

**Classics of Social and Political Thought
CTI 302 / GOV 314
SPRING 2021
Professor Maurizio Viroli
(Provisional OCTOBER 2020)**

Unique 29955 and 38535

TTh. 11-12:30

NOTE: This course will be conducted through Zoom and Canvas. **There will be no in person class meetings.**

Professor: Dr. Maurizio Viroli

Office hours: W 9-12

Office: Mezes 3.150; however, we will set up Zoom meeting for this time

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Course Description

This is a course about human nature. We will be asking what human beings are, what they care most about, what they most deeply need and are moved by, and what the character is of their 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. We will examine in depth ideas of moral and social emancipation as well as reflections on the religious experience. 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 some of the most thoughtful and influential reflections on these questions, from ancient times to the present. By the end of the course, students should understand and be able to assess some of the most compelling accounts of human nature that philosophers and historians have proposed and should have a deeper understanding of the origin, appeal, and validity of many contemporary political and social assumptions.

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 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.

Prerequisites: none

REQUIRED TEXTS

Many of the selections from the texts below will be available through PDF, including Skinner, Machiavelli and Levi. Be sure to have the texts with you when attending lecture (through Zoom). While we **strongly recommend** the following editions, be aware that we will do our best to provide an online version for these texts as well.

Texts:

- Aristotle, *The Politics*, Cambridge University Press (selection)
- Cicero, *On Duties*, Cambridge University Press
- Aquinas, *On Princely Government*, in *Political Writings*, Cambridge University Press
- Quentin Skinner, ‘Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the portrayal of good government’, in *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2, Cambridge University Press
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, Chicago University Press (selection)
- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Cambridge University Press
- La Boétie Etienne, *Discourse on voluntary servitude*, Hackett Publishing, 2012
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on Inequality” and “Discourse on Political Economy” in Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, Hackett Publishing
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, Trans. Allan Bloom, Basic Books
- Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Harper & Row (selection)
- Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harcourt Brace (selection)
- Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Penguin Classics
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, New York Simon & Schuster, 1996

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Cambridge University Press
Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Martin Hammond (ed.), Oxford World's Classics
Walzer, Michael, *Exodus and Revolution*, New York, Basic Books, 1985

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK I

Introductory Lecture

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

WEEK II

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

WEEK III September 8th-10th

Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book I

Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book III

WEEK IV

Cicero, *On Duties*, Book 1 and Book 3

Thomas Aquinas, *On Princely Government*

WEEK V

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, 'Of Good and Bad Government'

Quentin Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the portrayal of good government', in *Visions of Politics*

WEEK VI

Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy* Bk. I, chs. 1-6; 10; 16 -18, 58, and Bk. II, ch.2 and 4; Bk. III ch.1

Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, Bk. I chs. 10, 11, 12; BK II, ch. 2; Bk. III, ch. 1.

WEEK VI

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 1-8.

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 26.

WEEK VII

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters: 11, 13, 17, 21, Review and Conclusion
La Boétie Etienne, *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*

WEEK VIII

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*

WEEK IX

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Second Discourse, part II*
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy*

WEEK X

Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*,
VOL. I: Author's Introduction, Part I: 1 Physical Configuration of North America; 2. Concerning their point of departure and its importance for the future of the Anglo-Americans; ch. 9: Religion Considered as a Political Institution; Indirect Influence of Religious beliefs upon Political Society in the United States; The main causes That Make Religion Powerful in America). Vol. II: Part I, ch. 2: Concerning the Principal Source of beliefs Among Democratic Peoples; ch. 5: How Religion in the United States Makes Use of Democratic Instincts

WEEK XI

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

WEEK XII

Hannah Arent, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp. 3-35, and pp. 253-279
Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, pp. 9-37; 87-100; 145-150.

WEEK XIII

Walzer, Michael, *Exodus and Revolution*, pp. 9-70.

WEEK XIV

Walzer, Michael, *Exodus and Revolution*, pp.70-130.

Assignments and Grading

Class participation 20%

Midterm 30%

Final 50%

The class participation grades will be based on the quality of the comments you make and the questions you raise in discussion board posts, in class, and in office hours. Class participation grades will be raised by 5% for perfect attendance and will fall by 10% (one letter grade) for every unexcused absence after the second. There is no penalty for the first two absences, absences due to documented illness or family emergency, or absences due to religious holidays for which you have notified us in advance.

Papers will be graded for the quality of the writing as well as for their substantive content. For advice on writing political philosophy essays, see https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/government/_files/lpangleweb/AdviceOnPaperWriting.pdf. For individual help with paper writing, come to office hours any time or visit the Undergraduate Writing Center, info at <http://uwc.utexas.edu>. Late papers 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 midterm may be re-written within two weeks of being returned for a revised grade, which will then be averaged with the original grade. Unfortunately, we cannot apply this policy to the final, for the reason that time is likely to run short.

Students who violate university rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the university.

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>.

Class Recordings: Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.