

POLITICAL SCIENCE 101:  
INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY  
WINTER SEMESTER 2006

**TTh, 10 a.m.– 11 a.m.**  
**Angell Hall, auditorium B**

**Instructor:**

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**Office Hours:**

T 3–4 p.m.  
W 2–3 p.m.  
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**GSI's and sections:**

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**Read this syllabus carefully. You are responsible for the information it contains. If you have any questions, direct them to Professor LaVaque-Manty either in class, via phone or e-mail, or during office hours. If you lose this syllabus, ask for a replacement copy or visit the course website. Any changes made to this syllabus will be posted on the course website.**

**OVERVIEW**

This course is a chronological introduction to a selection of major — and some minor — works in Western political theory. Some of the central themes that the course will cover are ‘*justice*,’ ‘*human nature*’ and ‘*political action*. What is justice, and injustice? What are people like, what do they want and what may they hope for? Do we all want the same from our lives? How *may* and how *should* different political ideals be pursued? We will survey answers offered by many different kinds of thinkers, writing under a variety of circumstances. Finally, we will pay attention to what our theorists themselves are up to: how they argue for their views, whom they are addressing, and how they can be interpreted.

A common question students taking this course ask is, “What do the texts and issues for this course have to do with our politics?” Here’s a possible answer: It is up to you to decide whether they indeed have. Your answer, at the end of the day, may reasonably be “no.” But before you jump to that conclusion, you should note that many people — many generations, in fact — have taken these texts to deal with the most important political questions there are.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

January 19:	First short paper due
January 25:	Drop and add deadline
February 16:	Midterm exam
April 11:	Paper due
April 24:	Final exam at 4 p.m.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives for student learning in this course can be roughly categorized into two main categories: knowledge and skills. However, since the skills are *cognitive* (have to do with your ability to process knowledge), they can only be met if the knowledge goals have been met.

Let's be more concrete: At the end of the semester, you should:

1. Be **familiar with the texts** we have read and the kinds of arguments you have encountered during the course. (For example, if your relatives ask, "What's that Machiavellianism we hear about?")
2. Have an **understanding of what political theory** is and have at least a *general comprehension of major themes in political theory* (e.g., you should know what liberalism, marxism and conservatism are). The course website lists a set of concepts you will need to know at the final exam.
3. Be able to **read other similar texts** and **analyze other political arguments**. In other words, you should be able to engage in **inquiry** into political theory.
4. Be able to **express** your views on these matters both **verbally** and **in writing**.

These objectives are in an *ascending* order of importance: (2) is more important than (1), and so on. It doesn't matter if after a year or so you have forgotten the details of, say, Hobbes's arguments; it is more important that you develop the cognitive skills. This is because (a) thinking about the process as **inquiry** prepares you for other courses in political science, both in political theory or in other sub-fields. You will learn how to ask the right kinds of questions and how to go about answering them. Put simply: you will learn important scholarship skills. Furthermore, these skills will (b) make you a more informed citizen, (c) get you into law school and get you other good jobs (employers like people who can think, you know), and (d) make you a better person because you'll be open-minded to the complexity of viewpoints in the world. And, importantly, you'll be cool because you can show off at cocktail parties with your knowledge: "Oh yeah, it was Socrates who said that the unexamined life is not worth living. But I rather prefer Machiavelli's principle of ends justifying the means."

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## ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

**Accommodations for students with disabilities.** If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please make an appointment to see Prof. LaVaque-Manty. If you haven't done so already, you are also encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), Rm. G-625 Haven Hall 1045, tel. 763-3000 (Voice / TTY / TDD).

*Office hours.* You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of Professor LaVaque-Manty's office hours for any course-related issues whatever. You can also e-mail questions.

*Course website.* This syllabus, paper topics, announcements and other course material will be available at the course website on CTools. Every student has reasonably convenient access to the web, so this should not pose insurmountable difficulties. If it does, please contact Professor LaVaque-Manty with an explanation for why it is insurmountable.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### I. Readings

Complete the assigned reading before the lecture. Everything listed below is required.

The following books are available at the Michigan Union Bookstore. You don't have to use that bookstore, but you must get the listed edition:

- Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, third edition, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett, 2000)
- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (Harvest Books, 1989)
- David Wootton, ed., *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche* (Hackett, 1996)

Some required readings are in electronic format, accessible through the course website.

### II. Lectures

Attendance in lectures is not required, but strongly encouraged. The exams will require you to know material discussed only in lectures.

Printable versions of the PowerPoint slides used in lectures will be available on the course website *before* each lecture. You are welcome to use them to help your note taking. Please observe, however, that they will not make much sense without the lectures. Don't try to rely on them alone for the exams.

### III. Sections

Participation in the section is very important. You should attend it regularly; you should also bring the relevant reading(s) into the section as careful textual analysis is often necessary. Your section participation will account for 15% of your course grade. Your GSI will decide how participation is determined. It may include additional homework, presentations, quizzes. Your GSI will provide information on his or her policies on this.

In all matters regarding your work, you should first turn to your GSI.

### IV. Papers

You will write often, but not very much. The purpose of the assignments is to give help you practice your writing and thinking skills. The structure of the paper assignments is as follows:

- **Diagnostic “micro” paper** (2 pages, 500 words) due on **Thursday, January 19**. This paper will be graded, *but it will not count toward your final course grade*.
- **Short writing assignments**, totaling five pages (1,250 words). These will be assigned by your GSI. Some of them may be similar to the essay questions you will have to answer on the exams. Together, they count for 15% of your final course grade.
- **Short paper** (5 pages, 1,250 words) due on **Tuesday, April 11**. The paper will count for 20% of your course grade. Topics for the paper will be assigned at least two weeks in advance.

The following offers the rough principles on the basis of which your papers will be graded:

A / A–	Paper offers a clearly stated, interesting thesis which is supported with valid and sound arguments. The paper shows that the writer has thought about the assignment and developed his or her <i>own</i> ideas about it, instead of just offering minimal responses to the different components of the assignment. Interpretations of theories are sophisticated and supported with textual evidence; more than one source is considered. Writing is between good and brilliant: the organization of the paper is clear, prose is good and grammar flawless.
B / B+	Paper offers a clearly stated thesis which is supported with for the most part valid and sound arguments. The paper stays on topic, considering all the relevant aspects of the assignment. Interpretations of theories are plausible and supported with textual evidence; more than one source is considered. Writing, including outline and grammar, is solid.
B–	Paper offers a thesis and attempts to support it with arguments. However, the thesis is simplistic and/or the arguments weak or unconnected to the thesis. Interpretations are weak or problematic, textual evidence minimal or weak. Paper only uses one textual source. Writing and organization have problems that affect readability.
C / C+	Paper offers a minimal thesis and minimal or no arguments in its support. Interpretations thoroughly misguided and/or unsupported with any evidence. Writing — both at the level of paper organization and grammar — seriously problematic.
D+ / C–	No thesis, no arguments or no textual evidence. Organization incoherent, writing very awkward and unintelligible.
D	No thesis, no arguments, no evidence. Writer has no conception of most rudimentary aspects of writing (paragraphs, outline).
E	The paper displays a fundamental lack of understanding of the principles that guide scholarly endeavors. Examples include but aren't limited to gross mistakes in citing source materials as well as significant errors in framing the paper (e.g., writing a short story instead of an essay).

## V. Exams

There will be two exams in the course: an hour-long midterm on **Thursday, February 16** and a two-hour final exam on **Monday, April 24, 4–6 p.m.** in the usual lecture room.

**IF YOU CANNOT TAKE THE FINAL EXAM AT THE DESIGNATED TIME, DO NOT REGISTER FOR THIS COURSE.** There will be no early examinations for any reason whatsoever. Late make-up exams may be offered in cases of documented serious emergency.

The midterm and the final follow the same format, but the final is longer and **cumulative**. Each consists of three parts: identifications, short conceptual questions, and essay questions. Further details, **including a list of concepts we expect you to have mastered by the end of the semester**, are provided on the course website.

The midterm counts for 15% and the final 35% toward your final course grade.

**A Note About Grades**

We realize that grades matter to you very much. To maximize your chances of getting a good grade, we recommend that you keep up with the reading, come to lectures and sections, and do the work on time. The final exam will be designed in a way that it rewards those who have both done the reading and attended lecture. It will be completely straightforward and even easy for anyone who has done the work and understood, even minimally, the theories and concepts.

**V. Summary of Grading**

Participation:	15%
GSI-assigned writing:	15%
Paper:	20%
Midterm:	15%
Final exam:	35%

**VI. Grade grievances**

Your GSI is responsible for your grades. If you believe that you have been unfairly graded, you must follow this procedure:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching your GSI.
2. Provide a brief explanation **in writing** for why the grade you received was unfair.
3. Approach your GSI first. If you fail to reach an agreement, you may take your grievance to Prof. LaVaquer-Manty.

**GENERAL POLICIES****I. Class sessions**

The class will start at *exactly* 10:10 and end at 11:00; you must be in lecture on time.

*Cell phones and pagers* must be silenced for class and may not be used. In general, disruptive behavior — conversations, reading a newspaper or texts for other classes — won't be tolerated.

**II. Religious Observances and Other Scheduling Conflicts**

In keeping with the University of Michigan policy of respecting students' religious commitments, all attempts will be made to accommodate conflicts arising out of religious observances. The following is a list of some major religious holidays during the semester:

Feast of the Epiphany	January 6
Eastern Orthodox Christmas	January 7
Id al-Adha	January 10
Sankranti	January 14
Chinese New Year & Tet	January 29
Ash Wednesday	March 1
Eastern Orthodox Beginning of Lent	March 6
Baisakhi	April 13
Good Friday	April 14
Passover (Pesach)	April 12–20
Eastern Orthodox Good Friday	April 21

This list is not inclusive, and you are encouraged to let your GSI and/or the professor know about other religious commitments and holidays. (Documentation may be necessary.) **A change in university policy requires any student needing accommodation to notify the instructor about conflicts by the drop and add deadline (January 25).**

Furthermore, we are aware of and, in principle, sympathetic to the many other pressures students have in their lives and are willing to accommodate reasonable requests for extensions (except in the case of exams) and other issues that involve scheduling conflicts. It is, however, *your* responsibility to bring conflicts to the professor's attention, and to do so *in advance*. Student athletes will, in most cases, need a letter from the Athletic Department about the scheduling conflicts. As a rule, **no** late assignments will be accepted without prior permission except in cases of a documented emergency.

### **III. Incompletes**

The university policy on the grade of "incomplete" will be followed in this course. It is generally not in a student's interest to have an incomplete, so try to avoid getting one.

### **IV. Academic integrity**

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity and thus violations of the LS&A Academic Conduct Code, and they will result automatically in a failure in the course. Furthermore, as the LS&A Academic Judiciary Manual of Procedures specifies, a student may be expelled from the university for academic misconduct. For the purposes of this class, plagiarism will be defined as *submitting a piece of work which in part or in whole is not entirely the student's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source*. Additional information on what does and does not count as plagiarism can be accessed through the course website. **You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with those cases. Note that the paper-grading principles above specify a grade of E for a paper that does not cite material correctly.**

## COURSE CALENDAR

This is the calendar of readings and main assignments. Additional assignments and/or changes will be posted in the calendar on the course website or provided by your GSI.

Texts marked with an asterisk \* are in David Wootton, ed., *Modern Political Thought*. Texts marked with E are in electronic format and will be accessible through the course website.

Week	Date	Theme
Readings & Assignments		
1	1/5	<b>Introduction: What is Political Theory?</b>
2		<b>Socratic Politics: Critique &amp; Obedience?</b>
	1/10	Plato, "Apology," in <i>The Trial &amp; Death of Socrates</i>
	1/12	Plato, "Crito," in <i>The Trial &amp; Death of Socrates</i>
3	1/17	Aristophanes, <i>The Clouds</i> (E)
	1/19	Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (E) <b>First short paper due</b>
4		<b>Just Do It</b>
	1/24	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , chs. 1–17 (pp. 9–40)*
	1/26	<i>The Prince</i> , rest*
5		<b>Social Contracts: Hobbes &amp; Locke</b>
	1/31	Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , chs. 13–16 (pp. 169–187)*
	2/2	<i>Leviathan</i> , chs. 17–19, 21 (pp. 187–199, 204–209)*
6	2/7	John Locke, <i>Second Treatise on Government</i> , chs. 1–6 (pp. 312–334)*
	2/9	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chs. 7–9 (pp. 334–351)*
7	2/14	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chs. 10–19 (pp. 351–386)* Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" (E)
	2/16	<b>Midterm exam</b>
8		<b>Born free, everywhere in chains: Rousseau's Critique</b>
	2/21	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> , pt. I (pp. 404–431)*
	2/23	<i>Discourse</i> , pt. II (pp. 431–448)*
9	2/28	<b>"Spring" Break</b>
	3/2	
10		<b>Revolution and Enlightenment</b>
	3/7	Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i> , bk. I (pp. 464–474)*
	3/9	Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" (pp. 573–577)*
11		<b>Legacies of the Revolution, I: Conservatism</b>
	3/14	Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> (pp. 551–572)*
	3/16	Hannah More, "Village Politics" (E) William Paley, "Reasons for Contentment for the Labouring Parts of the British Public" (E)
12		<b>Legacies of the Revolution, II: Liberalism</b>
	3/21	John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , chs. 2–3 (pp. 613–647)*
	3/23	<i>On Liberty</i> , ch. 4 (pp. 648–659)*
13		<b>Legacies of the Revolution, III: Marxism</b>
	3/28	Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, <i>The German Ideology</i> (pp. 800–825)*
	3/30	Marx & Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> , §§I–II (pp. 826–839)*
14		<b>Welcome to the Fight Club: Nietzsche</b>
	4/4	Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> , First essay (pp. 906–924)*
	4/6	<i>Genealogy of Morals</i> , Second essay (pp. 924–946)*
15		<b>Modern Critics: Feminism and Anti-racism</b>
	4/11	<b>Paper due</b> Virginia Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i> , chs. 1–3
	4/13	<i>A Room of One's Own</i> , chs. 4–6
16	4/18	W.E.B. DuBois, selections from <i>A Dusk of Dawn</i> (E)
	4/24	<b>Final exam at 4–6 p.m. in the usual classroom (but on a MONDAY)</b>