

Modern Political Thought
Political Science 302
Spring, 2009
Syllabus

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

January 21, 2009 – Last day for changing courses.
March 6, 2009 – 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, and 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 will account for 60% of your grade. 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 it to me electronically. **If it is late for any reason other than documented illness, I will not accept it.** 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 “Discussion.” The other 40% of your grade will be determined by a final exam to be given during finals week, or a final paper, due on **April 24th, at the beginning of class for that day, preferably electronically.** **Late papers will not be accepted.** Plus/minus grading will be utilized in this course.

Political Science 302 (Modern Political Thought)

Syllabus

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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.**

Schedule of Classes
Classes begin at 9:35 and end at 10:25 AM.

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| Jan. 14: | Introduction |
| Jan. 16, 19, 21, 28: | Machiavelli |
| Jan. 30; Feb. 2, 4, 6: | Hobbes |
| Feb. 9, 11, 13, 16: | Locke |
| Feb. 18, 20, 23, 25, 27; March 2, 4, 6: | Rousseau |
| Feb. 29: | No class |
| March 16, 18, 20: | Hegel |
| March 23, 25, 27, 30; April 3: | Marx |
| April 8: | No class |
| April 6, 10, 13, 17: | deTocqueville |
| April 20, 22, 24: | Nietzsche |
| April 27: | Review |

There will be no classes March 9 through March 13 as it will be mid-semester break. There will be no class on April 8 because I will be observing Passover. Your final exam will be on Monday, May 4th, from 2:00pm to 3:00pm.

- 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).**

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