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.
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.
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.
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.

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.
Martha Nussbaum, Fragility of Goodness, pt. 3.
Stephen Salkever, Finding the Mean.
Aristide Tessitore, Reading Aristotle’s Ethics.
**THOMAS HOBBES**  
*Leviathan*, Part I-II.

Secondary Sources:  
Deborah Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*.  
David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan*.  
Michael Oakeshott, “Introduction to Leviathan” in *Rationalism in Politics*.  
Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, ch. 8 and *Visions of Politics*, vol. 3.  
Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*.  

**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*.  

**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*.  
Robert Wokler, *Rousseau*.  

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

**JOHN STUART MILL**  
*On Liberty.*

Secondary Sources:  
John Gray, *Mill on Liberty*  
John Gray, ed. *On Liberty In Focus*.  
Alan Ryan, *J.S. Mill*.  
Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*.  
John Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill*.  
Dennis Thompson, *John Stuart Mill and Representative Government*.

**JOHN RAWLS**  

Secondary Sources:  
Norman Daniels, ed., *Reading Rawls*.  
Thomas Pogge, *Realizing Rawls*.  
Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*.  
Robert Paul Woolf, *Understanding Rawls*.

**ROBERT NOZICK**  

Secondary Sources:  