

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY
POLITICAL SCIENCE 2060

Man, Society, and Being

Tuesday/Thursday 1:40-3:00 PM

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Office: Stubbs Hall 307

Office Hours: 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment

Course Overview

This course is meant to be a general undergraduate survey of Western political philosophy as it has evolved over time from the days of ancient Greece and Rome to our current age, the post-modern era. We will begin by discussing the nature of political philosophy and its goals, and we will frequently refer back to this discussion as we cover the changing nature of political thought throughout the course of the semester. Ultimately, political philosophy is rooted in pure philosophy and in certain "big" questions such as "What is the nature of Man?"

As this course counts as a general education credit for the social sciences, students will be expected to meet the goals of LSU's general education curriculum. According to the LSU catalogue, "General education courses are not hurdles to be overcome; rather, they are means by which students learn to think, describe, interpret, and analyze the world. Their primary aim is to educate rather than train, and to instill a desire for life-long learning." In light of this, students will directly confront the larger questions raised by political philosophy and interpret them in light of current political concerns, both national and international. It is hoped that by approaching the study of political philosophy as a holistic enterprise concerned with all aspects of the existence of the human person, by the end of the course, students will emerge better equipped to critically examine issues raised by the political leaders and thinkers of our day.

Course Requirements

Participation: While meditation on the deeper questions of being in the privacy and silence of one's own home may lead to the occasional valuable insight, experience has shown that the study of political philosophy in a group setting tends to produce wider and more frequent bursts of understanding. As such, students will be required to attend each scheduled class meeting. In addition, students will be expected to have read the assigned text prior to class, and be prepared for in-depth discussion of the material. While most classes will emphasize the lecture format, the instructor will often employ the Socratic Method to challenge students' understanding of the material covered to date. Reference to the assigned material will occur frequently throughout each class period, so it is to the student's advantage to bring the relevant text to class. In order to promote a comfortable and focused learning environment, please do not bring laptop computers to class, and please silence all cellular telephones prior to the start of class. I have no objection to the use of recording devices in class, provided that it is understood that any such recordings

may be used only for the purpose of facilitating note-taking and test-preparation. Any commercial use or publication of lecture material without the permission of the instructor is prohibited. Participation will be worth 10% of the overall grade. Students may earn participation points by (a) providing thoughtful answers to in-class questions that demonstrate knowledge of the assigned reading material (5%) and (b) doing well on written pop quizzes (5%).

Tests: In order to maximize the opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge of course material, three tests will be given throughout the semester. Each test will be worth 20% of the overall grade. It is to the student's advantage not to miss class, as test questions will be drawn from both assigned readings and in-class discussions. The test dates and topics are shown below; any changes to these dates or topics will be announced in class.

Papers: The study of political philosophy requires direct engagement with the ideas of the great political philosophers. Throughout the semester, two short papers (3-5 pages) will be assigned. Topics will be assigned by the dates indicated and will be drawn primarily from themes raised by the texts. A handout regarding citation style and overall paper format will be distributed prior to the due date for the first paper. Each paper will be worth 15% of the overall grade. Students will benefit greatly from reading Christopher Lasch's *Plain Style: A Guide to Written English*.

Scoring Breakdown:	Test 1 - 20%	Paper 1 - 15%
	Test 2 - 20%	Paper 2 - 15%
	Test 3 - 20%	Participation - 10%

90 - 100% = A 80 - 89% = B 70 - 79% = C 60 - 69% = D 0 - 59% = F

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the university learning environment. Each student will be expected to abide by the Louisiana State University Code of Student Conduct at all times. An understanding of plagiarism and related concepts is central to maintaining academic integrity. Many bright and talented students often prematurely terminate their careers due to ignorance of the nature of plagiarism. In order to minimize the chance of students falling afoul of plagiarism rules, each student is advised to consult LSU's Student Life and Enrollment website concerning rules for academic integrity. The following web address will lead students to LSU's accepted definition of plagiarism: <http://saa.lsu.edu/Plagiarism.html> Should students have further concerns regarding this matter, they may consult with the instructor or with the Center for Academic Success at Coates Hall room B-31.

Required Texts

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. F.H. Peters, (Barns and Noble Classics, 2004), ISBN: 9780760752364

Thomas Aquinas, *The Political Ideas of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Dino Bigongiari, (Free Press, 1997 edition), ISBN: 9780684836416

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. David Wootton, (Hackett Publishing, 1995 edition), ISBN: 0872203166

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings*, (Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005), ISBN: 9781593081003

Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre-Nous: Thinking of the Other*, trans. Barbara Harshav, (Columbia University Press, 2000), ISBN: 9780231079112

Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism* (ISI Books, 2004), ISBN: 9781932236484

Course dates, required readings, and discussion topics

Classical and Medieval Thought

August 23 - Introduction, course overview

Required Reading: None
For further reading: None

August 25 - The *Summum Bonum*

Required Reading: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Introduction - 22 (Book I)
For further reading: Plato's *Euthyphro*; The Book of Exodus 18:1-20:21

August 30 - The Virtues

Required Reading: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 23 - 64 (Books II & III)
For further reading: Plato's *The Apology of Socrates*; Plato's *Republic* Book Four

September 1 - On the Nature and Immortality of the Soul

Required Reading: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 65 - 88 (Book IV)
For further reading: Plato's *Phaedo*; St. John Chrysostom's *A Treatise to Prove that No One Can Harm the Man that does not Injure Himself*

September 6 - Virtue in Practice

Required Reading: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 89 - 133 (Books V & VI)
For further reading: St. Ephraim the Syrian's *Three Short Discourses*, especially the Discourse on Love; Plato's *Meno*

September 8 - Pleasure and Duty

Required Reading: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 204 - 227 (Book X)
For further reading: Cicero's *De Officiis*; Plato's *Crito*

September 13 - Neo-Platonism, the Church Fathers, and the Christian Model of Government

Required Reading: St. Augustine, *City of God*, Books XIX-XX [via Moodle]

For further reading: 1 Samuel 8: 1-21

September 15 - The Christian Conception of Man, the Polis, and Free Will

Required Reading: St. Augustine, *City of God*, Books XIX-XX [via Moodle]

For further reading: St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Question 83 (Free Will)

September 20 - Ethics in the High Middle Ages; Paper Topic 1 assigned

Required Reading: *The Political Ideas of Thomas Aquinas*, Introduction - 77

For further reading: Moses Maimonides' *Moreh Nevukhim (Guide for the Perplexed)*, Book III

September 22 - Ethics in the High Middle Ages (continued)

Required Reading: *The Political Ideas of Thomas Aquinas*, Introduction - 77

For further reading: St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, Part II, Question 40 (Just War)

September 27 - The Medieval Synthesis: Church and State

Required Reading: *The Political Ideas of Thomas Aquinas*, 147-158, 171-195

For further reading: The Constitution of Medina; Pope Gelasius I's letter "*Duo sunt*"

September 29 - The Medieval Synthesis (continued)

Required Reading: *The Political Ideas of Thomas Aquinas*, 147-158, 171-195

For further reading: Eric Voegelin's *History of Political Ideas Volume IV: Renaissance and Reformation*

October 4 - Test 1

Renaissance, Reformation, and Modern Thought

October 6 - The Practical Turn and the Secular State

Required Reading: Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*

For further reading: Eric Voegelin's *History of Political Ideas Volume IV*

October 11 - Machiavelli's Ideal

Required Reading: Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*
For further reading: St. Robert Bellarmine's *De Laicis* (Treatise on Civil Government);
Bernard Bourdin's *The Theological-Political Origins of the Modern State*

October 13 - Fall Break (no class)

October 18 - The Nature of Enlightenment and the Spirit of the Age; Paper 1 due

Required Reading: Immanuel Kant's "What is Enlightenment?", selections from Rene
Descartes and David Hume [via Moodle]
For further reading: Blaise Pascal's *Pensées (Thoughts)*; St. Alphonsus Liguori's *Moral
Theology*

October 20 - God, Man and Being reconsidered

Required Reading: Selections from Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of
Morals* [via Moodle]
For further reading: G.W.F. Hegel's *Philosophy of History*

October 25 - Early Modern Constitutional Theory

Required Reading: *Federalist Numbers 10, 23, 51, and The Declaration of Independence*
For further reading: Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*; Joseph de Maistre's *Considerations
on France*

October 27 - Socialism: The French Revolution completed

Required Reading: *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings*, 3-42, 177-182
For further reading: Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Pierre-
Joseph Proudhon's *What is Property?* and *The Philosophy of Poverty*

November 1 - Socialism: A New Theory of Justice?; Paper Topic 2 assigned

Required Reading: *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings*, 3-42, 177-182
For further reading: *The Portable Marx-Engels Reader*; Miguel de Unamuno's *Abel
Sanchez*; Eric Voegelin's *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*

November 3 - Test 2

November 4 - Final date to drop this course

Post-Modern Thought

November 8 - Phenomenology, Existentialism and the Post-Modern Concept of Being

Required Reading: Selections from *Entre-Nous: Thinking of the Other*, 1-122
For further reading: Miguel de Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life*

November 10 - Levinas and Heidegger: Being Redefined

Required Reading: *Entre-Nous: Thinking of the Other* (continued)
For further reading: Martin Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*

November 15 - New Responsibilities to the Other: Post-Modern Social Justice

Required Reading: Selections from *Entre-Nous: Thinking of the Other*, 123 - conclusion
For further reading: Jacques Derrida's *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*; Albert Camus' *The Plague*

November 17 - Post-Modern Social Justice (continued)

Required Reading: *Entre-Nous*, 123-conclusion (continued)
For further reading: Dietrich von Hildebrand's *The Nature of Love*; Cecil Eubanks' "The Politics of the Homeless Spirit: Heidegger and Levinas on Dwelling and Hospitality"; Francois Raffoul's "On Hospitality: Between Ethics and Politics"

November 22 - Thomist Revival and the Obligation to Resist Untruth

Required Reading: Pope Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* and *Rerum Novarum* [via Moodle]
For further reading: G.K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*; James V. Schall's *Roman Catholic Political Philosophy*

November 24 - Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

November 29 - The Return to the Aristotelian *Weltanschung*; Paper 2 due

Required Reading: *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, Introduction - 37
For further reading: Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn's *Liberty or Equality*; Jose Oretga y Gasset's *Revolt of the Masses*

December 1 - Man, Society, and Being reconsidered; Course Evaluation

Required Reading: *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, 38 - conclusion
For further reading: Pierre Manent's *Modern Liberty and Its Discontents*

December 6 - 10 AM - Noon - Test 3 (Final Exam)