

**Political Science 2060: Introduction to Political Theory
Spring 2014**

“The Philosopher and the City”

Instructor: Mr. Cory Sukala

Office: 216 Stubbs Hall

Office hours: To be announced (and otherwise by appointment)

E-Mail: cory.sukala@gmail.com

Course Objectives

This course provides an introduction to some of the basic problems of political life as examined in the great works of political philosophy. In particular, we will draw our focus to two key relationships within philosophic thought. First, that of the philosopher to the city, and second, that of faith and reason to one another. In the attempt to distill the tensions found in these relationships, we will read primary texts written by the great thinkers of antiquity and modernity in hopes of understanding them as they understood themselves.

Course Texts

Required:

- *Four Texts on Socrates: Plato's Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito and Aristophanes' Clouds*, Tom and Grace West, trans., Revised Edition. ISBN: 0801485746.
- *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, Richard McKeon, ed. ISBN: 0-375-75799-6.
- *The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli, Mansfield, trans. ISBN: 0226500446.
- *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes, Edwin Curley, ed. ISBN: 978-0872201774.
- *The Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, John Locke. ISBN: 0-486-42464-2.
- *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill. ISBN: 0486421309.
- *The Federalist*, Carey and McClellan, eds., ISBN: 0865972893.
- *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Walter Kaufman trans. ISBN: 0679724656
- A number of other required readings will be available on moodle. Please make note of these readings in the course outline below.

Supplemental:

- *On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason*, Pope John Paul II, ISBN: 157455302X (The text is also available for free on the Vatican website, but is much easier to digest in printed form)

Grading

- There will be three formal writing assignments in this class. The first two papers will be relatively short essays on assigned topics. **These papers will each be worth 20% of your course grade.** I will provide the due dates and assigned topics for these papers no less than two weeks before each respective deadline, though likely sooner.
- A final paper will be assigned and will be due during the scheduled final exam time set for this course, unless otherwise noted. **This paper will account for 40% of your course grade.**
- **The remaining 20% of your grade will be reflective of your attendance and participation in the course.** Please be aware that you can (and will) fail this class as a result of poor attendance. Also note that you will be marked absent if it becomes clear to me that you have not completed your assigned reading, and you will also be considered absent if you come to class without your assigned readings. Further, you will receive no credit if you do not participate in the class. To be clear, **every absence after your first will cost you a letter grade on your overall course grade.**
- **Please make note that this class will be primarily discussion based.** The best possible score in the course without participation is an 80%, though it will be extremely unlikely to manage a 'C' in the course, let alone higher, without participating. Learning begins with reading and thinking, but is greatly enhanced by argument and debate with others who hold dissimilar views. Discussion is the fastest way to master the material at hand. Once you have spent time reading and thinking, your assignments will become much easier. It is important, and thus required, that you keep up with your reading. We will be reading in class extensively. It is thus also important that you bring the assigned texts with you for each session. Finally, while argument and debate is expected and encouraged, so too is respect for your fellow students with whom you will invariably disagree.

Note: The use of laptops, cell phones and other electronic devices is prohibited during class.

Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to know and follow the rules of academic honesty. There are a number of forms of plagiarism, and some of them might surprise you. Please be sure you understand this matter fully before writing, as no excuse will be accepted after the fact, including ignorance of the rules. I take plagiarism very seriously, and you should too. If you plagiarize an assignment in this class, your case will be turned over to the Dean for academic misconduct and you will fail the course. There will be no exceptions.

Course Outline and Discussion Framework

I. What is Political Philosophy and What makes a Political Philosopher?

January 15: Leo Strauss- "What is Political Philosophy?", "Persecution and the Art of Writing" **(On moodle)**

II. The Ancient Greeks and the Polis

January 22: Plato- *The Apology*

January 29: *The Apology continued, The Crito*

February 5: *The Crito continued*

February 12: Aristotle- *The Nicomachean Ethics*

February 19: *The Nicomachean Ethics continued, The Politics*

February 26: *The Politics*

III. Modernity and the Social Contract

March 5: Machiavelli- *The Prince*

March 12: *The Prince continued*

March 19: Hobbes- *Leviathan*

March 26: Locke- *The Second Treatise of Government*

IV. America and the Liberal Experiment

April 2: Publius- *The Federalist*

April 9: Mill- *On Liberty*

V. Faith, Reason, and Philosophy

April 23: Nietzsche- *Beyond Good and Evil*

April 30: Pope John Paul II- *Fides et Ratio: On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason*

The Buddha- *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha (On moodle)*

Because the class will be discussion based, I am willing to linger on subjects/readings which are particularly fruitful or in need of greater elucidation. Accordingly, there may be slight alterations made to the schedule as we go along. Should this prove to be the case, expectations for when each of the particular readings are to be completed will be articulated in class.