon. June 9

Aristotle – *The Politics*: Books III & IV, Pages 86-146

Class 4: Wed. June 11

Aristotle – *The Politics*: Books V & VI, Pages 147-196
Mansfield. *Student's Guide*. Pages: 16-22

Class 5: Mon. June 16

Aristotle – *The Politics*: Books VII & VIII, Pages 197-241

Part II: Constituting a New Order

Class 6: Wed. June 18

Machiavelli – *The Prince*: Introduction & Pages 3-47
Mansfield. *Student's Guide*. Pages: 22-29

Class 7: Mon. June 23

Machiavelli – *The Prince*: Pages 48-111
Mansfield. *Student's Guide*. Pages: 29-36

Class 8: Wed. June 25

Machiavelli – *The Discourses*: Letter (p3), Book I: Preface & Chapters 1-6, 9, 11-13, 24-27, 32, 52-55.
Book II: Chapters 4, 9-10, 19-20, 22. Book III: Chapters 1-2, 8-9, 29, 47, 49. * This reading available in online course reserves.

Class 9: Mon. June 30

Hobbes – *De Cive*: Pages 89-152

Class10: Wed. July 2

Hobbes – *De Cive*: Pages 165-235
Mansfield. *Student's Guide*. Pages: 36-44
*** Essay Due***

Class 11: Mon. July 7

Hobbes – *De Cive*: Pages 243-308
Mansfield. *Student's Guide*. Pages: 44-End.

Class 12: Wed. July 9

Final exam and concluding discussion