

## Introduction to Political Theory

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MWF 2:00-2:50, Hoover 206  
Office Hours: MWF 8:15-11:50; TTH 8:15-11:50, or by appointment

PSC 280  
Fall 2015

This course provides an introduction to political theory. It examines the major issues that all political theorists must grapple with, such as the nature of persons, the formation of political societies, and ethics. The different approaches taken to these subjects by some of the most important theorists in the western world are systematically studied and critiqued.

Central to this course is the close reading of classic texts. I will rarely lecture; instead, we will discuss collectively the assigned works. Because it is often useful to read the whole text before discussing a part, reading assignments will come in waves. It is absolutely critical that you plan ahead and finish the reading before we start discussing a new author. I expect students to attend class regularly, complete reading assignments on time, and participate in class discussions. These activities are worth 15% of your final grade. If it becomes evident that students are not reading the assignments, I reserve the right to give daily quizzes that will count toward this grade. As well, there will be three tests, each of which is worth 20% of the final grade.

Finally, students get to write a 7-8 page paper providing an overview and critique of a thinker not covered in this class. The paper should engage with printed primary and secondary literature. I will approve paper topics on a first-come-first-served basis. Late papers will be assigned a penalty of 3 points for every 24 hours they are late. The paper due dates and assessment are as follows:

September 11: topic must be approved by this date.

October 2: turn in list of three primary sources, two books, and two academic journal articles you plan to consult for your project.

October 19: turn in a substantial one page outline of your paper. Include a bibliography that cites every work you plan to utilize for the paper (3% of grade)

December 4: turn in final paper (22% of grade)

A final letter grade based upon the percentage of points you earn in this course will be given based on the following scale:

93-100; A, 90-92.99, A-  
87-89.99, B+; 83-86.99, B; 80-82.99, B-  
77-79.99, C+; 73-76.99, C; 70-72.99, C-  
67-69.99, D+; 60-66.99, D  
0-59.99, F

Required book, Alan Ebenstein, *Introduction to Political Thinkers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> (ISBN: 0155066668)

August

31. **No class.** I hate to do it, but I will miss the first two days of class as I am taking my daughter to college. But this isn't so bad as you have a big chunk of Plato to read before Friday. Please have pp. 12-57 read by the start of class on Friday. This is not easy reading and the print is small, so don't put this off! Also, please *don't* read the introductions.

September

2. **No class.**

4. Discuss Plato

7. Discuss Plato.

9. **No class.** Serve Day

11. Discuss Plato

14. Finish reading Aristotle before the start of class (brief selection from the *Ethics* which I will hand out and pp. 68-98. Discuss Aristotle.

16. Discuss Aristotle.

18. Discuss Aristotle.

21. Read Genesis 1-3, I Samuel 8-12,

23. Read Matthew 1-5, Acts 4, Romans 13

25. Handout or Foxtale: "Making Sense of Social Justice" from *What is the Mission of the Church?* [foxtale]

28. Read St. Augustine, 104-116.

30. Discuss Augustine.

October

2. Catch-up and Review

5. Test #1.

7. Read St. Aquinas, 128-142

**9. Fall Break [no, this is in error, it is the 19<sup>th</sup>]**

12. Discuss Aquinas.

**14. No class. Work on paper over next week.**

**16. No class.**

**19. No class. Paper outline due in my office by 5:00 p.m.**

21. Read Machiavelli, 151-161

23. Discuss Machiavelli

26. Read Protestant Reformation, TBD

28. Discuss Protestant Reformation

30. Read Hobbes, 171-186

November

2. Discuss Hobbes

4. Read Locke, 196-214

6. Discuss Locke

9. Catch-up and Review

**11. No Class.**

13. Test #2

16. Read Rousseau, 225-245

18. Discuss Rousseau

20. Read Mayflower Compact, Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights  
[find your own copies]

23. Handout or Foxtale: *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, chapter 2

25. Read Mill, 254-291

27. **Thanksgiving**

30. Discuss Mill

December

2. Read Marx, 303-319

4. Read Hayek, 326-340

7. Discuss Hayek

9. Read Rawls

11. Discuss Rawls.

Final exam, 12:45-2:45

Please note: although I reserve the right to change this syllabus, I usually follow it religiously. If I make any changes, I will clearly announce them in class. Otherwise, you should follow it exactly.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) on the Newberg campus provides all students with free writing consultation, academic coaching, and learning strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). The ARC, located in the basement of the Murdock Learning Resources Center (library), is open from 1:00-10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:00-4:00 p.m. on Friday. To schedule an appointment, go to the online schedule at [arcschedule.georgefox.edu](http://arcschedule.georgefox.edu), call [503-554-2327](tel:503-554-2327), or email [the\\_arc@georgefox.edu](mailto:the_arc@georgefox.edu).

Visit [arc.georgefox.edu](http://arc.georgefox.edu) for information about ARC Consultants' areas of study, instructions for scheduling an appointment, learning tips, and a list of other tutoring options on campus.

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Office as early as possible so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, go to [ds.georgefox.edu](http://ds.georgefox.edu) or contact Rick Muthiah, Dean of Learning Support Services ([503-554-2314](tel:503-554-2314) or [rmuthiah@georgefox.edu](mailto:rmuthiah@georgefox.edu)).