

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Political Science 201

Bellevue College

Fall 2016

Monday—Thursday 11:30am-12:20pm in L221

INSTRUCTOR

Instructor: Dr. Larry Cushnie
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Office: A200F

Office Hours:
MTW @ 10:15-11:15 & by appointment

DESCRIPTION

This course explores political theory of the Western canon. We focus on issues of justice, power, legitimacy, freedom, and the motivations behind how human beings organize themselves. These questions push us towards a deeper consideration of the purpose behind human society as well as what constitutes a 'good life'. In an attempt to find clearer answers to these difficult questions we consider the works of ancient, modern, critical, and post-modern political thinkers.

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Substantial parts of lecture will be dedicated to large-group discussion, especially on Thursdays. Participation is strongly encouraged. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to the lecture for which it is assigned. They are also expected to bring the readings to lecture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To obtain a specialized knowledge of political theory with emphasis in the areas of legitimacy, justice, rights, and freedom.
2. To enlarge our political vocabularies, so that we may engage each other in political argument with greater force, flexibility, intelligence, and exactitude.
3. To conduct political dialogue with sympathy, critical attention, passion, and respect.
4. To develop clearly defined perspectives on the originations of political viewpoints and ideologies.
5. To strengthen our command of English prose through careful writing.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grades are broken down as follows:

Attendance & Participation – 25%
Discussion Questions – 10%
Response Papers – 30%
Midterm – 10%
Final Exam – 25%

Attendance & Participation – Involves doing more than keeping a seat warm. Will be graded through involvement during in-class discussions, attention paid, and participation in post-lecture activities (group projects, debates, etc.).

Discussion Questions – Each student is required to provide discussion questions for one of our discussion days which take place each Thursday.

Response Papers – Most weeks, students are asked to address questions about the readings. As a supplement to in-class discussion (and to fulfill the online requirement), the essays are meant to stimulate your thinking about the material covered in lecture and the readings. You are responsible for writing outside-of-class essays as assigned. Each essay should be at least 500-750 words in length. Each week's essay prompts will be posted on our course website by 11:59 pm on select Wednesdays. You must upload your response to Canvas by 10:00 am the following Monday.

Midterm (Thursday, November 3rd) – A short, in-class exam covering significant concepts from the readings and lecture. Bluebook format.

Final Exam (Tuesday, December 6th) – A longer form exam including quote identifications & short essays.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Charles Mills; *The Racial Contract* (Cornell University Press, 1999)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Aristotle; *Politics* (Hackett, 1998)

Thomas Hobbes; *Leviathan* (Hackett, 1994)

John Locke; *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett, 1980)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau; *The Basic Political Writings* (Hackett, 1987)

Karl Marx; *Selected Writings* (Hackett, 1994)

Readings outside of these texts will be posted on the course website.

COURSE POLICIES

Expectations

This is a college-level course, which means you are responsible for your own learning. Expectations include: completing assignments by the date/time listed in the syllabus; coming to class prepared to discuss the day's readings; bringing reading materials to class; participating in classroom discussions; fulfilling course requirements missed during absences; and taking initiative to answer questions about content and assignments. Students are advised to read the syllabus carefully before emailing questions to the instructor.

Rules of Engagement

This course involves discussion of controversial political issues. We will be respectful of each other and avoid inflammatory, derogatory and insulting words, phrases, and labels. I encourage robust discussion of contentious issues, however be prepared to support provocative claims with evidence.

Please note that all electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom during class time unless necessary to note taking. If an overwhelming need to check the interwebs persists, please leave the classroom to do so. Students engaging in extracurricular electronic usage will lose participation points for the day's class. You may or may not be informed of this deduction at the time, due to the distraction it causes to the class.

Missed Exams and Assignments

All major due dates are indicated in the attached course schedule. Late work will be penalized 5 points a day. Please note that all missed exams will receive a grade of 0 and make-up exams will not be administered unless you receive prior permission from me or you can document a true catastrophe. All assignments are graded on a 100 point scale.

Grade Dispute Policy

- 1) Wait 24 hours to contact me about disputing a grade
- 2) Submit your reason for contention in writing (at least 500 words) within 5 days
- 3) I reserve the right to change grades (higher or lower) after considering your comments

Disability Resources

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. Please visit the DRC if you have any questions about classroom accommodations. If you are a student who has a disability or a learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC staff as soon as possible. The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call the reception desk at 425-564-2498. Deaf students can reach the DRC by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit the DRC website for application information into the program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc. If you are someone who has either an apparent or non-apparent disability and requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with me to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College (http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050P_Student_Code_%28Procedures%29.asp). Such behavior will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment/exam in question. Please note that these are serious offences, which can result in possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. If you have questions about academic integrity, please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct and/or come talk to me during my office hours.

Cases of suspected cheating and plagiarism will be referred to the dean and an Academic Honesty Violation Report will be filed. University policies and guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism will be followed strictly. Please see the Academic Honesty Policy for specific information about what constitutes plagiarism.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus over the course of the quarter.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(* = on Canvas)

- 1) Monday, September 19 – Introduction and Syllabus Review
No readings
- 2) Tuesday, September 20 – Political Responsibility and the Pursuit of Wisdom
*Plato – *Apology*
- 3) Wednesday, September 21 – Understanding Humans
Aristotle – *Politics (Book I: Ch. 1-9, 12-13)*
- 4) Thursday, September 22 – Forming Human Communities/Class Discussion
Aristotle – *Politics (Book III: Ch. 1, 4-9, 11-18)*
- 5) Monday, September 26 – Justifying Rule
Aristotle – *Politics (Book IV: Ch. 1-11; Book VI: Ch. 2-3; Book VII: Ch. 1-3)*
- 6) Tuesday, September 28 – The State of Nature & Universal Laws
Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan (Hobbes' Introduction, Ch. 6, 13-15)*
- 7) Wednesday, September 29 – Creating a Political Community
Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan (Ch. 16-21, 29)*
- 8) Thursday, September 30 – Hobbes Conclusion/Class Discussion
- 9) Monday, October 3 – Liberal Political Theory
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 1-4)*
- 10) Tuesday, October 4 – The Origination of Property
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 5, 7-9)*
- 11) Wednesday, October 5 – Proper Government
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 10-15)*
- 12) Thursday, October 6 – Rights Retained & Dissolution of the Commonwealth/Class Discussion
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 18-19)*
- 13) Monday, October 10 – The Birth of Critical Perspectives
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part I
- 14) Tuesday, October 11 – Conceptualizing the State of Nature
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part I (cont.)
- 15) Wednesday, October 12 – The Origination of Property & Exclusion
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part II
- 16) Thursday, October 13 – The Downward Spiral of Humanity/Class Discussion
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part II (cont.)
- 17) Monday, October 17 – The General Will & True Consent
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Books I)*

- 18) Tuesday, October 18 – No Class
- 19) Wednesday, October 19 – Forging the Perfect Political Community
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Book II)*
- 20) Thursday, October 20 – Rousseauian ‘Government’
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Book III)*
- 21) Monday, October 24 – Human Potential
*GWF Hegel – ‘Introduction’ to the *Philosophy of History*
Karl Marx – *Alienated Labor*
- 22) Tuesday, October 25 – Human Potential
Karl Marx – *Alienated Labor* (cont.)
- 23) Wednesday, October 26 – Economic Conditions & Historical Materialism
Karl Marx – *Communist Manifesto*
- 24) Thursday, October 27 – Inspiring Revolution/Class Discussion
Karl Marx – *Communist Manifesto* (cont.)
- 25) Monday, October 31 – Imagining Communism
Karl Marx – *Critique of the Gotha Program*
- 26) Tuesday, November 1 – Imagining Communism
Karl Marx – *Critique of the Gotha Program* (cont.)
- 27) Wednesday, November 2 – Midterm Review/In-Class Activity
- 28) Thursday, November 3 – Midterm
- 29) Monday, November 7 – Anarchism
*Mikhail Bakunin – “What is Authority?”
- 30) Tuesday, November 8 – Challenging Coercive Powers/Election Day
*Emma Goldman – “Anarchism – What it Really Stands For”
- 31) Wednesday, November 9 – Challenging Coercive Powers
*Emma Goldman – “Anarchism – What it Really Stands For” cont.
- 32) Thursday, November 10 – Anarchism & Late Capitalism/Class Discussion
*Murray Bookchin – “Radical Politics in an Era of Advanced Capitalism”
- 33) Monday, November 14 – Debate
- 34) Tuesday, November 15 – Transcendentalism
*Ralph Waldo Emerson – “Politics”
- 35) Wednesday, November 16 – Abolitionism, Liberation, & Human Rights
*Frederick Douglass – “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

- 36) Thursday, November 17 – Race & the Social Contract/Class Discussion
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Introduction)*
- 37) Monday, November 21 – The Construction & Consequences of Race
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 1)*
- 38) Tuesday, November 22 – The Contracts
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 1)* cont.
- 39) Wednesday, November 23 – Normalizing Exploitation
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 2)*
- 40) Thursday, November 24 – Thanksgiving Holiday
- 41) Monday, November 28 – Violent Enforcement of the Social Contract
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 2)* cont.
- 42) Tuesday, November 29 – Naturalizing Political Domination
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 3)*
- 43) Wednesday, November 30 – From Theory to Reality
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 3)* cont.
- 44) Thursday, December 1 – Final Exam Review/Class Discussion
- 45) Tuesday, December 6 – Final Exam (11:30am-1:20pm)