

**Theoretical Foundations of Modern Politics**  
**CTI 321 / GOV 351D**  
**Unique Numbers 29810, 37940**  
**Spring 2022**  
**MWF 1-2, RLP 1.104**  
**Final Exam: Saturday, May 14, 7:00-10:00 PM (sorry)**

**Instructor: Dr. Erik Dempsey**

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**Dr. Dempsey's Zoom Room: <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/5361649708>**

**Office Hours: M 2:30-4; Th 2:30-4; and by appointment**

**TA: Evan Cree Gee**

**Office: Batts 1.118**

**Office Hours: Monday, 9:30-12:30**

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**Course Description**

This class explores the philosophic basis of modern politics. We will look at how modern political philosophy broke with both classical and Christian thought, in the new understanding of human nature that it proposed and the new approach to politics that it defended on that basis. In this version of the course, we will pay special attention to religious questions, and how a new way of thinking about politics was connected to a new way of thinking about religion.

We will give sustained attention to three texts: Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise*, and Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. We will treat, in more abbreviated form, other texts that shed light on the theoretical underpinnings of modern political life, including selections from Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, Calvin's *Institutes*, and Martin Luther's writings.

Our course goal is to understand the character of the modern political world by reckoning with some of the chief arguments made by those who helped bring it into being.

## Classroom Policy

Except for the first two weeks, when class will meet on Zoom in Dr. Dempsey's Zoom Room, all classes will meet in person. The lectures and discussion sections will proceed mainly by way of close textual analysis. Make sure you do each reading carefully before coming to class. Bring your copy of the assigned text to every class so as to be able to follow the lectures and discussions. Use printed editions each book; e-readers are not allowed in class.

**TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND STORE LAPTOPS BEFORE CLASS. IF YOU ARE CAUGHT TEXTING DURING CLASS, IT WILL BE COUNTED AS TWO UNEXCUSED ABSENCES.**

**USE OF LAPTOPS IN CLASS IS NOT PERMITTED! IF YOU HAVE A COMPUTER WITH YOU, IT SHOULD BE CLOSED. ACCOMODATIONS WILL BE MADE ONLY FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.**

## Assignments and Grading

**Final Exam (35% of final grade):** The final exam for this class will take place during the exam period on **Saturday, May 14, from 7-10 PM**. It will be a cumulative final, covering material from the entire semester, and will be essay based. I will give more information on this in class.

**Midterm Exam (25% of final grade):** The midterm for the class will be given on Friday, February 25, in class. It will be a closed book essay exam. You will need to bring your own blue book to class.

**Paper (30% of final grade):** There will be one paper for this class, due on April 8. The paper will be 1200-1400 words. The topic and instructions for submitting the paper will be given at least two weeks prior to the paper's due date.

**Attendance and Quizzes (10% of final grade):** Attendance is required at every class meeting. This class will take place in person: there is not an online option for this class after the first two weeks. For every unexcused absence after the first, you will lose 10% from your attendance and quiz grade, which is equal to 1% of your total grade. If you have 8 unexcused absences, you automatically fail the course.

Absences will be excused for serious reasons, like illness or religious observance. To have an absence excused, please email Evan with the subject heading "Excused Absence," and give your reasons for missing class, and the date on which you missed class. If possible, email him before you miss class.

Pop quizzes will be given at the beginning of classes roughly once per week, once we begin meeting in person. They will be based on the reading due for that day. The study questions on canvas will provide some guidance as to the kinds of questions that might be asked—though sometimes there will be questions that are not drawn from the study guides. You will be allowed to make up a pop quiz only in case of an excused absence.

This part of your grade will be calculated as your quiz average minus your attendance penalty.

**Class participation:** Your grade can improve by 1/3 of a mark (for instance, from a B- to a B) through consistent, informed participation throughout the semester.

**Reading journal:** If you keep a reading journal over the course of the semester, you can earn some extra credit, improving your final grade by as much as 1/3 of a mark. You should use the journal as a place to record your own responses to the readings, both what you find memorable or important about each, and what questions each raises for you. Whether your grade can be raised depends on the quality of your journal, and how close your average is to the next grade up. You can turn the journal in at the final exam.

### Grading Policy

We will use the plus / minus grading system for this class. Quizzes, tests, and attendance will be graded numerically. Papers and participation in discussion sections will be given letter grades. In order to calculate your final grade, these will be translated into number grades as follows:

A: 96; A-: 91; B+: 88; B: 84.5; B-: 81; C+: 78; C: 74.5; C-: 71; D: 65; F: 30

A grade between two other marks will receive the average of the two number grades. If your paper gets a B+/A-, for instance, it will count as an 89.5.

Final grades are calculated numerically, then translated into a letter grade using the following scale:

A: 93-100; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-90; B: 83-87; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-80; C: 73-77; C-: 70-73; D: 60-70; F: below 60.

Papers will be graded for the quality of the writing as well as for their substantive content. For individual help with paper writing, please come to office hours or visit the Undergraduate Writing Center, info at <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>.

Late papers will receive a penalty of 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late, including Saturdays and Sundays.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

For Machiavelli, Spinoza, and Montesquieu, be sure to get the correct translations. For Hobbes and Locke, any version with numbered paragraphs will be fine. You will not be permitted to bring an e-reader to class, so be sure to acquire printed copies of each book. When we have handouts, print the relevant selections and bring them to class.

1. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, The University of Chicago Press, ISBN 0226500446. Trans. Harvey Mansfield, ed. and trans.

2. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Cambridge, ISBN 0521369746 Trans. Anne Cohler et al.

3. Benedict Spinoza, *The Theologico-Political Treatise*. Focus Philosophical Library, ISBN 1585100854. Trans. Martin Yaffe.

4. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Any complete edition with paragraph numbers.
5. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*. Any complete edition with paragraph numbers.
6. Handouts to be distributed as pdfs

## Reading Schedule

**These readings may be subject to change. I will announce changes in class and post them on Canvas.**

Wednesday, January 19: Course Introduction

Friday, January 21: Aristotle's *Politics*, handout

Monday, January 24: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, handout

Wednesday, January 26: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Epistle Dedicatory and Chapters 1-3

Friday, January 28: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 4-6

Monday, January 31: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 7-9

Wednesday, February 2: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 10-14

Friday, February 4: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 15-17

Monday, February 7: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 18-19

Wednesday, February 9: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 20-24

Friday, February 11: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 25-26

Monday, February 14: Martin Luther, handout

Wednesday, February 16: Martin Luther, handout

Friday, February 18: John Calvin, handout

Monday, February 21: John Calvin, handout

Wednesday, February 23: John Calvin, handout

Friday, February 25: Midterm Exam

Monday, February 28: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 46 (not a typo!), paragraphs 1-3; Letter Dedicatory; Introduction; and Chapter 6

Wednesday, March 2: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 10-11, 13

Friday, March 4: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 14-15

Monday, March 7: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 17, 43

Wednesday, March 9: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, Preface

Friday, March 11: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 1-2

Monday, March 14-Friday, March 18: Spring Break

Monday, March 21: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 4-5

Wednesday, March 23: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 6-7

Friday, March 25: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 12-15

Monday, March 28: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 16-17

Wednesday, March 30: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 18-19

Friday, April 1: Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 20

Monday, April 4: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, 1-4

Wednesday, April 6: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, 5, 9-10

Friday, April 8: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, 11-14

Monday, April 11: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Author's Foreword, Preface, and Book 1

Wednesday, April 13: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 2-3

Friday, April 15: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 4 and Book 5, Chapters 1-7

Monday, April 18: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 7, Ch 1-5 and 8-17; Book 8, Ch 1-7 and 16-17

Wednesday, April 20: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 11

Friday, April 22: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 12

Monday, April 25: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 14; 15, Ch 1-9

Wednesday, April 27: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 19

Friday, April 29: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 20; Book 21, Ch 20

Monday, May 2: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 24

Wednesday, May 4: Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 25

Friday, May 6: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Demons* (handout)

Saturday, May 14, 7-10 PM: Final Exam

## **OTHER 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:** Academic dishonesty will be treated extremely seriously. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. The university's Honor Code, with information on the meaning of academic integrity, is found at the following website:

<http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/>

**Accommodations for religious holidays:** If anyone needs to miss class for a religious observance, I will hold a make-up session for you and the absence will be excused. If anyone misses a religious observance for class, they can take it up with their god.