

Classics of Social and Political Thought, Spring 2022

CTI302/GOV314E (Unique Course Number: 29775, 37895)

Room: PMA 5.126

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-2:00pm

Final Exam: Saturday, May 14, 9:00am-12:00 noon

Instructor: Samuel Mead

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursday, 2:00-3:30, on Zoom (in-person office hours TBD)

Course Description

In this course, we will be asking perennial questions of the utmost concern to us as human beings. What is virtue? What is justice? What is love? What place do each of these have in a life lived to the fullest and highest extent? Might they preclude one another? What is it that we humans desire most deeply? How must we live as individuals and as members of a community? And what are the origins of the political community, of justice, of sociability, and of our highest yearnings?

We approach these questions through a close study of some of those authors who have thought about them most deeply. Our task is not only to see *who* thought *what* and *when*. We will wrestle with the ideas put forth by these authors in the hopes of gaining wisdom on questions that retain their importance in our lives today.

Our course will begin with classical political philosophy and end with modern evolutionary psychology. After reading a brief passage from Aristotle, we proceed through some of Plato's key dialogues on virtue and love. We will then see how St. Augustine addressed the same topics through his religious approach in the *City of God*. We next consider how Thomas Hobbes' response to ancient and medieval thinkers helped lay the groundwork for modern political life and its comparatively low estimation of the human condition. Then, we turn to two of the most powerful modern critics of liberalism, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Nietzsche, who depart from Hobbes in some respects while joining him in his departure from the classical conception of human nature.

The last unit of the course will cover Charles Darwin and two of his intellectual descendants, Richard Dawkins and Edward O. Wilson. We will see how evolutionary theory and modern evolutionary psychology join the project of interpreting human nature, yearning, and sociability.

Class Meetings

The class sections will proceed mainly by way of close textual analysis. Make sure you do each reading carefully before coming to class. You are required to bring your copy of the assigned text to every class so that you can follow and participate in the discussions.

The following are the rules of classroom conduct:

- You are required to have a physical copy of every book. E-readers are not allowed in class.
- Turn off and put away all cell phones before class begins. Texting during class is a violation of class rules. If you are caught texting during class, it will count as two unexcused absences.
- Use of laptops during class is not permitted. Please store your laptops before class begins. If you wish to take notes, please use paper. Studies suggest that students learn more in class with a pencil and paper than with a laptop.
- Treat one another respectfully.

Course Requirements and Grading Rubric

30%—Final exam, closed book. Date and Time: Saturday, May 14, 9:00am-12:00 noon.

The exam will consist of essays selected at random from study questions handed out at least two weeks beforehand. The exam will cover material from the entire term.

50%—Two papers. Each paper will have a length requirement of 1200-1500 words and will be worth 25% of your overall final grade. Papers will be graded both on substance and on the quality of the writing. The papers are due **March 1** and **April 14**. I will distribute each paper topic on Canvas at least 13 days before the paper is due.

When you turn in your papers, you should bring two copies with you. You'll exchange one copy with another student and you will write reviews of one another's papers.

You may rewrite your papers. If you rewrite, I will grade the revised paper, and your final grade will be an average of your new grade and your original grade. NB: When you turn in your revised paper, you *must* turn in the original paper with my markings with it, or your new paper will not be graded. Also, it is possible to receive a lower grade on your new paper.

10%—Quizzes and short writing assignments. There will be short pop quizzes on the reading at the beginning of many of our classes. These will be easy if you have done the reading. If you miss class, you will be allowed to make up the quiz *only if* your absence is excused. Because the quizzes are given at the start of class, it is important that you be on time for every class meeting. If you have an obligation that prevents you from being in class on time, do not take the class.

There will also be three short writing assignments. There is a short paper due on February 8. You will also write a review of another student's paper every time you turn in a long paper. The reviews will be due on the Tuesday after the paper is due. Each of these three assignments will count toward your quiz grade as the equivalent of three quizzes.

10%—Class participation and attendance. Attendance is **required** at every class meeting. You get two unexcused absences with no immediate penalty. **After that, for every class you miss, your attendance grade will drop by 10%, which means that your overall final average will drop by 1%.** Having more than 8 unexcused absences—including the first two, for which there is no other penalty—will result in automatic failure of the course. I will excuse absences if you have a serious reason for missing class, such as illness or a religious observance, but you should consult with me as early as possible.

This is a discussion intensive class, and you are expected to come to every meeting having done the readings and prepared to offer your thoughts and interpretations of them. Your participation will be graded with the same rigor as the other parts of the course. You do not automatically receive a perfect participation grade if your attendance is perfect.

University Requirements

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 Western civilization. The program is open to students in all majors and colleges. From more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts/> or email the academic director, Professor Lorraine Pangle, at: lorrainepangle@austin.utexas.edu.

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.

Grading Policy

We will use the following grade scale for the class. All assignments and tests will be graded numerically:

A 92.5-100

A- 89.5-92.5

B+ 86.5-89.5

B 82.5-86.5

B- 79.5-82.5

C+ 76.5-79.5

C 72.5-76.5

C- 69.5-72.5

D+ 66.5-69.5

D 62.5-66.5.

D- 59.5-62.5

F 0-59.5

Required Texts

You are required to have the edition of each text that we use in class. This will be crucial for keeping everyone on the same page.

Plato, *Republic*. Trans. Allan Bloom. Basic Books. ISBN 0465094082

Plato. *Symposium*. Trans. Seth Benardete. The University of Chicago Press. ISBN 9780226042756.

Augustine. *City of God*. Trans. Henry Bettenson. Penguin Classics. ISBN 0140448942.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Ed. Edwin Curley. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN 0872201775.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The First and Second Discourses*, Translated by Roger D. Masters. St. Martin's Press . ISBN 9780312694401.

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

Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man*. Penguin Classics. ISBN 0140436316.

Wilson, Edward O. On Human Nature. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. ISBN 0674016386.

Dawkins, Richard. The Selfish Gene. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN 0198788606.

List of Readings

These readings may be subject to change. I will announce any modifications during class and post them on Canvas.

Tuesday, January 18: Introduction: Aristotle's Politics, excerpt (available on Canvas)

Thursday, January 20: Plato, *Republic*: 327a-336a

Tuesday, January 25: Plato, *Republic*: 336b-354c

Thursday, January 27: Plato, *Republic*: 357a-367e

Tuesday, February 1: Plato, *Republic*: 368a-383c

Thursday, February 3: Plato, *Republic* 433a-445e

Tuesday, February 8: Plato, *Symposium*: 172a-180b (**short paper due**)

Thursday, February 10: *Symposium*: 180b-188e

Tuesday, February 15: Plato, *Symposium*: 189a-201c

Thursday, February 17: Plato, *Symposium*: 201c-212c

Tuesday, February 22: Augustine, *Confessions* (handout) and *City of God*, Book I, Preface; Book II, Chapters 2, 20-21; Book IV, Chapter 4 and 15

Thursday, February 24: Augustine, *City of God*, Book V, Preface, 11-22; Book XII, Chapters 5-9, 22-23, and 28; Book XIV, Chapters 1-6, 10-15, 25, and 28

Tuesday, March 1: Augustine, *City of God*, Book XV, Chapters 4 and 5; Book XIX, Chapters 4-8, 12-21, 25-28 (**first long paper due**)

Thursday, March 3: Augustine, *City of God*, Book XX, Chapters 1-3

Tuesday March 8: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Dedicatory Letter, Introduction, and Chapter 31, paragraph 41; Chapter 46 (paragraphs 1 and 10-13); Chapters 6-8

Thursday, March 10: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 10-11, 13-15

Spring Break (March 14-March 19)

Tuesday, March 22: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 17-18; Chapter 19 (paragraphs 1-4)

Thursday, March 24: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 20-21, Chapters 28 (focus especially on paragraphs 1-4) and 30 (focus especially on paragraphs 1-5)

Tuesday, March 29: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 101-121 and notes

Thursday, March 31: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 121-141 and notes

Tuesday, April 5: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 141-161 and notes

Thursday, April 7: Rousseau, *Discourses on Inequality*, 161-181 (**class may be canceled due to conference**)

Tuesday, April 12: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, all of preface and First Essay, aphorisms 1-9

Thursday, April 14: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, First essay, aphorisms 10-17 (**second long paper due**)

Tuesday, April 19: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 1-6, 9, 13, 14, 19, 22, 25, 36, 44, 51, 55, 56

Thursday, April 21: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 188, 201, 219-222, 257-260, 263, 295, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra's Prologue (esp. 3-5) (handout will be provided)

Tuesday, April 26: Darwin, Chapter 1 (pp.21-28 and 42-43 only), Chapter 2 (pp. 63-68 only), Chapter 4

Thursday, April 28: Darwin, *Descent of Man*, chapter 5, Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, chapters 3 and 4 (**class may be substituted for CTI lecture**)

Tuesday, May 3: Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, chapter 5; Wilson, *On Human Nature*, Chapters 5 and 6

Thursday, May 5: Evolutionary psychology handouts (Trivers/Pangle) and course conclusion

Final Exam

Date, Location, and Time to be determined.

Additional Policies

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/>

Academic dishonesty: Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. The university's Honor Code, with information on the meaning of academic integrity, can be found here:
<http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/>

Accommodations for religious holidays: If you need to miss class for a religious observance, please email me. I will excuse your absence and we will make arrangements to keep you updated with the course material.