

Classics of Social and Political Thought

CTI 302 / GOV 314

Spring 2024

Professor Lorraine Pangle

Unique 29240 and 37295
T Th 11-12:30, MEZ 2.124

Unique 29245 and 37300
T Th 2-3:30, CBA 4.324

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Course Description

This is a course about human nature. We will be asking what human beings are, what we care most about, what we most deeply need and are moved by, and what the character is of our highest aspirations. We will consider what the features are of human nature that make human life both so rich and promising and so fraught with conflict. We will consider different accounts of where we came from and of the potential that political life does or does not have to forge communities within which individuals can find happiness. Through all of this, we will consider what the answers to those questions suggest about how we should live, both individually and collectively.

The course will proceed by means of close readings of a number of the deepest and most provocative reflections on these questions from ancient times to the present. The first 2/3 of the course will take us on a swift tour of seven major thinkers, each presenting a fundamentally different claim about human nature. We will look at Aristotle's account of humans' political nature, Plato on humans' erotic nature, Augustine on humans' fallen nature, Hobbes on humans' selfish nature and the chaotic state of nature, Rousseau on humans' solitary, peaceful, but malleable nature, Nietzsche on humans' historical nature and the will to power, and the contemporary psychologist Tomasello on humans' cooperative, social nature. Informed by these debates, we will return in the last third of the course to a slow reading of Aristotle's account of human happiness, virtue, and friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students should understand and be able to assess some of the most compelling accounts of human nature that have been proposed and should also have a deeper understanding of the origin, appeal, and validity of many contemporary political and social assumptions. Students will develop skills of close reading, analytic writing, and vigorous, open, civil discussion of hard questions.

This is an introductory course with no prerequisites.

This course counts towards the Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas, a 6-course sequence in the great books, ideas, and controversies that have shaped the modern world. The program is open to students in all majors and colleges. For more information, visit <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/coretexts>.

This course may be used to fulfill the Social and Behavioral Sciences component of the University Core Curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility.

Required Texts and Other Resources

The following books are available at the University Co-op and are *required in these editions*:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Bartlett and Collins. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. ISBN 0226026752.

St. Augustine. *City of God*. Trans. Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin Books, 1972. ISBN 0140448942.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 1994. ISBN 0872201775.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Modern Library, 2000. ISBN 0679783393.

Plato, *Symposium*. Trans. Seth Benardete. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. ISBN 0226042758.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The First and Second Discourses*. Trans. Roger D. and Judith R. Masters. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1964. ISBN 0312694407.

Tomasello, Michael. *A Natural History of Human Morality*. Harvard University Press, 2018. ISBN 0674986822.

Recommended texts:

Turabian, Kate, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Ninth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Strunk, William, and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* (any edition).

Students must have Microsoft Word and must submit all essays in .docx format.

Recommended resource for essay writing advice:

<https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/government/faculty/lsp226>.

For help with essay writing come to office hours any time or visit the University Writing Center at <https://uwc.utexas.edu/>.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, <https://diversity.utexas.edu/disability>.

Teaching Modality and Classroom Policies

This course will be entirely in-person and class sessions will not be recorded. Students are required to attend every class meeting with a print copy of the assigned text for that day in hand and with the reading completed. All computers and cell phones are to be turned off and stowed away. Taking notes is strongly recommended.

This course will proceed mainly through discussion. Every student is expected to contribute actively to creating a community of rigorous, probing, honest, and civil discourse. It is as important to listen carefully to one another as to the instructor. The purpose of speaking in class is not to demonstrate what you know but to practice formulating hypotheses, raising good questions, building on one another's ideas, and offering alternatives.

Assignments and Grading Scheme

Grades will be based on the following requirements:

- reading quizzes: 10%

- attendance, participation, and discussion board posts: 15%

- very short (300-500 word) essay, due 2/2 by midnight on Canvas: 5%

- two 1200-1500 word essays, due 3/1 and either 4/5 or 4/25 by midnight on Canvas: 20% each

- final exam: 30%

Plus and minus grades will be used, as follows: 93-100: A; 90-92: A-; 87-89: B+; 83-86: B; 80-82: B-; 77-79: C+; 73-76: C; 70-72: C-; 60-69: D; below 60: F.

On 12 random days throughout the semester, reading quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. These may not be taken late or made up, but the lowest 2 quiz grades will be dropped.

As often as you like and at least twice in the semester, including once before spring break, each student should post on the discussion board on Canvas a paragraph about the reading for the next day. The post should be made by midnight on either Monday or Wednesday. This is an opportunity to reflect on the reading, to help shape the class's discussion about it, and to practice asking good questions—one of the most important skills needed in university studies and in life. Posts should focus exclusively on the assigned text for the following day and should show that you have read it carefully. Each post should identify something that you found especially

important, interesting, surprising, or provocative in the reading, and then pose two or three questions about the reading that you would like to explore in class. These questions should be honest and searching, opening up issues that struck you as both puzzling and important; they should be connected explicitly to a specific passage; and they should be answerable from within the text.

The attendance/participation grades will be calculated as follows:

- attending class with the assigned text: 2 points each day or 54%

- 2 required posts: 5 points each or 10%

- making great comments and raising great questions in class, in office hours, or in extra posts: 36%

Absences due to illnesses, family emergencies, adding the class late, or religious holidays may be made up by getting notes from a classmate and discussing with me in the next office hours. In addition, extra credit will be available as follows:

- perfect attendance: 5%

- coming to office hours with a buddy and with 3 great questions you have worked out together in advance: 5%

- making a speech at one of the Jefferson Center Braver Angels debates: 5%

Essays will be graded for the quality of the writing as well as for their substantive content. Essays should be based on a careful reading of the texts, classroom discussion, and your own thinking. The use of artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT) in this class is strictly prohibited. This includes using AI to generate ideas, outline an approach, answer questions, solve problems, or create original language. Consulting other resources (e.g. Wikipedia, scholarly articles) is neither encouraged nor forbidden, but all sources you use, including texts assigned for this course, must be properly cited in footnotes. All language you use from any source must be in quotation marks, and both language and ideas you take from any source must be properly credited. Essays will be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin software and other methods.

Students who violate University rules on academic misconduct are subject to a failing grade in the course and to referral to the dean of students, with potential further consequences including a written warning, probation, deferred suspension or dismissal from the University. To learn more about academic integrity standards, tips for avoiding a potential academic misconduct violation, and the overall conduct process, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

Late essays will be subject to a penalty of 3% + 2% for each calendar day they are late, unless you have a medical excuse or family emergency.

The final exam is required of all students and will not be waived to accommodate travel plans. However, students in either section may take the exam with the other

section if you notify me in advance.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Check Canvas regularly for updates, essay prompts, and other messages.

1/16 and 18 Introduction and selection from Aristotle's *Politics* (posted on Canvas)

1/23 Plato, *Symposium*, 172a-97e, esp. 172a-78a and 189c-93e

1/25 Plato, *Symposium*, 198a-223d, esp. 198a-212c

1/30 Augustine, selection from *Confessions* (posted on Canvas); *City of God*, book 1, preface; book 2, chapters 20, and 21; book 4, chapter 4; book 5, preface and chapters 12-15, 17, and 19

2/1 Augustine, *City of God*, book 12, chapters 5-9 and 22-24; book 13, chapters 1-4; book 14, chapters 1, 3, 4, 6, 10-15, 25, and 28; book 19, chapter 17

2/2 (Friday) first essay due on Canvas by midnight

2/6 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Hobbes's Introduction; chapters 1-2 and 6

2/8 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 7, 8, 10, and 11

2/13 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 13-15

2/15 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 17-18; chapter 21; chapter 28 paras. 1-13 and 27; chapter 30 paras. 1-4 and 20-21

2/20 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 78-98 and notes

2/22 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 101-116 and notes

4/27 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 116-141 and notes

2/29 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 141-180 and notes

3/1 (Friday) second essay due on Canvas by midnight

3/5 Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay

3/7 Nietzsche, selections from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Twilight of the Idols* (posted on Canvas); *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 9, 13, 19, 22, 36, 51, 55, 56, 188, 201, 257-60, and 263

spring break

3/19 Tomasello, 1-57

3/21 Tomasello, 57-118

3/26 Aristotle, *NE* 1.1-7

3/28 Aristotle, *NE* 1.8-2.4

4/2 Aristotle, *NE* 2.5-3.5

4/4 Aristotle, *NE* 3.6-12

4/5 (Friday) first option for submission of third essay to Canvas by midnight

4/9 Aristotle, *NE* 4.1-5

4/11 Aristotle, *NE* 4.6-5.4

4/16 Aristotle, *NE* 5.5-7

4/18 Aristotle, *NE* 8.1-8

4/23 Aristotle, *NE* 9.4, 7, 8, and 9; 10.6-8

4/25 no class; second option for submission of third essay to Canvas by midnight

4/30 optional review session, 11 am only

5/3 exam for am section, 1-3 pm (bring blue books)

5/6 exam for pm section, 10:30 am-12:30 pm (bring blue books)