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Department of Politics

POLITICAL THEORY

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course examines a selection of the most influential and enduring works in the western tradition of political philosophy, highlighting the way in which major concepts of political thought have evolved from ancient Greece to contemporary western society. By critically examining the works of classical and modern political theorists (such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Rawls and Nozick), we will explore such topics as the nature of the state, the justification of political authority, distributive justice, democracy and freedom. What is the meaning of these concepts? In what does their value consist? How (if at all) can they be achieved? What social and political arrangements best preserve them? Our objective in the course is to understand and critically evaluate some of the most important ideas and theories in the history of political philosophy and to reach our own reasoned positions on the issues they raise.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- two short papers (5-6 pages).
- one long paper (15-20 pages).
- Active participation in class discussions.

LECTURES AND CLASS PARTICIPATION: Lectures have two main purposes. The first is to supply background for the readings and to place them in a larger philosophical context. The second is to demonstrate how to go about identifying, analyzing, and assessing the central claims and arguments in the readings. One of the best ways to improve your skills of analyzing and evaluating philosophical arguments is through discussion, so there will be an attempt made to devote at least half of the class to discussion.

REQUIRED TEXT (readings from additional sources will also be assigned):

- Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. by E. Barker, Oxford.
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Ed. with Introduction by Edwin Curley. Hackett Publishing Company.
- John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Ed. Peter Laslett. Cambridge University Press.
- John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Ed. James Tully. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Writings*. Ed. Stefan Collini. Cambridge University Press.

- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Basic Books.
- Plato, *Republic*. Basic Books.
- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Revised edition. Belknap Press
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, Hackett Publishing Company.

Late papers & Extensions. Late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day late (for example, from A to A-, from A- to B+, and so on). Weekend days count. If you finish a late paper during a weekend, e-mail it to me right away, and turn in a hard copy later. Extensions will not be granted except under genuinely extenuating circumstances. Please come and talk to me if you are in doubt as to whether your situation counts as an extenuating circumstance.

CALENDAR OF ASSIGNMENTS

This calendar may be revised as the semester goes on.

PLATO

Republic, Books I-X.

Secondary Sources:

Julia Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic*.

Allan Bloom, "Interpretive Essay" in *The Republic of Plato*.

J. Peter Euben, *The Tragedy of Political Theory*, chs 7, 8.

Paul Friedlander, *Plato: An Introduction*.

Charles Griswold, ed., *Platonic Writings/Platonic Readings*.

Terence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*.

G. Klosko, *The Development of Plato's Political Theory*.

Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, (chapter on Plato).

Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic*.

C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings*.

Arlene Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*.

Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, *Platonic Studies*, nos. 5 & 6.

Gregory Vlastos, "The Theory of Social Justice in the *Republic*," in H. North (ed.) *Interpretations of Plato*.

ARISTOTLE

Politics. Books I-VIII.

Recommended: *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Secondary Sources:

John Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*.

David Keyt and Fred D. Miller, Jr., eds., *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics*.

Richard Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy*.

Fred D. Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics*.

Martha Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, pt. 3.

Stephen Salkever, *Finding the Mean*.

Aristide Tessitore, *Reading Aristotle's Ethics*.

Bernard Yack, *The Problems of a Political Animal*.

THOMAS HOBBS***Leviathan***, Part I-II.

Secondary Sources:

Deborah Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*.Mary Dietz, *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory*.David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes*.Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*.David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan*.C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, chap. 2.Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*.Michael Oakeshott, "Introduction to Leviathan" in *Rationalism in Politics*.Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, ch. 8 and *Visions of Politics*, vol. 3.Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in Philosophy of Hobbes*.Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*.Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*.Richard Tuck, *Hobbes and Philosophy and Government*.**JOHN LOCKE*****The Second Treatise of Government*** and ***A Letter Concerning Toleration***.

Secondary Sources:

Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government*.John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*.Ruth Grant, *John Locke's Liberalism*.Peter Laslett, "Introduction" to CUP edition of *Two Treatises of Government*.A. John Simmons, *The Lockean Theory of Rights* and *On the Edge of Anarchy*.A. John Simmons, *Moral Principles and Political Obligations*, chapter on tacit consent.James Tully, *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts*.Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality*.Jeremy Waldron, *The Right to Private Property*, ch. 6.**JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU*****Social Contract*** and ***Discourse on Inequality***.

Secondary Sources:

Mark Hulliung, *The Autocritique of Enlightenment: Rousseau and the philosophes*.R.D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*.Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man*.J. Miller, *Rousseau: Dreamer of Democracy*.Susan Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, pt. III.Judith Shklar, *Men and Citizens*.Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction*.Patrick Riley, *The General Will Before Rousseau*.Robert Wokler, *Rousseau*.

Patrick Riley, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*.
Judith Shklar, *Men and Citizens*.

JOHN STUART MILL

On Liberty.

Secondary Sources:

F. R. Berger, *Happiness, Justice and Freedom: The Moral and Political Philosophy of J.S. Mill*.

John Gray, *Mill on Liberty*

John Gray, ed. *On Liberty In Focus*.

Andrew Pyle, ed., *Liberty: Contemporary Responses to John Stuart Mill*.

Alan Ryan, *J.S. Mill*.

Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*.

John Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill*.

John Skorupski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*.

Dennis Thompson, *John Stuart Mill and Representative Government*.

JOHN RAWLS

A Theory of Justice. Sections 1-17, 20-35, 39-43, 67-69, 77-79, 82.

Secondary Sources:

Samuel Freeman, ed., *John Rawls: The Cambridge Companion*.

Norman Daniels, ed., *Reading Rawls*.

Thomas Pogge, *Realizing Rawls*.

Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*.

Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Rawls*.

ROBERT NOZICK

Anarchy, State and Utopia. Pages ix-xiv, 3-35, 149-294.

Secondary Sources:

Jeffrey Paul, *Reading Nozick: Essays on Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.