

Introduction to Political Theory

Mark Hall
Center Street House, Room 12
Class time: 2:40-3:30, MWF
Hoover 105
(O) (503) 554-2674, (H) (503) 554-0324

PSCI 280
Spring 2009

Office Hours: MWF 9:40-12:00, or by appointment.

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.

I expect students to attend class regularly, complete reading assignments on time, and participate in class discussions. These activities are worth 10% 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 are required to write an 8-10 page paper providing an overview and critique of a thinker not covered in this class. I encourage you to look at a non-western thinker, but this is not a requirement. Possibilities include Confucius, Maimonides, Nietzsche, Gandhi, Mao, and Hayek. The paper should engage with printed primary and secondary literature. I will approve paper topics on a first-come-first-served basis. The paper due dates and assessment are as follows:

January 28: topic must be approved by this date.

February 18: turn in list of three primary sources, two books, and two journal articles you plan to consult for your project.

April 1: 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)

April 20: turn in final paper (27% 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 Text: Alan Ebenstein, *Introduction to Political Thinkers*, 2nd. ISBN 0-15-506666-8.

Dates and Reading Assignments:

January 12, 2009

12. Introduction. What is political theory? Why is it important?

14. Plato 1-20

16. **No class (I'm out of town). Read Plato 21-40.**

19. **No class, MLK day.**

21. Plato, 41-57

23. Finish Plato.

26. Aristotle, 58-77

28. Aristotle, 77-98

30. Finish Aristotle

February

2. Is there such a thing as Christian political thought? Class debate

4. Early Church, TBA

6. Augustine, 99-116

9. Finish Augustine.

11. Post-Augustine, TBA.

13. Aquinas, 117-142

16. Finish Aquinas.

18. Review

20. **Test #1**

23. Machiavelli, 143-161

25. Finish Machiavelli

27. Hobbes, 162-175

March

2. Hobbes, 175-186

4. Finish Hobbes

6. Locke, 187-204

9. Locke, 204-214

11. Finish Locke, read Declaration of Independence

13. Review.

16. **Test #2.**

18. Rousseau, 215-229

20. Rousseau, 229-245

23-27 Spring Break.

30. Rousseau, 229-245

April

1. Kessler article at: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Thought/fp18.cfm>

3. Mill, 246-265

6. Mill 265-285

8. Mill, 286-291

10. **No class, Good Friday.**

13. Marx, 292-319

15. Finish Marx

17. Hayek, 320-340

20. Rawls, 341-357

22. Finish Rawls.

24. Review.

May 1, Final Exam, 1:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: I DO NOT GIVE EARLY FINALS. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides all students with free writing consultation, general tutoring, and learning enhancement strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). Students can make an appointment with the ARC Writing Center for guidance and feedback on written projects. ARC consultants can also provide basic tutoring for many general education and other courses. The ARC hours of operation are from 3:00-10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:30-4:30 p.m. on Friday. Go to www.georgefox.edu/arc/ for information about consultants' areas of study, how to schedule an appointment, and helpful learning tools. Call Rick Muthiah, Director of the Academic Resource Center, at x2314 if you have questions.

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services office early in the term so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to Disability Services. For more information, contact Rick Muthiah, Director of Disability Services (ext. 2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu), or go to ds.georgefox.edu.