

**GOV 351D; CTI 321**  
**Unique # 37385; 29284**

**THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN POLITICS**

**Spring 2024**

**UTC 3.134**

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**Course Description**

This course examines the philosophic origins of modern politics and culture by looking at the works of several authors whose writings played decisive roles in the rise and development of modern political philosophy. In our study of Machiavelli's *Prince*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, and selected political writings of Rousseau and Nietzsche, we will consider the ways in which modern political thought broke with the past and offered a new set of political visions. We will consider the differing views of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Nietzsche on issues such as the aims and limits of politics, the role of morality in the harsh world of political necessity, the proper place of religion and reason in political life, and the nature and basis of justice. Throughout the course, we will reflect of the impact that the revolutionary doctrines of modern political philosophy have had on the political world in which we live.

**Prerequisite**

Completion of at least thirty hours of coursework.

**Texts**

Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Chicago)  
Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett)  
Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Yale or Hackett)  
Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago)  
Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Penguin)

- Please try to purchase the particular editions of the books ordered for this class, and always bring the book we are reading to class.

**Requirements**

Careful reading is the most important requirement. The reading assignments in this course are not long, but they are quite difficult; make sure you read them slowly and take notes while you read. You should try to come to every class with questions, comments, and interpretations. Since the love of knowledge is not always powerful enough to inspire students to do all the reading, I will give unannounced quizzes. These quizzes will not be particularly difficult for those who have done the reading carefully, and they can be a nice way of lifting your grade. Any quizzes missed due to an unexcused absence from class cannot be made up. I also encourage you to keep a reading notebook for the notes that you take as you read (separate from the notebook you use for class notes). If you turn in such a notebook at the end of the semester, you can add 1 or 2 points to your final grade, depending on the thoroughness of your notes.

You have the option of writing a paper this semester. If you choose this option, you will write an analytical essay on a theme in one or two of the readings. I will hand out paper topics, with staggered due dates, several times during the semester. You would be wise not to wait until the last set of topics, since the end of the semester is a busy time and you might find one of the earlier topics more interesting. To encourage you to write the optional paper and to reward those who put forth the extra effort, your paper grade will be factored into your final grade only if it will be to your advantage. No late papers will be accepted.

There will be two exams, one in the middle of the term (on Machiavelli and Hobbes) and the other during the exam period at the end of the term (on all of the authors, but with greater weight given to Locke, Rousseau, and Nietzsche). The first exam will be given in class; the second will be given on the scheduled day during the exam period. The exams will be blue-book essay exams.

On all your work, you are expected to know and to adhere to UT's policies on academic honesty.

### **Attendance Policy and Other Odds and Ends (please read carefully)**

- Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class, and attendance will be considered in determining your final grade. After two unexcused absences, your grade for "Attendance and Participation" will drop 10 points for each unexcused absence. That means that a significant number of absences will have a serious downward effect on your final grade. If you are late to class, you will be counted as absent for that day. If you have perfect attendance for the entire semester, 5 extra points will be added to the "Attendance and Participation" part of your grade.
- No work submitted by email will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.
- Please turn off your phones and put them away before class.
- If you have a special need for a computer or a tablet, please explain that need to me and then do not sit in any of the three back rows.

- The Alamo Draft House rule: NO PHONES, NO COMPUTERS, NO OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING CLASSES (see the preceding point for exceptions). If you break this rule, you will be marked absent for that class. If you break it a second time, you will lose all attendance and participation credit for the course.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: By UT policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## Grades

Your grade will be calculated by one of the following two methods. Plus/minus grades will be used in the final grades.

### With the optional paper

Paper: 25%  
First exam: 25%  
Final exam: 30%  
Attendance and Participation: 10%  
Quizzes: 10%

### Without the optional paper

First Exam: 35%  
Final Exam: 45%  
Attendance and Participation: 10%  
Quizzes: 10%

## Note on EL Flag

This course carries the Ethics and Leadership flag. Ethics and Leadership courses are designed to equip you with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life.

## Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

## Course Plan

I will give the specific assignments for each class as we go along, but this is a rough schedule:

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|------------|---|
| Jan. 16–18 | Introduction; Machiavelli, Letter to Vettori, <i>The Prince</i> , Dedicatory Letter, Chapters 1-4 |
| Jan. 23–25 | Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Chapters 5-9   |

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| Jan. 30–Feb. 1 | Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Chapters 10-15   |
| Feb. 6–8       | Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Chapters 16-21   |
| Feb. 13–15     | Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Chapters 22-26; start Hobbes?  |
| Feb. 20–22     | Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Dedicatory Letter, Author's Introduction, Part I, Chapters 1-6, Part 4, Chapter 46 |
| Feb. 27–29     | Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Part I, Chapters 7-16  |
| Mar. 5         | Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapters 17-21 and other selections  |
| Mar. 7         | Midterm exam  |
| SPRING BREAK   |   |
| Mar. 19–21     | Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , Chapters 1-4  |
| Mar. 26–28     | Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , Chapters 5-9  |
| Apr. 2–4       | Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , Chapters 10-19; Rousseau, <i>First Discourse</i>                |
| Apr. 9–11      | Rousseau, <i>First Discourse</i> ; Rousseau, <i>Second Discourse</i> , Part I                                 |
| Apr. 16–18     | Rousseau, <i>Second Discourse</i> , Parts I-II; start Nietzsche?  |
| Apr. 23–25     | Nietzsche, Preface and other selections from <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>                                    |
| Exam week      | Final exam  |