

Political Science 104 ~ Introduction to Political Theory

Fall Term 2012 ~ Tuesday & Thursday, 11:05-12:20

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W 10:00-11:30

This is a first course in political theory. I will proceed on the assumption that students have had no prior exposure to the topics we will take up. Although most of the readings are from canonical texts we will work thematically. We will consider various basic political concepts – especially power and freedom – and explore how different political thinkers have, over time, defended differing conceptions for a variety of different reasons and purposes. We will consider various ways - in terms, say, of consent or procedural fairness or consequences. – to justify or criticize political institutions and practices. And we will consider how differing theories of ‘human nature,’ and especially of human knowledge, inform competing conceptions of politics.

The course is, as the title suggests, introductory. It is aimed at first and second years students. Any student beyond the second year needs my explicit permission to enroll.

Attendance: Is *not* optional. I expect you to be in class and will take attendance on a regular basis. At the margins your attendance and participation will impact your final grade.

Showing up is not enough. I expect that you will come to class prepared – having done the assigned readings and formulated questions, objections, and reactions to them. I will provide plenty of opportunity for you to articulate those questions, objections and reactions.

Written Assignments: There are three take-home exams for the class. They will be weighted equally – each worth one-third - for purposes of determining your final grade. You can anticipate writing about ten pages (typed) for each assignment. In each instance you will have to prepare answers to two or three questions. These will primarily address assigned readings from a particular segment of the course. However, each assignment will presume familiarity with all the previously assigned

readings. And in each instance you will have at least one week to complete the assignment.

Fair Warning: *Absent some truly exceptional circumstance I will not accept late assignments.* I have noted the dates for the three assignments on the schedule at the end of the syllabus.

Readings. As you will see, the reading for the course is quite demanding in terms of both quantity and difficulty. In other words, not only is there a lot of reading, but also it does not consist in pre-digested secondary sources and textbooks. You can anticipate having to struggle with many of these texts. It is essential that you do the readings and that you do them in advance of class. You will find a schedule of readings at the end of the syllabus.

Required Books: I have ordered the following books at the UR Bookstore. You can also obtain them readily - second hand - online at your favorite e-purveyor.

- Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Penguin. ISBN# 978-0140431957
- Jean Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract*. Penguin.
ISBN # 978-0140442014
- G.W.F Hegel. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Hackett.
ISBN # 0872200566
- Karl Marx . *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. International.
ISBN # 0717800563
- John Stuart Mill. *On Liberty & Subjection of Women*. Penguin.
ISBN #9780141441474
- Friedrich Nietzsche. *Beyond Good & Evil*. Vintage. ISBN # 978-0679724650
- Max Weber. *The Vocation Lectures*. Hackett. ISBN # 978-0872206656
- John Dewey. *The Public & Its Problems*. Swallow Press . ISBN # 0-8040-0254
- Hannah Arendt. *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. Penguin. ISBN # 0142437565
- Michel Foucault. *Discipline & Punish*. Vintage. ISBN # 0-394-72767-3

In addition I have assigned a number of shorter texts that will be available online via Blackboard. These readings are:

- Immanuel Kant: "An Answer to the Question 'What Is Enlightenment?'"
- Karl Marx: Excerpt ~ "Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy"
- Benjamin Constant: "The Liberty of the Ancients as Compared to that of the Moderns"
- Isaiah Berlin: "Two Concepts of Liberty"
- C.S. Peirce: "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make our Ideas Clear"
- John Dewey: "Creative Democracy"
- Michel Foucault: "What is Enlightenment?" and "Nietzsche,

Genealogy, History”
Schedule of Readings & Written Assignments

August

30 - Introduction

September

4 - Models of Justification

6 - Hobbes

11 - Hobbes

13 - Hobbes

18 - Rousseau

20 - Rousseau

25 - Kant; Hegel

27 - Hegel ;

First Assignment

Distributed

October

2 - Marx

4 - Marx;

First Assignment Due

9 - *No Class (Fall Break)*

11 - Mill

16 - Mill

18 - Constant; Berlin

23 - Nietzsche

15 - Nietzsche

30 - Nietzsche

November

1 - Peirce

6 - Dewey; *Second Assignment
Distributed*

8 - Dewey

13 - Weber; *Second Assignment
Due*

15 - Weber

20 - Arendt

22 - *No Class (Thanksgiving)*

27 - Arendt

29 - Foucault

December

4 - Foucault

6 - Foucault

11 - Wrap Up/Catch Up;

Final Assignment

Distributed

20 - *Final Assignment Due*

