

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Political Science 373: Early Modern Political Theory  
Fall 2006  
TuTh 1:00-2:15 p.m., CBC C124

Professor David Fott                      Hours: Tu 2:45-3:30 p.m., WTh 2:45-4:45 p.m., or by appointment  
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In this class we will meet three of the designers of modern politics. First we will study Machiavelli's *other* great book, in which he seems to be more favorable to republics than to princes. Then we will examine Locke, who systematized and constitutionalized Machiavelli and promoted religious toleration and private property. Finally, Hume was one of the first philosophers to suggest that republican government could be practiced in a large territory; he thus influenced the political science of the American Founders. Yet Hume's philosophical skepticism appears to threaten the possibility of any political science; so we must study his account of the human understanding, including his criticism of the notions of cause and effect, which drove the later work of Kant.

**Required Readings:**

Niccolo Machiavelli. *Discourses on Livy*. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995.

John Locke. "*Two Treatises of Government*" and "*A Letter Concerning Toleration*." Edited by Ian Shapiro. Yale Univ. Press, 2003.

David Hume. *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*. Rev. ed. Edited by Eugene F. Miller. Liberty Fund, 1987.

David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. 2nd ed. Edited by Eric Steinberg. Hackett, 1993.

David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Edited by J. B. Schneewind. Hackett, 1983.

Reading available on the Internet is indicated by \* (free Adobe Reader required).

**Schedule of Readings and Topics:**

Tu Aug 29	Introduction
Th Aug 31	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses on Livy</i> : dedicatory letter; book 1, preface, chapters 1-15
Tu Sep 5	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses</i> : book 1, chapters 16-39
Th Sep 7	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses</i> : book 1, chapters 40-60
Tu Sep 12	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses</i> : book 2, preface, chapters 1-16
Th Sep 14	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses</i> : book 2, chapters 17-33
Tu Sep 19	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses</i> : book 3, chapters 1-13
Th Sep 21	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses</i> : book 3, chapters 14-35
Tu Sep 26	Machiavelli, <i>Discourses</i> : book 3, chapters 36-49; <b>paper #1 due</b>
Th Sep 28	Locke, <i>First Treatise of Government</i> : chapters 1-6
Tu Oct 3	Locke, <i>First Treatise</i> : chapters 7-10
Th Oct 5	Locke, <i>First Treatise</i> : chapter 11
Tu Oct 10	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> : chapters 1-7
Th Oct 12	Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> : chapters 8-15
Tu Oct 17	Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> : chapters 16-19
Th Oct 19	Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> : pp. 215-32

Tu Oct 24 Locke, *Letter*: pp. 232-54

Th Oct 26 **Examination #1**

Tu Oct 31 \*Locke, *Some Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest, and Raising the Value of*

*Money*: pp. 1-63; available without purchase at

<[http://olldownload.libertyfund.org/Texts/Locke0154/Works/PDFs/0128-04\\_Pt02\\_Money1.pdf](http://olldownload.libertyfund.org/Texts/Locke0154/Works/PDFs/0128-04_Pt02_Money1.pdf)>

Th Nov 2 \*Locke, *Some Considerations*: pp. 63-116

Tu Nov 7	Hume, <i>Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary</i> : “Of the Liberty of the Press,” “That Politics may be reduced to a Science,” “Of the First Principles of Government,” “Of the Origin of Government,” “Of the Independency of Parliament”
Th Nov 9	Hume, <i>Essays</i> : “Whether the British Government inclines more to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic,” “Of Parties in General,” “Of the Parties of Great Britain,” “Of Civil Liberty,” “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”
Tu Nov 14	Hume, <i>Essays</i> : “Of the Balance of Power,” “Of some Remarkable Customs,” “Of the Original Contract”
Th Nov 16	Hume, <i>Essays</i> : “Of Passive Obedience,” “Of the Coalition of Parties,” “Of the Protestant Succession”
Tu Nov 21	Hume, <i>Essays</i> : “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth”; <b>paper #2 due</b>
Th Nov 23	No class (Thanksgiving recess)
Tu Nov 28	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> : sections 2-5
Th Nov 30	Hume, <i>Human Understanding</i> : sections 6 and 7
Tu Dec 5	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals</i> : sections 1, 3-5
Th Dec 7	Hume, <i>Principles of Morals</i> : section 9; appendices 1-3

**Final examination: Tu Dec 12, 1:00-3:00 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.

**Assignments:**

Written assignments include:

1. Two interpretive, analytical papers concerning the assigned readings (not primarily research papers) of 5 to 7 pages each. Topics will be assigned. **Of the two papers, the one with the higher grade will count for 30% of your final grade, and the one with the lower grade 20%.** The papers will be due at the beginning of class on September 26 and November 21.
2. An examination on October 26, which will count for 15% of your final grade.
3. A final examination on December 12, which will count for 35% of your final grade. That examination will consist primarily or exclusively of essay questions.

You must complete all required 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 two 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 on the scale 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 either examination will be made except in case of illness.