PSC 270-01: Introduction to Political Theory (Writing Intensive)  
Spring 2011  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.  
Graham 203

Instructor: Professor Carisa R. Showden  
Office: 226 Graham Building  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 – 11:45; Thursdays 3:30 – 5:00; and by appointment  
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Course Overview:  
Political philosophy is the study of the fundamental questions of public life. It covers topics such as human nature, the proper relationship between the state and individuals, the proper relationship between the state and social groups, and the rights and duties that accrue to citizens. In this course, we will examine some of the key concepts of political theory and the ways in which they have been framed and have developed from Plato’s time to the present. The course is not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, you should leave this class with a basic understanding of some of the key writings of representative political thinkers from the Western tradition.

With the work of each theorist we read this semester, we will use the following four questions as the framework to guide our discussion and analysis: What is the scope of the state?; What is the justification for the authority of the state?; What are the ends or purposes of the state?; and What are the means (techniques) the state is to use in achieving its goals? With this framework in mind, you should have a strong grasp by the end of this term of the essential questions asked and various answers posed by eminent political thinkers regarding authority, justice, power, equality, and liberty.

Note Well:  
1. This course is writing intensive. This means that you will be doing a lot of writing this term, produced in response to many different kinds of writing assignments, both formal and informal.  
2. Additionally, this is a reading intensive course. This means that many of the reading assignments are dense and/or lengthy. You will need to set aside at least 3 hours of reading time for every hour of class time.  
   a. You are expected to do the assigned readings before the class in which they will be discussed.  
   b. You may need to review key passages in the assigned readings after we have discussed them in class as well.  
   c. You should also get into the habit of taking reading notes to keep track of the main ideas and important quotes from the assignments.

Goals of the Course (Student Learning Objectives):  
There are two primary goals for this course:  
1. to introduce you to the historical development of key political ideas in Western thought  
   and  
2. to develop your critical thinking skills.  

To achieve the first goal, we will read and discuss certain representative thinkers of classical and modern political thought. To develop your critical thinking skills, you will be asked to analyze the key concepts we will discuss (liberty, freedom, equality, power, justice, etc.) during class discussions and in your written work. With these two primary goals in mind, we will work to help you meet the following student learning objectives for this course:
By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Analyze the significance of time and place for the emergence of particular political ideals.
2. Define key political concepts such as power, authority, justice, equality, and liberty, for yourself and for each of the theorists we read.
3. Analyze the relationship between particular definitions of these concepts and the types of states that embody those ideals, considering specifically the relationship between the ends or purposes of the state and the techniques used to achieve those ends.
4. Apply the theories we read to understand the nature of, and potential solutions to, current political problems.

Required Texts:
(Note: All books are available at the University Bookstore in the Elliot University Center. If you borrow or purchase different editions than the ones listed here, you are responsible for correlating the page numbers of the readings.)

6. Additional Readings on e-reserve, which is accessible through the course blackboard site. These readings are required and are marked with a double asterisk (**) in the schedule of readings below.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings:

Tues., Jan. 11th: Course Introduction: What is “political theory”?

Thurs., Jan 13th: Plato: Republic
Justice: City and Soul (Statecraft and Soulcraft)
   Book 1 (pp. 1 – 31);
   Book 2 (pp. 32 – 59).

Tues., Jan. 18th: Plato: Republic
Justice, Leadership, and Lies
   Book 3 (pp. 60-76, up to line 400);
   Book 3 (pp. 86, at 410c – 93);
   Book 4 (pp. 94 – 121).

Thurs., Jan. 20th: Plato: Republic
Leadership: The Philosopher-Kings
   Book 5 (pp. 122 – 156).
   Book 6 (pp. 165, at 492 – 177, up to line 504).
Tues., Jan. 25th:  

**Plato: Republic**  
Noble Myths and Political Education  
Book 7 (pp. 186 – 195, up to line 523);  
Book 7 (pp. 204 at line 532 – 212).  
Book 10 (pp. 279, at 608b – 292).  

Thurs., Jan. 27th:  

**Nicolò Machiavelli: Discourses on Livy**  
The Republican Machiavelli (Corruption is bad.)  
Introduction (pp. 81 – 82);  
Book One, Preface & chapters 1-8 (pp. 82 – 107);  
Book One, chapters 55 & 58 (pp. 150 – 158);  
Book Two, Preface and chapters 1-2 (pp. 158 – 171).  

⇒⇒ MICROTHEME ONE DUE in class (January 27th) ⇐⇐  

Tues., Feb. 1st:  

**Machiavelli: Discourses on Livy**  
The Ambiguous Machiavelli  
Book One, selected chapters from 9 – 50 (pp. 107-145).  

Thurs., Feb. 3rd:  

**Machiavelli: The Prince**  
The Realpolitik of Princes (Corruption is good?)  
Preface and Chapters 1-14 (pp. 5 – 47).  

Tues., Feb. 8th:  

**Machiavelli: The Prince**  
The Realpolitik of Princes, continued  
Chapters 15-26 (pp. 47 – 80).  

Thurs., Feb. 10th:  

**John Locke: Second Treatise of Government**  
The State of Nature and Private Property  
Chapters 1-7 (pp. 7 – 51).  

⇒⇒ MICROTHEME TWO DUE in class (Feb. 10th) ⇐⇐  

Tues., Feb. 15th:  

**Locke: Second Treatise of Government**  
Creating and Maintaining the Liberal Republic: The Social Contract  
Chapters 8-14 (pp. 52 – 88).  

Thurs., Feb. 17th:  

**Locke: Second Treatise of Government**  
The Foundations of Liberal Authority, Rights, and Revolutions  
Chapters 16-19 (pp. 91 – 124).  

Tues., Feb. 22nd:  

MID TERM EXAM  

Thurs., Feb. 24th:  

**Rousseau: Discourse on the Origin of Inequality & On the Social Contract**  
Inequalities & The Foundation of Political Right  
“Discourse” Preface, Introduction, and Part One (pp. 33 – 46, end of first ¶);  
“Discourse” Parts One and Two (pp. 52, at ¶ break – 81).  
_Social Contract_, Book One, chapters 1-4 (pp. 141 – 147).
The Social Contract, The General Will, and the Question of Sovereignty  
Book One, chapters 5-9 (pp. 147 – 153);  
Book Two, chapters 1-12 (pp. 153 – 172).

The Government  
Book Three, chapters 1-7 (pp. 173 – 187);  
Book Three, chapters 11-18 (pp. 194-203).  
Civil Religion  
Book Four, chapters 1-2 (pp. 203-207);  
Book Four, chapter 8 (pp. 220-227).

Tues., March 8th:  NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK.
Thurs., March 10th:  NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK.

Tues., March 15th:  **Edmund Burke: “Reflections on the Revolution in France” (excerpt)**  
**Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen**  
**Marie-Olympe de Gouges: Declaration of the Rights of Women & Citizens**

Thurs., March 17th:  Burke & de Gouges discussion, continued. No additional readings.

→ → MICROTHEME THREE DUE IN CLASS (March 17th) ← ←

Tues., March 22nd:  **John Stuart Mill: *Utilitarianism***  
Utilitarianism and Justice  
Chapter 2 (pp. 6 – 27);  
Chapter 5 (pp. 61 – 67).

Thurs., March 24th:  **Mill:  *On Liberty***  
Liberty and Its Conditions  
Chapters 1-2 (pp. 69 – 90, end of first ¶);  
Chapter 2 (pp. 102, at last ¶ - 105);  
Chapters 2-4 (pp. 113 – 153).  
Chapter 5 (pp. 178 – 181).

Tues., March 29th:  **Mill:  *On Representative Government***  
Representative Government & Its Conditions and Dangers  
Chapters 2-4 (pp. 198 – 245);  
Chapter 6 (pp. 261 – 276).

→ → DRAFT ONE OF SUMMARY PAPER DUE IN CLASS (March 29th) ← ←

Thurs., March 31st:  **Mill:  *On Representative Government***  
Representative Government: Suffrage For Whom?  
Chapter 8 (pp. 299 – 317).
Tues., April 5th: Karl Marx: selected excerpts
Materialism and the Critique of Capitalism
Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**
The German Ideology, Part One (three excerpts)**
Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts (excerpt on “Alienated Labor”)**

MICROTHEME FOUR DUE IN CLASS (April 7th) ↔ ↔

Thurs., April 7th: Marx: selected excerpts
Communism
“The Communist Manifesto” (excerpts)**

Tues., April 12th: Marx, continued
**Be sure to bring your Marx readings to class

Thurs., April 14th: Michael Walzer: “In Defense of Equality”**

Tues., April 19th: Iris Marion Young: “Displacing the Distributive Paradigm”**

Thurs., April 21st: Course Wrap-Up & Exam Review. No Additional Readings.

Thursday, April 28th: FINAL EXAM, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.
SUMMARY PAPER DUE NOT LATER THAN 3:30 APRIL 28TH ↔ ↔

Course Requirements & Their Weight In Your Final Grade:

- Short Writing Assignments and Participation: 15%
- Four (4) Microthemes: 8% each (32% total)
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Exam: 20%
- Draft One of Summary Paper: 6%
- Final Summary Paper: 12%

Assignments & Course Requirements in Detail:

1. Short Writing Assignments: Throughout the semester, you will be asked to complete a variety of short assignments designed to facilitate depth of understanding of the texts, promote engagement with the material in different ways, and/or develop the basic building-blocks of good writing. These assignments also should help both you and me assess how well you are understanding the material on an on-going basis, providing fairly regular feedback where no single assignment affects the final course grade too severely. Many of these assignments are integrated into lecture and class discussion (that is, done in class), and if you miss class, you cannot make them up. Others are typed homework assignments that will serve as the basis of our class discussion the day they are due. Expect an average of one of these short assignments per week. While no one assignment is worth more than a few points, these points do add up, so you should take these assignments seriously. Half of your participation grade comes from these assignments.

2. Class Participation: I take attendance and note participation daily. Obviously, if you aren’t here, you can’t participate. That said, just showing up and staying awake isn’t participation. Participation includes, for example, paying attention, asking questions about the readings and/or
lectures, contributing to class discussion in a way that demonstrates that you have completed the reading, responding politely to your classmates’ questions, and responding to my questions (even if just to ask me to rephrase or say that you don’t know).

NOTE: you are expected to prepare the readings in advance of the class period for which they are assigned. As many of the readings are quite challenging, I strongly encourage you to take notes as you read and bring them to class for reference during discussions. ALWAYS BRING THE READINGS TO CLASS.

Please note: Class begins at 2:00 p.m. Habitual lateness will result in no credit for participation/attendance.

3. Microthemes: These are short, typed papers that require you to answer detailed questions about the readings in a succinct yet thorough manner. Micro-themes build skills that are essential for critical reading and effective writing. The skills that go into writing successful micro-themes (separating central from secondary arguments, accurate summarizing, paying attention to the parts of an argument you both like and don’t like) are critical skills for writing successful longer papers. In this way, they are also—like rough drafts—means through which you can develop the building blocks of persuasive and engaging writing. These papers are short but very important for both the substance and mechanics of your writing. Work hard on them. (See Blackboard for more specific assignment details and paper prompts.)

4. Mid-Term Exam: An in-class short essay format exam that will ask you to explain and analyze the major themes of the works we have read, bringing to bear your understanding of the assigned readings, the lectures, and the class discussions. You will need to bring at least one blue book to the exam.

5. Final Exam: During our University-scheduled final exam period, you will write a comprehensive final exam consisting of short essay questions on single authors and slightly longer essays on multiple authors. You will need to bring two blue books to the final exam.

6. Summary Paper: You will write one longer paper this semester that will ask you to synthesize and analyze what you have learned about “political thought.” Because an essential element of good writing is rewriting, a formal revision process will be built into this paper. You will submit a fairly polished first version of the paper on March 29th. This version will be worth 6% of your final course grade. I will provide you detailed comments and suggestions for revisions on your paper. You will then submit the final version of your paper not later than the beginning of the final exam period. (Early papers are always welcome. Late papers will not be accepted.) (See Blackboard for more specific assignment details.)

Course Policies:

An Electronics-Free Classroom:

This is an “electronics-free classroom.” You may not use computers, cell phones, iPads, iPod Touches, Blackberries, or any other electronic device while in class. You should always bring your books/readings, your (paper) notebook, and pens/pencils. You should not bring other note-taking (or sending) devices. Please silence your cell phones. If you have an emergency that requires you to have your cell phone available during class, please see me before class begins.
Honor Code:
I expect all students in this course to abide by both the letter and spirit of the university’s academic integrity policy. Violations of the university honor code will be prosecuted. The full text of the Academic Integrity Policy can be viewed at: http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/

Specifically pertinent to this course are the following infractions:

a. “Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. Cheating includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying from the work of another student, using notes or other materials not authorized during an examination…” If caught cheating, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

b. “Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise.” Do NOT engage in plagiarism. If caught, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, please see me immediately.

Grading Scale:
I use a standard “ten-point” grading system. For example:
93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B, etc.

Letter Grades:
A (93-100): Outstanding. Met all criteria for the assignments in a manner that demonstrated a sophisticated, critical engagement with the material.
A- (90-92)/B+ (87-89): Generally excellent. Either less sophisticated than “A” work or slightly weak in one of the key criteria for the assignments.
B (83-86): Good. Generally persuasive and accurate writing, but much weaker in one area or a bit weaker in two areas than “A” work.
B- (80-82)/C+ (77-79): Pretty good. Less persuasive or accurate rendering of the philosophers’ arguments (or your own arguments). Weak in a few important respects.
C (73-76): Fair. Still has a somewhat coherent argument, but very weak in two areas OR does not fully answer the question asked (i.e., only answers one part of a two-part question).
C- (70-72)/D+ (67-69): Worthy of credit. Disorganized, inaccurate, major problems with readability OR unclear that assignment was read (that is, the argument might be clear and persuasive, but does not engage with the assigned reading or doesn’t answer the question assigned in any meaningful way).
D/D- (60-66): Some credit. Fails to meet most of the standards, but is a complete piece turned in on time with some general nod to having read the assignment prompt.
F (0-59): Assignment not addressed, assignment submitted late, and/or the required reading was obviously not done.

(Please note: This grading scale is in compliance with the “UNCG Grading System for Undergraduates” as outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin. The University’s grading criteria can be found here: http://www.uncg.edu/reg/Catalog/0910/AcaRegs/Grading.html.)