

Nature of Politics

01:790:101:23

Fall 2015

Mondays & Wednesdays 7:15–8:35 PM (HCK-101)

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Office Hours:

Mondays 5:00–7:00 (and by Appointment)

Hickman Hall

Room 602

This course will introduce students to some of the core concepts and enduring debates in political thought by exploring selected texts from across the canon of Western political theory and political philosophy in connection with everyday political questions. There are a multitude of questions, concepts, and debates in political theory and political philosophy, and this introductory course will admittedly only explore a small piece of the universe of political thought. Thematically, we will focus on investigating a variety of intermixed areas and questions including: what we mean by “politics” and “the political,” and what it means to *do* political theory or to think *politically*; how to approach the question of governance, or what the means and ends of government and the organization of community are and should be; the nature of citizenship, what it means to be or not be a member of the body politic, and the implications of difference within political community; the relationship between justice, equality, freedom, and politics; and the relationship between politics and economics. Using these areas and questions as signposts to organize our descent into thinking politically, this course will introduce the student to core texts and political thinkers of Western political thought. Throughout the semester, you will use these texts as a foundation to clarify the meaning of some of the key concepts we use to think about politics, and to critically examine and normatively reevaluate our political reality.

This course fulfills the following Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes for Areas of Inquiry: Social Analysis (SCL)

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

Required Reading

The following texts will be used during this course and it is suggested that each student acquire them in advance of each assignment. Many of the assigned readings listed in the course schedule below may be found in the specific texts listed here as well as in alternate editions, or they may be commonly available elsewhere. Shorter selections will be made available on reserve in the library and through Sakai when possible. Readings will be assigned in each class for the next class section. Specifically assigned page numbers, chapters, and section headings will be noted in

a format that allows for the use of alternative editions when possible. If there are any questions regarding which edition to use, please contact the instructor.

Aristotle, *The Politics* (Penguin Classics), ISBN: 978-0140444216

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Penguin Classics), ISBN: 978-0140431957

Steven Lukes, *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat* (Verso Books), ISBN: 978-1844673698

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Dover Publications), ISBN: 978-0486272740

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (W. W. Norton and Co.), ISBN: 978-0393090406

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Bantam Classics), ISBN: 978-0553585971

Jonathan Westphal, ed., *Justice* (Hackett Publishing Co.), ISBN: 978-0872203457

Course Expectations & Grades

Students will be responsible for completing an in-class midterm and final exam. In addition to these exams, students must complete a take-home midterm exam and will be responsible for writing short, but frequent in-class writing prompts or take-home reaction papers (1–2 pages). Assignments must be completed by the deadline set by the instructor. Late and missing assignments will be penalized.

Final Grade Breakdown

25% Midterm Exam

25% Midterm Take-Home Essay

25% Final Exam

25% Short Responses, Reaction Papers, and In-Class Writing Prompts

Attendance and Participation: Students must attend all scheduled course meetings and abide by the university's attendance policies regarding absences. Any student intending to miss class for excusable reasons must inform the instructor a minimum of one week prior to the class. Active and critical participation is a must for any understanding of the nature of politics, and accordingly students are expected to read all materials and come to class prepared to discuss and actively participate.

Students with more than four absences are at risk of failing the course. Students are expected to attend each class session on-time. A student that is twenty minutes or more late to class will earn half an absence. All students should report absences (regardless of the reason) using the University's self-reporting absence system online (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>). The University's policy on absences for religious observances is as follows:

“It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.47B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting.”

It is the responsibility of the student to provide timely notification to the instructor about necessary absences for religious observances. Students are also "...responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule."

Makeup Exams and Missed Assignments:

All makeup exams must be arranged with the instructor prior to the missed exam. Makeup exams will be given at a scheduled time in the Political Science Department.

Email, Announcements, and Classroom Technology: You are required to regularly check your Rutgers University student email account and the Sakai Course Site at sakai.rutgers.edu. (To access Sakai, you will need your Rutgers Net ID and password. You will receive announcements from Sakai at your Rutgers e-mail address, so it is important for you to check that account frequently.) Failure to regularly check your Rutgers e-mail account is not an acceptable excuse for anything. You may contact the instructor with questions and concerns at the email address provided in this syllabus. Please be advised that you must allow 24 hours (Monday–Friday) or 48 hours (Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays) from the time your email is sent to receive a response. The use of phones and other mobile devices to make or receive, calls (telephone or other), text messages (SMS), tweets, status updates, or any communication with your physical, digital, or imaginary social network during class is strictly prohibited. In other words, your phone should be off (not just on vibrate) and your computer should only be used for taking notes during class. The use of smartphones, tablets, netbooks, laptops, etc. during class is at the discretion of the instructor, and the instructor reserves the right to prohibit the use of technological devices if they prove disruptive or distracting. Should you choose to use a computer to take notes during class, the instructor reserves the right to request electronic copies of your notes for the day the computer was used.

Disability Services: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disability Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 that mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please register with the Office of Disability Services for Students, which is dedicated to providing services and administering exams with accommodation for students with disabilities. **The Office of Disability Services for Students can be contacted by calling (848) 445-6800 and is located on the Livingston campus at the following address: 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite a145, Piscataway, NJ 08854.**

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

All students should be familiar with and abide by the University's policy on academic integrity. Information on this policy, as well as resources to learn more about your responsibility as a student to act with integrity is available online at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. Plagiarism and the University's policy on academic integrity can be complicated. You are expected to make an effort to learn about plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, as well as how to avoid them. Taking the time to do so will help ensure that you do not violate the University's policy. Keep in mind that accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism.

Please Note: This syllabus is subject to change and students should regularly check the Sakai site for the most recent version. Readings and assignments may be removed, added or modified at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule and Assigned Readings

Assigned readings are listed below the dates on which they will be discussed in class. Readings marked with an asterisk "*" will be made available on Sakai or through library course reserves. Readings marked with a "W" appear in *Justice* edited by Jonathan Westphal. Specific page numbers and chapters will be announced during class when necessary.

Week One: Introduction

Wednesday 9/2

No reading assigned

Week Two: The State and Political Theory

Monday 9/7

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of The Political**

Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" *

Tuesday 9/8 (Change In Designation Day: Monday Schedule)

Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" (continued)*

Additional reading TBA

Weeks Two & Three: Ancient Thoughts on Justice, the State, and Citizenship

Wednesday 9/9

Aristotle, *The Politics*

Plato, "Justice" (W)

Aristotle, "Justice" (W)

Monday 9/14

Aristotle, *The Politics*

Wednesday 9/16

Aristotle, *The Politics*

Week Four: The Art of Governance

Monday 9/21

Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Wednesday 9/23

Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Week Five: The Obligation of Governance

Monday 9/28

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Wednesday 9/30

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Week Six: The Science of Governance

Monday 10/5

Publius (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay), *The Federalist* *

Wednesday 10/7

Selected Anti-Federalists TBA*

Week Seven: The (Im)morality of Governance

Monday 10/12

Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism**

Wednesday 10/14

In-Class Midterm Exam

Week Eight: Equality

Monday 10/19

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality"

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract**

Wednesday 10/21

Amartya Sen, "Equality of What"(W)

Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice**

Weeks Nine & Ten: Justice

Monday 10/26

John Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (W)

Robert Nozick, "Anarchy, State, Utopia" (W)

Wednesday 10/28

Hans Kelsen, "What is Justice?" (W)

Immanuel Kant, "A Definition of Justice" (W)

Monday 11/2

J.S. Mill, "On the Connexion Between Justice and Utility" (W)

Weeks Ten & Eleven: Freedom

Wednesday 11/4

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*

Monday 11/9

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (continued)

Wednesday 11/11

TBA

Weeks Twelve to Fourteen: Politics and Economics

Monday 11/16

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*

Wednesday 11/18

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*

Monday 11/23

Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State**

Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchism—Encyclopedia Britannica Article”*

Wednesday 11/25 – (Change In Designation: Friday Schedule – No Class)

Monday 11/30

Karl Marx, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”

—, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844”

Wednesday 12/2

Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question”

Friedrich Engels, “Versus the Anarchists (Engels to Theodor Cuno)”

Week Fifteen: Utopia, Dystopia, and Modernity

Monday 12/7

Steven Lukes, *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat*

Wednesday 12/9

Steven Lukes, *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat*

Final Exam to Be Given During the Designated Exam Period