

PSCI 203: History of Modern Political Philosophy

Spring 2015
MWF, 11:10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Commons 335

Professor Emily Nacol
Department of Political Science
Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00-11:00 a.m.; Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m.; and by appointment
Commons 351
emily.c.nacol@vanderbilt.edu

This course is a survey of modern political thought, ca. 1500-1900. We will engage in close reading and analysis of some of the best-known texts in the Western tradition of political theory, from Machiavelli's *The Prince* to Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*, and beyond. The course will focus on both continuity and change in this tradition. We will ask a pair of questions about these texts: What is novel or innovative about each particular author's contributions to the study of politics? How can we understand these writers as common participants in a long conversation about the character of political life, a conversation that we are still having today?

To answer these two questions, we will focus on concepts or questions that span our readings. What is justice, and how is it best achieved politically? What does it mean to be free, and how can we preserve freedom? How do we establish equality in a political community while being attentive to difference? How should we understand and confront power politically? What is the relationship between religion and politics? What do economic relationships and practices have to do with politics? What kinds of institutions best secure and protect our political values?

Finally, we will think about how these readings have influenced our contemporary understandings of politics, but the course is also meant to encourage you to see each of these works as political and philosophically interesting in its own right and in its own time, and to judge for yourself which perspectives and arguments are persuasive or compelling.

Requirements and Grading

Book List:

The following books are available for purchase in the bookstore or can be borrowed from the library, where I have put them on reserve:

- W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, eds. Donald Gibson and Monica Elbert (Penguin, 1996).
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Hackett, 1994).
- Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, ed. Ted Humphrey (Hackett, 1983).
- John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. James Tully (Hackett, 1983).
- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Hackett, 1980).
- *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton, 1978).

- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner (Cambridge UP, 1988).
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and The Subjection of Women*, ed. Alan Ryan (Penguin, 2007).
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses' and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge UP, 1997).
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Miriam Brody (Penguin, 2004).

Please acquire these editions if possible, since class discussion will run much more smoothly if we are all using the same versions of the texts.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:

This course will be primarily a lecture course, although some time will be set aside roughly once a week for group discussion. In advance of these meetings, I ask that you hand in one (or more) written comments or questions for us to use for our discussion. Due dates for these are marked on the syllabus, and you will receive credit for doing them.

The course has five major components:

- In-class work
 - Attendance and participation
 - Bring your text to class
 - Participate in all discussion meetings (and lectures, too, if you so desire)
 - Reading questions and comments
- Three short essays, each of 1500-1800 words (approx. 5-6 pages).
- Final closed-book exam

The grade breakdown is as follows:

- In-class work: 20% total
 - Attendance and participation: 10%
 - Reading Questions/Comments: 10%
- First Essay: 20%
- Second Essay: 20%
- Third Essay: 20%
- Final exam: 20%

To pass this course, you must pass each of the components of the course. For example, someone who completes all written work but does not attend class regularly will receive a failing grade for in-class work and will subsequently fail the course. Likewise, someone who is an excellent contributor to class discussions but fails to complete a written assignment will fail the course.

Extra Credit Opportunities

One of the goals of this course is to convince you that some of the themes and problems articulated in these (in some cases, very old!) texts are alive to us even today. With this in mind, I will offer the opportunity for you to see some of this at work outside of our classroom, with the promise of extra credit attached.

One place we can find important political concepts and debates is in the medium of film. This semester, we have selected a classic Western that many political theorists think vividly reflects the debates about the rule of man and the rule of law that animate social contract theory—John Ford's

1962 film, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, starring Jimmy Stewart and John Wayne. I will screen the movie at 7 pm on Sunday, February 15.

Current scholars also keep the work of modern political thinkers alive in their scholarship, in which we continue to investigate many of the questions and problems of the texts we are reading in PSCI 203. This semester, we in the department of political science are extraordinarily fortunate to host lectures by two preeminent scholars in modern and contemporary political theory, Professor Neil Roberts from Williams College, and Professor Fonna Forman from the University California, San Diego. Professor Roberts will visit on Friday, January 23, and give a lecture from 3:30-5 pm in the Commons. Professor Forman will visit on Monday, February 2, and give a lecture from 12-1:30 pm in the Commons.

If you attend one of these events this semester and write a short paragraph reflecting on what you found most interesting, you will earn extra credit on the final exam *or* an additional 24 hours to work on one of your essays. Please indicate which you option you prefer when you hand in your paragraph.

Grading policy

I grade on a 4.0 scale, in accordance with the standard of the College of Arts and Sciences. Your final exam is the only exception. I will grade it on a 100-point scale, and your review sheet will contain a chart explaining how each grade corresponds to a value on the 4.0 scale.

Late work policy

You may take a 24-hour extension on any one of your essays this semester, no questions asked. Please indicate somewhere on your essay that you are taking the extension. You may only take the free extension once during the semester.

Regarding late work, I will deduct 1/3 of a letter grade for the first 24 hours that the paper is late. After that, I will deduct one full grade per 24-hour cycle. I will not accept an essay more than 4 days (96 hours) after it is due.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable, and I report all suspected cases to the Undergraduate Honor Council. If you are unsure about citations or have any questions pertaining to what counts as plagiarism, please do not hesitate to contact me. For more on the Honor System, see http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/chapter2.html.

More information about how to cite sources properly will be included with your essay assignments. All essays, as well as the citations of articles and books in the body of your essays, and the list of citations or references at the end of the essays, should adhere to the standard formatting guidelines provided by the political science department. These guidelines can be found on the political science department's web page, as well as on our course OAK site.

Laptop Policy

Unless you have a documented reason for using a laptop in lectures, I ask that you power down all your electronic equipment in class. In exchange for your respectful adherence to this policy, I promise to keep the use of Power Point slides to a bare minimum and to repeat myself as often as you need so that you can take good notes by hand more easily.

Emergencies and Course Accommodations

Your success in this course is very important to me. While I will enforce these policies strictly and fairly, I know that emergencies and illnesses sometimes arise during the semester. If you are sick or experiencing personal circumstances that are affecting your work, please let me know immediately so that we can make arrangements together for you to complete your work within a reasonable period of time. In emergency cases, I will excuse late work or a series of absences if you can provide a doctor's note or a note from your dean or advisor.

If you need course accommodations due to a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated during class time, please make an appointment with me /or the Opportunity Development Center (2-4705) as soon as possible.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Please bring your texts and notes to **every class**, since we will frequently work from them. Please read in advance of class. Some assignments are heavier than others, so plan accordingly!

Monday, 01/05/2015 What is Modern Political Philosophy?

Unit One—Machiavelli: The First Modern Political Thinker?

Wednesday, 01/07/2015 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Letter Dedicatory and Ch. 1-14, pp. 3-53.

Friday, 01/09/2015 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Ch. 15-26, pp. 54-92.

Podcast: Philosophy Bites—Quentin Skinner on Machiavelli's *The Prince*. **OAK: Course Content**

Monday, 01/12/2015 Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, eds. H. Mansfield and N. Tarcov (UChicago Press, 1998) I.2-I.6, I.11-12, I.27, I. 58. II.2, III.1-3, pp. 10-23, 34-38, 62-63, 115-119, 129-133, 209-215. **OAK: Course Content**

Recommended but not Required: Discourses III.4-6, pp. 215-236. **OAK: Course Content**

Question/Comment on Machiavelli materials due in class.

Wednesday, 01/14/2015 Discussion: Machiavelli Materials

Unit Two—Hobbes' *Leviathan*: A New Science of Statecraft

Friday, 01/16/2015 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Letter Dedicatory and Introduction, Ch. 3-7, 10 and 11, pp. 1-5, 3-37, 50-63.

Monday, 01/19/2015 Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. No Class.

Wednesday, 01/21/2015 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 13-16, pp. 74-105. Focus especially on Ch. 13 and 16.

Reading question/comment on *Leviathan* due in class.

- Friday, 01/23/2015 First Discussion: Hobbes, *Leviathan*
- Monday, 01/26/2015 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 17-22, pp. 106-155. Focus especially on Ch. 17 and 21.
- Wednesday, 01/28/2015 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 24-30, pp. 159-218.
Podcast: Philosophy Bites—Quentin Skinner on Hobbes on the State.
OAK: Course Content
- Friday, 01/30/2015 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 31-32, pp. 233-250; Ch. 42, Sections 1-31, 67-80, pp. 333-349, 366-373; Ch. 43, pp. 397-410; and Review and Conclusion, pp. 489-497.
Reading question/comment on *Leviathan* due in class.
- Monday, 02/02/2015 Second Discussion: Hobbes, *Leviathan*.

Unit Three—Locke: From Toleration to Revolution

- Wednesday, 02/04/2015 Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, entire.
Podcast: Philosophy Bites—John Dunn on Locke on Toleration.
OAK: Course Content
- Friday, 02/06/2015 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 1-5, pp. 7-29.
First Essay Due In Class
- Monday, 02/09/2015 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 6-9, pp. 30-67.
Reading question/comment on the *Letter* /or *Second Treatise* due in class.
- Wednesday, 02/11/2015 Discussion: Locke, *Letter* and *Second Treatise*, Ch. 1-9.
- Friday, 02/13/2015 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 10-14, pp. 68-87.
- Monday, 02/16/2015 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 15-19, pp. 88-124.
Reading question/comment on *Second Treatise* due in class.
- Wednesday, 02/18/2015 Discussion: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 10-19.

Unit Four—Rousseau: On Civilization and Commerce

- Friday, 02/20/2015 Rousseau, “Discourse Concerning Inequality,” Part One, pp. 113-160.
Note: Be sure to look at the Notes to Part One on pp. 189-218.
- Monday, 02/23/2015 Rousseau, “Discourse Concerning Inequality,” Part Two, pp. 161-188.
Note: Be sure to look at the Notes to Part Two (pp. 218-222).
Podcast: Philosophy Bites—Melissa Lane on Rousseau on Civilization. **OAK: Course Content**
Reading question/comment on “Discourse” due in class.
- Wednesday, 02/25/2015 Discussion: Rousseau, “Discourse”

Unit Five—Kant and International Political Theory

- Friday, 02/27/2015 Kant, “What is Enlightenment?,” p. 41-48.
- Monday, 03/02/2015-
Friday, 03/06/2015 No Class. Spring Break!
- Monday, 03/09/2015 Kant “Perpetual Peace,” pp. 107-144.

Unit Six—Wollstonecraft and the Argument for Women’s Rights

- Wednesday, 03/11/2015 Wollstonecraft, “Vindication of the Rights of Woman,” Letter Dedicatory, Introduction, and Ch. 1-3, pp. 3-67.
- Friday, 03/13/2015 Wollstonecraft, “Vindication of the Rights of Woman,” Ch. 4, 6 and 9, pp. 68-98, 144-150 and 175-186
- Second Essay Due in Class.**
- Monday, 03/16/2015 Wollstonecraft, “Vindication of the Rights of Woman,” Ch. 12-13, pp. 196-242.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments” (1848). **OAK: Course Content**
- Harriet Taylor Mill, “Enfranchisement of Women” (1851). **OAK: Course Content**
- Reading question/comment on *Vindication* and supplementary materials due in class.**
- Wednesday, 03/18/2015 Discussion: Wollstonecraft, etc.

Unit Eight—Mill on the Individual and Society

- Friday, 03/20/2015 Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. 1, p. 1-14.
- Monday, 03/23/2015 Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. 2-3, pp. 15-71.
- Wednesday, 03/25/2015 Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. 4-5, pp. 72-115.
- Reading question/comment on *On Liberty* due in class**
- Friday, 03/27/2015 Discussion: Mill, *On Liberty*.

Unit Nine—Marx’s Critique of Capitalism: Toward Human Emancipation

- Monday, 03/30/2015 Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” in *ME Reader*, pp. 26-52.
- Wednesday, 04/01/2015 Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” in *ME Reader*, pp. 66-105.
- Podcast: Philosophy Bites—Jonathan Wolff on Marx on Alienation.
OAK: Course Content
- Friday, 04/03/2015 Discussion Meeting: Alienated Labor in Theory and Practice

- Monday, 04/06/2015 Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *ME Reader*, pp. 269-500.
 Friedrich Engels, "Karl Marx" in *Critics of Capitalism: Victorian Reactions to Political Economy*, eds. E. and R. Jay (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), pp. 105-109. **OAK: Course Content**
Reading question/comment on any Marx reading due in class.
- Wednesday, 04/08/2015 Marx General Discussion

Unit Ten—DuBois and the Twentieth Century: The Problem of the Color Line

- Friday, 04/10/2015 DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, "The Forethought," and Essays 1, 3, 6, and 13, pp. 1-12, 36-50, 74-90, and 186-203.
- Monday, 04/13/2015 DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Essays 7-9, pp. 91-153.
Reading question/comment on *Souls* due in class today.
- Wednesday, 04/15/2015 Discussion: *The Souls of Black Folk*
Paper Three Due in Class
- Friday, 04/17/2015 Day off to prepare for exam review session
- Monday, 04/20/2015 Exam review session

Important Assignment Dates:

- Paper 1:** Friday, February 6, in class
Paper 2: Friday, March 18, in class
Paper 3: Friday, April 15, in class
- Final exam:** Friday, April 24, 3-5 p.m., Location TBA
or
 Wednesday, April 29, 12-2 p.m. (alternate exam); Location TBA

Extra Credit Opportunity Dates:

- Film Screening: Sunday, February 15, 7 pm, Commons 335 (paragraph due Monday, February 16, in class)
- Neil Roberts Lecture: Friday, January 23, 3:30-5 pm, Commons 349 (paragraph due Monday, January 26, in class)
- Fonna Forman Lecture: Monday, February 2, 12-1:30 pm, Location TBA (paragraph due Wednesday, February 4, in class)