



Course Description

This course is a primarily 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. We will frequently connect contemporary political questions with the texts of historical thinkers, and vice versa. 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.

Instructor:
Prof. Mika LaVaque-Manty
7640 Haven Hall
mmanty@umich.edu
734.615.9142

Office hours:
Mondays, 1:30-2:30
Tuesdays, 2–3
By appointment

GSI:
Rosario Aguilar
rosarioa@umich.edu

Eileen Basso
embasso@umich.edu

Kathleen Tipler (AA GSI)
ktiplier@umich.edu

Scott Woltze
swoltze@umich.edu

Brendan Wright
bjwr@umich.edu

Important Dates

September 20:	First paper due
September 24:	Drop/add deadline
September 24:	Notification deadline for religious conflicts
October 15:	Fall study break
October 17:	Midterm exam
November 9:	Last day to drop
December 10:	Second paper due
December 18:	Final exam at 4–6 p.m.

If you cannot take the final exam at the designated time, you cannot take this course!

Summary of grading:

Papers:	20%
Midterm:	15%
Final exam:	35%
Participation:	30%

Introduction to Political Theory

Learning Objectives

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.
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.

Rules of the Game for the Course

I. Here is what we expect from students:

- You will treat everyone in the class with respect.
- You will understand that you may encounter opinions and material you disagree with and even find objectionable.
- You will acknowledge that there is no “A for effort,” but that effort is necessary for a good grade.
- You will not cheat, plagiarize or otherwise steal the work of others.
- You will not make excuses for your failure to do what you ought.
- You will accept the consequences — good and bad — of your actions.

II. Here is what students can expect from us:

- We will treat you with the respect.
- We will manage the class in a professional manner. That may include educating you in appropriate behavior.
- We will begin and end class on time.
- We will return your assignments quickly with detailed feedback.
- We will pursue the maximum punishment for academic misconduct.
- We will keep records of your attendance and performance.
- We will investigate every excuse for nonattendance of classes and noncompletion of assignments.
- We will be available to you for advising.
- We will maintain confidentiality concerning your performance.
- Your grade will reflect the quality of your work and nothing else.

Policy regarding e-mail

We encourage you to use e-mail to communicate with us. Keep in mind the following:

- We will reply to e-mails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours during the weekend.
- We will be happy to answer substantive questions about the course materials, but we will *not* read drafts of papers or partial papers submitted electronically.
- E-mail is a part of your performance in this course. It is also a means of *professional* communication. Dude, if u like cant tell the diff b/w dat n rting 2 ur friends, u r an idiot. ill fail u n ROTFLMAO. ;P

Religious Observances

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. Please note that, according to the Provost's policy on religious holidays, **you must give notice of a religious conflict by the drop/add deadline.** After that, requests cannot be honored.

Introduction to Political Theory

General Course Requirements

I. Readings

Complete the reading before the lecture; you need to write about it on the website. Everything listed below is required; the books are available at Ulrich's, Michigan Book & Supply, and the Union Bookstore. You don't have to use those bookstores, but you must get the edition listed:

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, third edition, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 2000).

Wootton, David, ed. *Modern Political Thought from Machiavelli to Nietzsche* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1996).

Additional required readings are available through the CTools site for the course. Many of them will be assigned only a few days before they are discussed; it is your responsibility keep up with them.

II. Lectures

The lectures are going to be partly interactive, thanks to the LectureTools software. Attendance in lectures is required and monitored; attendance and participation in lectures is part of your participation grade. The exams will require you to know material discussed only in lectures.

Before lecture You need to complete the reading for the day one day before and answer a few basic questions accessible through the course website **by 8 a.m. of morning of the lecture**. Your feedback is required and important: it will help shape the content of the lecture.

If you don't use a laptop and LectureTools to take notes during lecture, you can print the outlines of the lecture notes on the morning of the lecture.

During lecture Early on in the semester, you will be assigned to groups for the purposes of the interactive lectures. At each lecture, you'll need to find your group and sign in through your group. Please note that lectures begin at 10:10; signing in late will be penalized. During the lecture, you can take notes on your laptop and view the presentation slides. You can also ask questions and provide other feedback on your laptop or through your group's laptop holder.

After lecture Podcasts of the lectures will be available on LectureTools. You can use them to review lectures before sections, for the exams, and in general to clarify confusions.

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).

LectureTools

LectureTools is a software interface developed at the University of Michigan to facilitate interactive learning in large classes. A separate handout and an in-class training session will provide more information on its use.

Introduction to Political Theory

III. Participation

Thirty percent of your final course grade reflects your participation in this course.

The participation grade is made up as follows:

- A Attend more than 90% of lectures and demonstrate active engagement.
 Demonstrate good-faith effort on more than 90% of pre-lecture response assignments.
 Attend more than 90% of sections and participate actively in discussions.
 Perform **well on all** GSI-assigned tasks, homework, quizzes, and writing.
 (Your GSI will specify the performance standards.)
- B Attend more than 75% of lectures and demonstrate active engagement.
 Demonstrate good-faith effort on more than 75% of pre-lecture response assignments.
 Attend more than 75% of sections and participate in discussions.
 Perform **satisfactorily on all** GSI-assigned tasks, homework, quizzes, and writing or **well on most** of them.
- C Attend more than 70% of lectures.
 Demonstrate good-faith effort on more than 50% of pre-lecture response assignments.
 Attend more than 70% of sections and participate at least occasionally in discussions.
 Perform **satisfactorily on more than 50%** GSI-assigned tasks, homework, quizzes, and writing.
- D Attend more than 60% of lectures.
 Demonstrate good-faith effort on more than 50% of pre-lecture response assignments.
 Attend more than 60% of sections.
 Perform **satisfactorily on some** GSI-assigned tasks, homework, quizzes, and writing.

Two further criteria apply:

- You may supplement your participation marginally by attending office hours or by participating online in various ways.
- If you attend fewer than 50% of lectures **or** discussions, your participation grade is E, regardless of the other components.

Introduction to Political Theory

IV. Papers

The structure of the paper assignments is as follows:

- **Short paper 1** (500 words) due on **Thursday, September 20**.
- **Short paper 2** (1,250 words) due on **Monday, December 10**.

All writing assignments will be accessible through your **section-specific CTools site**. You submit and receive the papers electronically. **No hard copies are acceptable except for in-class writing assignments** (if any). **Your papers must be in the pre-Office 2007 Microsoft Word format (.doc) or in rich text format (RTF).**

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 own 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 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 are misguided and/or unsupported with any evidence. Writing — both at the level of paper organization and grammar — is problematic.
- D+/C– No thesis, no arguments or no textual evidence. Organization incoherent, writing very awkward and borders on 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).

A word on grammar. Students often ask whether they will be “graded for grammar.” The answer is no and yes. “No,” in the sense that grammar alone isn’t a grading criterion. But “yes” in the sense that bad grammar — and awkward style — detract from the argument: they make it difficult to follow the writer’s logic, and they make it tiresome for the reader to go through the text. Your goal is not to entertain, but you also shouldn’t make the reading harder work than it needs to be. You are responsible for understanding the rules governing Standard Written English, and usage and grammar rules are important.

Introduction to Political Theory

Grade grievances

If you believe that you have been unfairly graded, you must follow this procedure:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching the GSI or the professor.
2. Provide an explanation **in writing** for why the grade you received was unfair.

Departmental grade grievance procedures are outlined on the political science website, at <http://www.polisci.lsa.umich.edu/undergrad/grievance.html>.

Incompletes

The university policy on the grade of “incomplete” will apply in this course. It is generally not in a student’s interest to have an incomplete, so try to avoid getting one.

Academic integrity

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity and so violations of the LSA Academic Conduct Code, and they will **automatically result in a failure in the course**. Furthermore, as the LSA 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 mean

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 is available on the course website. **You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with those cases. Note that the paper-grading principles above specify a score of E for a paper that does not cite material correctly. You are also responsible for avoiding even the appearance of plagiarism.**

Meeting the learning objectives in this course requires that *you* apply your current knowledge and skills to the questions and exercises and, through them, improve that knowledge and those skills. Shortcuts won’t get you there, however appealing they might seem. Because of this, **the use of commercial study guides such as Cliff Notes, Sparknotes.com, and other similar resources outside this course counts as academic misconduct**. You will automatically fail this course if we catch you using such resources.

Introduction to Political Theory

Calendar

Sept. 5 Introduction: **What is political theory?**

Political Critiques, Obedience & Resistance

Sept. 10 Plato, "Apology," in *The Trial & Death of Socrates*.
Training for LectureTools

Sept. 12 Plato, "Crito," in *The Trial & Death of Socrates*.

Sept. 17 TBD

Political Action: Dirty Hands

Sept. 19 Machiavelli, "Letter to Francesco Vettori" (W, pp. 6–8).
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 1–7 (W, 9–23).

Sept. 20 First short paper due at 5 p.m.

Sept. 24 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 8–26 (W, 23–57).

Sept. 26 Michael Walzer, "Political Action."*

Fearful Creatures: Hobbes's Social Contract

Oct. 1 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* chs. 6, 13–14 (W, 140–145, 168–177).

Oct. 3 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 15–17 (W, 178–189).

Oct. 8 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 18–21 (W, 189–209).

Oct. 10 TBD

Oct. 15 Fall study break

Oct. 17 Midterm exam

Life, Liberty & Property: Locke's Social Contract

Oct. 22 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 1–9 (W, 312–351).

Oct. 24 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 10–13 (W, 351–360).

Oct. 29 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 18–19 (W, 372–386).

Oct. 31 TBD

Born Free, Everywhere in Chains: Rousseau's Social Contracts

Nov. 5 J-J Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pt. I (W, 401–431).

Nov. 7 Rousseau, *Discourse*, pt. II (W, 431–448).

Nov. 12 Rousseau, *Social Contract*, bk. I (W, 464–474).

Nov. 14 TBD

Texts marked with an asterisk (*) are accessible in the "Readings" folder on the course website's Resources.

Texts marked with a **W** are in Wootton, ed., *Modern Political Thought*.

TBD means the reading will be decided later on the basis of student feedback.

Introduction to Political Theory

Worrying about the Swinish Multitudes

Nov. 19 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (W, 551–572).

Nov. 21 TBD

Against the Tyranny of the Majority

Nov. 26 J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, chs. 2–3 (W, 613–647).

Nov. 28 Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 4 (W, 648–659).

Alienation, Exploitation, Ideology

Dec. 3 Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (W, 800–825).

Dec. 5 Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (part), (W, 826–839).

Dec. 10 TBD

Second short paper due.

Dec. 18 Final exam in Angell Auditorium B, 4–6 p.m.
--