

Political Science 211
Introduction to the History of Political Thought
Spring 2019
MW 9:00a-11:50a

Instructors: Luke Sandle and Will Kujala
Office: 11-17 HM Tory Building (end of hall in 11th Floor)
Email: wkujala@ualberta.ca, sandle@ualberta.ca
Office Hours: 12:15-1:45 Wednesdays

Course Description: This course introduces students to a selection of key thinkers in the history of Western political thought and the contexts, political controversies, and philosophical debates to which they responded. Although our scope is incredibly wide, we will be examining texts and their contexts closely by zooming in at specific moments in history. We will investigate these texts for a deeper understanding of the concepts and words we use to describe political life today, such as ‘politics’ itself, the state, rights, liberty, equality, and authority. In sum, we will do three things: read theoretical and political texts in their historical context, ask what their relevance is to our own time, and, using our work from these two tasks, think critically about politics. In doing so, we will engage with key questions of political theory that have been, and remain relevant today, such as: how are political communities founded, and on what basis? What do we owe our community and our state (and what do they owe us)? What, ultimately, justifies political and legal authority? What legitimate limits can be placed on individual freedom? Looking at older texts is therefore not an ‘historical exercise’ but allows us to rethink our answers to these questions, how we pose them, and excavate, understand, and criticize our own political ‘common sense.’ This allows us to think critically about the ways in which distributions of power are justified today.

Course Prerequisites: POL S 101 or the consent of the department. Students who have credit in POL S 210 may not take POL S 211 for credit.

Course Objectives: After taking this course, students should:

- Have a deeper and historically-minded understanding of key concepts in political theory and political science, such as ‘politics,’ ‘the state,’ ‘liberty,’ and ‘rights’
- Be able to critically examine, interpret, and write about difficult theoretical texts and relate them to their historical context.
- Be able to write short, well-argued essays about topics in politics and philosophy
- Gain a sense of the scope and history of the subfield of political theory within political science, preparing them for future coursework in political theory.

Course Requirements/Assessments (see explanations below):

Requirement	Weighting	Date
Working Papers	4 x 15% each = 60%	See class schedule
Participation	15%	-----
Take-Home Final Exam	25%	Due one week after last class (June 19)

Texts for this Course:

The texts for this course will be made available in PDF form on e-class as selections from the books. However, you may wish to purchase these texts for yourself. Because these texts are generally cheaper from other sources (used book stores, online, or in local stores in Edmonton) we did not order them. Any edition published by a reputable press (**Penguin, Hackett, or a University press**) is viable. However, below I have listed affordable and readable recommendations. If you do not purchase the books, it is **highly recommended that you print the PDFs**, and read them as hard copies, so that you can write notes on them and bring them to class.

The electronic editions we will be using are the following:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated Peter Bonadella (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by GAJ Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press) (any full edition will do if it has page numbers).

Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. Bromwich and Kateb (New Haven: Yale University Press)(any full edition will do if it has page numbers).

Reading and Meeting Schedule (SEE E-CLASS FOR READINGS):

Week 1: Politics and Philosophy with the Greeks I (Luke Sandle)

May 6: Plato, *The Republic* BK I

May 8: Plato, *The Gorgias* & Pericles Funeral Oration

Week 2: Politics and Philosophy with the Greeks II (Luke Sandle)

May 13: Aristotle, *Politics*, BK I

❖ **Workshop on Working Papers**

May 15: Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, (On Liberal Education) & Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, BK I & II

Week 3: Modern Political Thought I: Machiavelli and the Art of Politics (Will Kujala)

- ❖ May 20: **NO CLASS, STATE HOLIDAY**
- ❖ May 22: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters I-XX, XXIV-XXVI.
- ❖ **First Working Paper on Plato Due May 22 in Class, PAPER COPY**

Week 4: Modern Political Thought II: Hobbes and the Science of Politics (Will Kujala)

- ❖ May 27: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction, chapters 5, 6, 9-14, review and conclusion
- ❖ May 29: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 15-21. **Second Working Paper on Machiavelli Due**

Week 5: The Nineteenth Century I: Mill and Liberalism (Luke Sandle)

- ❖ June 3: Mill, “On Liberty” (selections)
- ❖ June 5: Mill, “On Liberty” cont’d **Third Working Paper on Hobbes Due**

Week 6: The Nineteenth Century II: Marx and Critique (Will Kujala)

- ❖ June 10: “Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy”; *The Communist Manifesto*
- ❖ June 12: Wrap-up **Fourth Working Paper on Mill Due**
- ❖ **June 17: Extra, Fifth Working Paper on Marx Due in Tory Main Office before 4 PM!**

Assignments/Assessments:

Working Papers: There are five 500-word working paper assignments, spread throughout the term. We will count the grade for your four *best* ones (meaning you can skip one if you so desire—it would be best to choose the last if you choose to do so). Each assignment consists in answering a question about one of two key passages from the text we are reading that week. We will post the questions and passages on e-class before you read the texts so that they can guide your reading. The working papers are graded out of 10. They cannot exceed the word limit by more than 50 words.

The main criteria of grading the working papers has to do with your ability to set forth and defend an answer to the question in the form of an *argument*. You must make an argument that follows the general form of “***I argue that...because...***” This is true even when the questions ask you to interpret the text rather than argue ‘for’ or ‘against’ a position the author takes. Even when we are interpreting texts we are making arguments that have corresponding objections and responses. Good working papers carefully consider potential objections and provide brief responses to them. The difficulty of these papers has to do with the word limit: you must write concisely and to the point.

Participation: Participation in this class is crucial. Students must be ready to discuss the texts. This means they have read the texts, thought about them, and brought them (virtually or physically...) to the class to talk about them with others. More than three unexcused absences from class will result in a **fail** for this class requirement, and therefore the class as a whole.

Final Exam: The final exam will be two questions chosen out of four. It is a take-home exam in which you are allowed (expected) to cite and consult the texts to answer the questions. It is due one week after the last class.

Grading Rubric: Grades in this course are calculated and given in percentage form, but these percentages will be converted into a letter grade, the percentage grade from all requirements providing the final letter grade for the course. The conversion is done according to the following rubric:

Percentage	Letter	Grade Point on 4.0 Scale
91-100	A+	4.0
85-90	A	4.0
80-84	A-	3.7
76-79	B+	3.3
71-75	B	3.0
70-74	B-	2.7
65-69	C+	2.3
60-64	C	2.0
55-60	C-	1.7
53-55	D+	1.3
50-52	D	1.0
0-49	F	0

A rubric for the working papers will be distributed in the first week of class. The rubric for the final will be made available prior to the last day of class.

Important Information:

Electronics: Students should have cell phones off and stowed away during class. This is not only to prevent your own distraction but to avoid disrupting class or distracting those around you. Laptops are fine in class as note-taking devices but not for web-surfing, chatting, and emailing.

Late Policy: Late working papers will be penalized two points for each day after the due date. Exceptions can be made in the case of genuine emergencies and medical reasons with documentation.

Absences: Attendance is critical in seminars and lectures, and I will keep attendance using a sign-in sheet available at the beginning of class. As with late assignments, I will except those with genuine emergencies and documentable medical reasons.

Appealing a Grade: Students may appeal their grade for a particular assignment or exam at least one class day after they have received their grade (i.e., not the day they have received the graded assignment back). The process begins with taking up the issue with Will Kujala. If our discussion of your grade does not resolve the issue, it can be forwarded to the Undergraduate

Chair of the Political Science Departments. After this, you must consult the Faculty of Arts procedures for grade appeals.

Academic Integrity: "The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University."

All forms of dishonesty are unacceptable at the University. Any offence will be reported to the Associate Dean of Arts who will determine the disciplinary action to be taken. Cheating, plagiarism and misrepresentation of facts are serious offences. Anyone who engages in these practices will receive [at minimum](#) a grade of zero for the exam or paper in question and no opportunity will be given to replace the grade or redistribute the weights. As well, in the Faculty of arts the sanction for **cheating** on any examination will include **a disciplinary failing grade** (NO EXCEPTIONS) and senior students should expect a period of suspension or expulsion from the University of Alberta.

Recording of Lectures: Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Learning and Working Environment: The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behavior that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behavior is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional service or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice at www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca. Information about the University Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at policiesonline.ualberta.ca/policiesprocedures/pages/dispPol.aspx?PID=110.

Specialized Support and Disability Services: Students with disabilities or special needs that might interfere with their performance should contact the professor at the beginning of the course with the appropriate documentation. Every effort will be made to accommodate such students, but in all cases prior arrangements must be made to ensure that any special needs can be met in a

timely fashion and in such a way that the rest of the class is not put at an unfair advantage. Students requiring special support or services should be registered with the office of Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS): www.ssds.ualberta.ca. This is particularly important for students requiring special arrangements. Once you have registered with SSDS, it is your responsibility to provide the instructor with a 'Letter of Introduction' and, if necessary, an 'Exam Instruction and Authorization' form.

Feeling Overwhelmed? (In need of student, social, financial, or security services?): The Student Distress Centre listens, offers support, supplies information, and provides services:

- Call: 780-492-HELP [4357]
- Drop in: 030-N in the SUB
- Web: www.su.ualberta.ca/sdc
- Chat: www.campuscrisischat.com

Learning and Writing Support: Students looking to improve their essay writing and study habits are encouraged to visit the Student Success Centre at 2-300 SUB. The SSC exists to help students maximize their educational experience. The writing resources staff provide workshops and one-on-one sessions with students for a small fee.

www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/academicsupport/writingstaff.cfm