

## **GVPT 241: Introduction to Political Theory**

Summer Session II (7/13/08-8/22/08)

Class Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 9:00am-12:20pm

Classroom: 1101 Tydings Hall

Instructor: Sung-Wook Paik

Office: 1135A Tydings Hall

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2:00pm-3:00pm and by appointment

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### **Course Description**

This is a course designed to provide students with a survey of the history of western political thought. Specifically, the course will focus on the writings of Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Mill and how they each understood the concept of justice as manifested in their understanding of the relationships between the moral and the political, between the private and the public, and between soulcraft and statecraft. Whereas ancients have often regarded the caring of the soul as having a crucial importance in devising a well-ordered political regime, moderns have strongly advocated a rigid distinction between the two realms, arguing that questions of ‘good life’ ought to be decoupled from questions of politics. What is the significance of this difference? Does it relate to how we understand politics, freedom, or human nature? Was this change historically inevitable? If so, what are its effects on how we think of political life today? If not, what are the alternatives?

The objective of this course is three-fold: (1) to critically engage in the writings of philosophical texts; (2) to provide students with the necessary skills in expressing and defending one’s thoughts coherently both in writing and discussion; and, last but certainly not least, (3) to foster the capacity of public reasoning as citizens in a democratic regime.

### **Required Texts**

There are six required texts for the course, which are available for purchase at the University bookstore. These texts will also be made available on course reserve in the library. Although you may choose to use a different edition/publisher for each of the texts listed below, I insist that you use the Lee edition (Penguin Classics) for Plato’s Republic.

Plato, The Republic (Penguin Classics)

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (Penguin Classics)

John Locke, Second Treatise of Government (Hackett Publishing Company)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Basic Political Writings (Hackett Publishing Company)

Immanuel Kant, Perpetual Peace, and Other Essays (Hackett Publishing Company)

John Stuart Mill, On Liberty and The Subjection of Women (Penguin Classics)

There are also recommended books listed below. Although these extra materials will not be referenced directly in class, they overlap with some of the main themes of the course. Students, however, are *NOT required* to purchase these books for this class.

Benjamin Constant, Political Writings (Cambridge University Press)

Isaiah Berlin, Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty (Oxford University Press)

Quentin Skinner, Liberty before Liberalism (Cambridge University Press)

### **Course Requirements and Grading Standards**

The final grade will be determined by the following distribution:

Class participation and Attendance	20%
Quizzes	20% (5% each)
Midterm exam (Take-home)	30%
Final exam (In-class)	30%

Class participation and Attendance (20%): Students will be expected to come to class well prepared. You should have read the assigned material carefully, preferably more than once, taken notes, and formulated your own thoughts and questions. In addition, you should participate frequently and thoughtfully to the class discussion. Since class only convenes twice a week, attendance is absolutely crucial. Unexcused absences will detract from your ability to actively participate in class, and will be assessed accordingly. **Three or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.**

Quizzes (20%): There will be five, unannounced quizzes to test your comprehension of the reading material for the week. The questions for the quizzes will be straightforward and factual. Your responses will be evaluated on the basis of whether you provide an accurate description of the text with a degree of detail. It is not sufficient to simply get the general idea. **Each quiz is worth 5% of your final grade for a total of 20%.** (Quizzes will be graded according to the following formula: A=5, B=4.2, C=3.8, D=3.2, F=0; No plus or minus on the quizzes.) Students who have taken all five quizzes will be able to drop their lowest quiz grade. Or, you may choose to take a ‘free pass’ on one of the five quizzes in case of an absence.

Midterm exam—Take-home (30%): The midterm will be a take-home, open-book exam. The questions will be distributed in class on Thursday, July 31; that is, one week prior to due date. All responses must be typed, double-spaced, using normal point type (12 point Times New Roman font preferred). Further instructions and guidelines will be distributed along with the questions. **Your midterm exam is due at the beginning of lecture on Thursday, August 7.** Electronic submissions will NOT be accepted. Late submission will result in a penalty of 1/3 letter grade per day late.

Final exam—In-class (30%): The final exam will assess your understanding of and ability to analyze material from the books and lectures. They will consist of short answers and essay questions. **It will be cumulative and closed-book.** Be prepared to recall what you

have learned and to write clear, thoughtful, and well-supported answers to challenging questions. The final exam will be held during the last day of class; **Thursday, August 21**.

Your course grade will be assessed on an absolute scale according to which: 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, 0-59=F. There will be NO CURVE.

### **Other Issues and Policies**

1. Academic Integrity: UMCP has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at UMCP for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, or plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit: <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/students.html>.

2. Accommodations: The University and your instructor will provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. *Students with disabilities of any sort 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 Service to determine and implement appropriate accommodations. The instructor will make every effort to accommodate such needs in accordance with University policies.

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 individual 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, July 18.

## **Course Outline**

### Class 1: Tuesday, July 15

- What is political theory?; Why is it important?
- Four approaches to political theory
- Setting the stage: A Preliminary discussion of Plato's *Republic*

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, 1-52 (pages refer to the Lee edition)

### **I. The Classical View: Truth, Philosophy, and Politics**

### Class 2: Thursday, July 17

- Nature vs. Convention

- Politics and Architectonics: Statecraft as Soulcraft
- Plato's Paradox: Political Philosophy versus Politics

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, review 1-52, read 112-156, 189-248.

Class 3: Tuesday, July 22

- Philosopher kings: Ideal or Actual?
- Deviant societies: What's wrong with democracy?

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, review 189-248, read 275-334.

## **II. The Modern Discontent with the Ancients**

Class 4: Thursday, July 24

- The Rise of "Pure" Political Theory: the Science of Politics
- The Hobbesian State of Nature: "The Passion to be Reckoned with is Fear"

Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, Introduction, ch. 1-15.

Class 5: Tuesday, July 29

- Political Representation: Authorizing and Alienating
- *Leviathan*: "The Sovereign can do No Wrong"
- Legalism: The Office of the Sovereign Representative

Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, ch. 16; Part II, ch. 22-31.

Class 6: Thursday, July 31

- "Life, Liberty, and Property": Property and Political Membership
- Liberal Revolution: Who Judges?
- "For the Common Good?": the thin line between Prerogative and Tyranny.

Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, All.

**\*Midterm, take-home exam to be distributed in class.**

## **III. The Search for Secular Objectivity: Breaking the Hobbes/Locke Deadlock**

Class 7: Tuesday, August 5

- Looking Inwards: Kant's Deontological Solution

- Kant contra Hobbes I: The Public Use of Reason
- Kant contra Hobbes II: The Idea of a Hypothetical Contract

Reading: Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*, All; *Theory and Practice*, All

#### Class 8: Thursday, August 7

- Cosmopolitanism and Perpetual Peace
- Reconciling Morality and Politics: The Requirement of Publicity
- Moral Politician vs. Political Moralist

Reading: Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, All.

**\*Midterm exam is due.**

#### Class 9: Tuesday, August 12

- Looking Outwards: Mill's Consequentialist Solution
- The Search for Truth: Freedom of Discussion and the "Marketplace of Ideas"
- Individuality and Progress

Reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 1-3.

### **IV. Beyond Modernity? Or Radical Modernity?**

#### Class 10: Thursday, August 14

- Rousseau's Theory of State of Nature: Inequality and its Origins
- Civilization as Corruption: Amour-propre and the Loss of Authenticity
- Political Romanticism?

Reading: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, All.

#### Class 11: Tuesday, August 19

- Men vs. Citizens: Two Ways to be Good
- The General Will: Where do Citizens come from?
- The Concept of Sovereignty: Strong Democracy or Totalitarianism?

Reading: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Selections TBA.

### **V. Conclusion**

#### Class 12: Thursday, August 21

- Concluding Discussions
- **In-class Final Exam (10:20am-12:20pm)**