

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Political Science 200: Survey of Political Theory  
Spring 2007  
MW 10:00-11:15 a.m., TBE B174

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 are required:

- 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, 2004.  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The First and Second Discourses*. Edited by Roger D. Masters. Translated by Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters. St. Martin's, 1964.  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract*. Edited by Roger D. Masters. Translated by Judith R. Masters. St. Martin's, 1978.

Suggested readings include chapters from *History of Political Philosophy*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, on the following political theorists: Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche. The book is available at the library on two-hour reserve.

**Schedule of Readings and Topics:**

W Jan 17 Introduction

**I. Ancient and Medieval Political Theory**

- M Jan 22 Plato, *Apology of Socrates*  
W Jan 24 Plato, *Crito*  
M Jan 29 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 3-46, 53-55  
W Jan 31 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 67, 80, 93-101, 105-25  
M Feb 5 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 127-41, 152-61  
W Feb 7 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 184-220  
M Feb 12 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 221-44  
W Feb 14 Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 251-63, 272-81  
M Feb 19 No class (Presidents' Day recess)  
W Feb 21 Lecture on Aristotle, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas; **paper #1 due**

## II. Early Modern Political Theory

M Feb 26	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Dedicatory Letter, chaps. 1-7
W Feb 28	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , chaps. 8-14
M Mar 5	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , chaps. 15-26
W Mar 7	<b>Examination</b>
M Mar 12	No class (spring break)
W Mar 14	No class (spring break)
M Mar 19	Lecture on Hobbes; Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 1-5
W Mar 21	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 6-9
M Mar 26	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 10-15
W Mar 28	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 16-19
M Apr 2	Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , pp. 126-44
W Apr 4	Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , pp. 144-67

## III. Late Modern Political Theory

M Apr 9	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts</i> , pp. 30-64
W Apr 11	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality</i> , pp. 76-113, including Rousseau's notes, pp. 182-92; <b>paper #2 due</b>
M Apr 16	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality</i> , pp. 113-41, including Rousseau's notes, pp. 192-222
W Apr 18	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality</i> , pp. 141-81, including Rousseau's notes, pp. 223-28
M Apr 23	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i> , pp. 45-77
W Apr 25	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i> , pp. 78-107
M Apr 30	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i> , pp. 108-32
W May 2	Lecture on Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche

**Final examination: M May 7, 10:10 a.m. – 12:10 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.

### 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 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 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.

**Other Information:**

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