

# **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

Political Science 201

Bellevue College

Winter 2017

Monday-Thursday 11:30am-12:20pm in B204

## **INSTRUCTOR**

Instructor: Dr. Larry Cushnie  
Email: l.cushnie@bellevuecollege.edu  
Office: A200F

Office Hours:  
MTW @ 10:20-11:20 & 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, In-Class Activities, & Debate – 25%

Discussion Questions – 10%

Response Papers – 35%

Midterm – 10%

Final Exam – 20%

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 (Tuesday, February 21) – A short, in-class exam covering significant concepts from the readings and lecture. Bluebook format.

Final Exam (Tuesday, March 21 @ 11:30am-1:20pm) – 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](http://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](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) Tuesday, January 3 – Introduction and Syllabus Review  
No readings
- 2) Wednesday, January 4 – Political Responsibility and the Pursuit of Wisdom  
\*Plato – *Apology*
- 3) Thursday, January 5 – Understanding Humans  
Aristotle – *Politics (Book I: Ch. 1-9, 12-13)*
- 4) Monday, January 9 – Forming Human Communities  
Aristotle – *Politics (Book III: Ch. 1, 4-9, 11-18)*
- 5) Tuesday, January 10 – Justifying Rule  
Aristotle – *Politics (Book IV: Ch. 1-11; Book VI: Ch. 2-3; Book VII: Ch. 1-3)*
- 6) Wednesday, January 11 – Aristotle Conclusion/Class Discussion
- 7) Thursday, January 12 – The State of Nature & Universal Laws  
Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan (Hobbes' Introduction, Ch. 6, 13-15)*
- 8) Monday, January 16 – Creating a Political Community (No Class for MLK Day)  
Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan (Ch. 16-21, 29)*
- 9) Tuesday, January 17 – Hobbes Conclusion/Class Discussion
- 10) Wednesday, January 18 – Liberal Political Theory  
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 1-4)*
- 11) Thursday, January 19 – The Origination of Property  
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 5, 7-9)*
- 12) Monday, January 23 – Proper Government, Rights Retained, & Dissolution of the Commonwealth  
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 10-15, 18-19)*
- 13) Tuesday, January 24 – Locke Conclusion/Class Discussion
- 14) Wednesday, January 25 – The Birth of Critical Perspectives  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part I
- 15) Thursday, January 26 – Conceptualizing the State of Nature  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part I (cont.)
- 16) Monday, January 30 – The Origination of Property & Exclusion  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part II
- 17) Tuesday, January 31 – The Downward Spiral of Humanity  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Part II (cont.)

- 18) Wednesday, February 1 – The General Will & True Consent  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Books I)*
- 19) Thursday, February 2 – Forging the Perfect Political Community  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Book II)*
- 20) Monday, February 6 – Rousseauian ‘Government’/Class Discussion  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Book III)*
- 21) Tuesday, February 7 – Human Potential  
\*GWF Hegel – *‘Introduction’ to the Philosophy of History*  
Karl Marx – *Alienated Labor*
- 22) Wednesday, February 8 – Human Potential  
Karl Marx – *Alienated Labor (cont.)*
- 23) Thursday, February 9 – **No Class (College Issues Day)**
- 24) Monday, February 13 – Economic Conditions & Historical Materialism  
Karl Marx – *Communist Manifesto*
- 25) Tuesday, February 14 – Inspiring Revolution  
Karl Marx – *Communist Manifesto (cont.)*
- 26) Wednesday, February 15 – Imagining Communism/Class Discussion  
Karl Marx – *Critique of the Gotha Program*
- 27) Thursday, February 16 - Midterm Review/In-Class Activity
- 28) Monday, February 20 – **No Class (Presidents’ Day)**
- 29) Tuesday, February 21 – **Midterm**
- 30) Wednesday, February 22 – Anarchism  
\*Mikhail Bakunin – “What is Authority?”
- 31) Thursday, February 23 – Challenging Coercive Powers  
\*Emma Goldman – “Anarchism – What it Really Stands For”
- 32) Monday, February 27 – Challenging Coercive Powers/Debate Prep  
\*Emma Goldman – “Anarchism – What it Really Stands For” cont.
- 33) Tuesday, February 28 – Debate
- 34) Wednesday, March 1 – Abolitionism, Liberation, & Human Rights  
\*Frederick Douglass – “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”
- 35) Thursday, March 2 – Race & the Social Contract/Class Discussion  
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Introduction)*
- 36) Monday, March 6 – The Construction & Consequences of Race  
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 1)*

- 37) Tuesday, March 7 – **No Class (Faculty Development Day)**
- 38) Wednesday, March 8 – The Contracts  
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 1 cont.)*
- 39) Thursday, March 9 – Normalizing Exploitation  
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 2)*
- 40) Monday, March 13 – Violent Enforcement of the Social Contract  
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 2 cont.)*
- 41) Tuesday, March 14 – Naturalizing Political Domination  
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 3)*
- 42) Wednesday, March 15 – From Theory to Reality  
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 3 cont.)*
- 43) Thursday, March 16 – Final Exam Review/Class Discussion
- 44) Monday, March 20 – Final Exam Review
- 45) Tuesday, March 21 – Final Exam (11:30am-1:20pm)