

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Political Science 200: Survey of Political Theory
Fall 2007
MW 7:00-8:15 p.m., WRI C303

Professor David Fott
Office: WRI B217; 895-4187

Hours: MTuW 2:30-4:30 p.m., or by appointment
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The tasks of political theory are to understand, and search for answers to, fundamental questions of political life: How should we live, as individuals and as a society? What is justice, and what does it require of us? What is the best form of government? In lecture we will survey the most important thinkers of Western civilization who have tried to answer those questions; but we will focus on four of them: Plato, Niccolò Machiavelli, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Readings:

The following books have been ordered for purchase and are also at the library on two-hour reserve:

- Plato and Aristophanes. *Four Texts on Socrates*. Rev. ed. Translated by Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Cornell Univ. Press, 1998.
Plato. *The Republic*. 2nd ed. Translated by Allan Bloom. Basic Books, 1991.
Niccolò Machiavelli. *The Prince*. 2nd ed. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998.
John Locke. *The Selected Political Writings*. Edited by Paul E. Sigmund. Norton, 2005.
Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The First and Second Discourses*. Edited by Roger D. Masters. Translated by Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters. Bedford/St. Martin's, 1964.
Jean-Jacques Rousseau. "On the Social Contract" with "Geneva Manuscript" and "Political Economy." Edited by Roger D. Masters. Translated by Judith R. Masters. Bedford/St. Martin's, 1978.

For students who want additional information, suggested readings include chapters from the book *History of Political Philosophy* (available at the library on two-hour reserve) on the political theorists covered in readings and lectures.

Schedule of Readings and Topics:

M Aug 27 Introduction

I. Ancient and Medieval Political Theory

- W Aug 29 Plato, *Apology of Socrates*
M Sep 3 No class (Labor Day recess)
W Sep 5 Plato, *Crito*
M Sep 10 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 3-46, 53-55
W Sep 12 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 67, 80, 93-101, 105-25
M Sep 17 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 127-41, 152-61
W Sep 19 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 184-220
M Sep 24 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 221-44
W Sep 26 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 251-64, 272-81
M Oct 1 Lecture on Aristotle, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas; **paper #1 due**

II. Early Modern Political Theory

W Oct 3	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , pp. 1-33
M Oct 8	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , pp. 34-60
W Oct 10	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , pp. 61-105
M Oct 15	Examination
W Oct 17	Lecture on Hobbes; Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 1-5
M Oct 22	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 6-9
W Oct 24	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 10-15
M Oct 29	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 16-19
W Oct 31	Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , pp. 126-44
M Nov 5	Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , pp. 144-67

III. Late Modern Political Theory

W Nov 7	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts</i> , pp. 30-64
M Nov 12	No class (Veterans Day recess)
W Nov 14	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men</i> , pp. 76-113, including Rousseau's notes, pp. 182-92; paper #2 due
M Nov 19	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men</i> , pp. 113-41, including Rousseau's notes, pp. 192-222
W Nov 21	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men</i> , pp. 141-81, including Rousseau's notes, pp. 223-28
M Nov 26	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i> , pp. 45-77
W Nov 28	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i> , pp. 78-107
M Dec 3	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i> , pp. 108-32
W Dec 5	Lecture on Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche

Final examination: M Dec 10, 8:10 p.m. – 10:10 p.m.

Format:

Sessions will combine lecture and discussion. It is imperative, therefore, that you come to class having done the assigned reading for that day. A superior method of preparation is to read the material twice: first fairly quickly in order to grasp the direction of the argument, then slowly and thoroughly, taking notes as you go. A list of questions for discussion for each reading is available at <<http://faculty.unlv.edu/dfott/>> (free Adobe Reader required).

Assignments:

Written assignments include:

1. A paper of 2 pages on a topic to be assigned, which will count for 15% of your final grade.
2. An in-class examination, which will count for 20%.
3. A paper of 5 to 7 pages on a topic to be assigned, which will count for 30%.
4. A final examination, which will count for 35%.

The papers will be due at the beginning of class on the dates specified. The examinations will consist mainly or exclusively of essay questions.

You must complete all written assignments in order to pass the course. Your contribution in class may increase the grade on one of the assignments by one increment (e.g., from B to B+). Your grade may be reduced if you have more than three unexcused absences; lateness normally counts as an absence.

Extensions for submitting papers will be granted only in cases of emergency (e.g., personal illness, preferably with a note from a doctor; serious illness in one's family). The grade on a paper will be reduced by one increment for each day the paper is late without an approved extension (e.g., a paper of B+ quality will receive a B if it is one day late; a paper of B quality will receive a B-/C+ if it is two days late). No alternate arrangements for the examinations will be made except in case of illness.

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If you use a computer to take notes in class, I reserve the right to require you to send me by e-mail (via your Rebelmail account) a copy of your notes within twelve hours of a particular class. Failure to do so will result in a penalty of the grade.

Use of any other electronic device in class, except with prior permission, is prohibited and will be considered the equivalent of an absence for that class.

If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) for coordination of services. DRC is located in the Student Services Complex, room 137. The telephone number is 895-0866 (TTY 895-0652).