

Modern Political Thought
Political Science 302
Spring, 2013
Syllabus

Read all the information in this document
carefully, so you are not surprised by
requirements you may find onerous.

January 22, 2012 – Last day for changing courses.
March 8, 2012 – Last day for dropping courses
without academic penalty.

The Honor Code is in force and will be
followed completely in this course.

The Course

This is a course in modern political thought, in which we will be discussing primary sources. Our goal is to achieve some understanding of the principles on which modern politics is based; to some substantial degree this means considering the modern reaction to the ancient understanding of nature and things. We will have to mention how modern “natural right” differs from ancient views thereof. We will also consider how History and Historicism have influenced political life by redefining the principles by which we take our bearings. And finally, we will consider how the modern project has culminated in a relativistic understanding of the world (i.e., The Death of God) that is pierced only by religious faith, which is by definition not based on reason. In other words, the principles of modern politics are not based on reasonably accessible standards or are based on faith-based standards. In any case, they are not based on autonomous human reason. We will consider at least part of the sequence of thought that brought us to this existential condition.

Course Requirements and Policies

All the readings are difficult, though some are more “readable” than others. Also, they are of varying lengths, so that it will be important for you to begin reading some of the longer ones earlier in order for you to be able to comply with the main priority of the course. **Do not be surprised by lengthy readings; take this into account before you decide to remain enrolled in this class. Each reading should be completed by the first day I begin to lecture on it.** In addition, you should refresh your memory of what you have read and what we have discussed in our previous class before you come to class on any given day. That is the best method to prepare for this course and to achieve the grade you desire.

There are eight readings for the course. You will be quizzed on them, both when we begin studying a thinker and when we conclude studying that same thinker, and the six highest grades **distributed from among different thinkers** will account for 60% of your grade. If you are ill or involved in a family emergency (documentation required) you can write a paper instead of taking one of the quizzes. Though only six quizzes will count towards your grade, you must read all of the books and take at least one quiz (or write a paper if that is appropriate) on all of them. Alternatively, you can hand in a one to two-page paper (about 300 to 600 words) **summarizing the main arguments of the reading.** These are due on the **first** day a reading is due at the beginning of class. I prefer that you send them to me electronically. In other words, you will have three grades for each thinker if you write the papers, and one grade from each of six thinkers will make up 60% of your grade. **If it is late for any reason other than documented illness, I will not accept it. The requisites for the final paper apply to these summaries as well (just read further down in this syllabus).** You should also be

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aware that we will adhere to the scheduled reading for each day. If we require more time to complete a given thinker, we will take that time toward the end of the semester in the time prescribed for "Review." The other 40% of your grade will be determined by a final exam to be given during finals week (Thursday, May 2nd, at 7:00pm) or a final paper of five to ten pages due on **April 26th, at the beginning of class for that day, sent to me electronically.** You can exempt the final exam if you make a 100 average on the quiz requirement **for all eight books.** **Late papers will not be accepted.** **Papers that contain more than five grammatical errors will not be graded.** **Clarity and coherence, in addition to no errors of content, are the driving elements of the grade you will get on them.** Plus/minus grading will be utilized in this course.

I take attendance every day because it is my legal obligation to know who is in my class, and it is my community obligation to be able to inform other professors and appropriate people if you are cutting class. However, I do not penalize your grade for a specific number of cuts. On the other hand, if you have read this syllabus carefully, you do understand that it is impossible to do well in this course without attending and being prepared.

You need to check the class conference regularly. Material on it is part of the course, and you can be quizzed on it.

From time to time it is possible I will have to cancel class because of circumstances beyond my control. Should this occur, these classes will be made up, usually early mornings, because that is when there are no conflicts. If you consider this an undue hardship, you should think twice about taking this course with me as the instructor.

My e-mail address is bshapir@emory.edu, which is the preferred mode of communication, and my phone number is 4-8334. My office is Seney 303. There is a conference for this class on learnlink, and you should consult it regularly. **My office hours are by appointment.**

THE HONOR CODE

Everyone in this course is at least a second semester freshman, so there should be no doubt about the general meaning of the Honor Code. In this course it means two specific things: do not submit anyone else's work as your own (this of course includes cheating on quizzes) and do not read any secondary sources unless they are specifically approved by me.

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I do not have time, nor do I care to use the time I have, negotiating academic dishonesty. If you cheat, plagiarize, use secondary sources, or engage in any fraud of this type I will send the issue to Honor Council, and you can talk to them.

Schedule of Classes
Classes begin at 5:30pm and end at 7:10 PM.

Jan. 15:	Introduction
Jan. 17, 22, 24:	Machiavelli
Jan. 29, 31; Feb. 5:	Hobbes
Feb. 7, 12, 14:	Locke
Feb. 19, 26, 28; March 5:	Rousseau
Feb. 21:	No class
March 5 (8:00 to 9:40am):	Rousseau
March 7:	No class
March 19, 21:	Hegel
March 26:	No class
March 28; April 2, 9:	Marx
April 4:	No class
April 11, 16, 18:	deTocqueville
April 23 (8:00 to 9:40am)	Nietzsche
April 23, 25:	Nietzsche

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There will be no class on Feb. 21 as I will be out of town at an Alumni Gathering.

There will be no class on March 7th as I have a professional commitment out of town.

There will be no classes between March 11th and 15th because it is mid-semester break.

There will be no class on March 26th as I will be observing the Passover holiday.

There will be no class on April 4th; I will be at a Board of Counselors function.

Machiavelli: **The Prince, Pages 3-105.**

Hobbes: **Leviathan, Pages 1-24, Parts I and II, Pages 289-298.**

Locke: **The Second Treatise of Government, Pages 3-139.**

Rousseau: **The First and Second Discourses, Pages 30-228**

Hegel: **The Philosophy of History, Pages xv-xvi, Pages 1-110.**

Marx: **“The Communist Manifesto,” (entire).
Handout.**

deTocqueville: **Democracy in America, Pages 3-15, 27-55, 105-161,
348-398, 403-443, 450-451, 479-534, 639-676.**

Nietzsche: **“The Use and Abuse of History,” (entire).**

You may have noted a number of class meetings at other than “normal” times. We may not need all of them, but we will make those decisions as the time for them comes about.

REMINDER

Do not read any secondary sources, including introductions, prefaces, or forwards in these books. You may read more than what is assigned from other primary sources from these authors. Use of commercial summaries like Spark Notes, Monarch Notes, etc. is considered an honor violation.