

Professor Johanna Meehan
Political Theory II
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This course is a philosophically oriented introduction to Western political theory. We begin with Machiavelli and towards the end of the semester, after reading many of the iconic works in classical political theory, we will turn to the writings of some contemporary theorists. It is generally accepted that the works of Machiavelli and Hobbes reflected a significant shift in political understandings. The center of the medieval world had given way and from the writhing, shuddering gasps of bodies tortured in the chambers of priests and princes and the endless killing in the name of the Prince of Peace, came new efforts to articulate the grounds and limits of authority. Hobbes defended the establishment of an absolute power that would limit violence making it unitary, while Locke thought that power could be legitimated only if rights were recognized. New powers and new players grappled with each other, institutions were created, destroyed and created again. Money flowed, armies marched, mercenaries and freemen alike, fought under one banner or another, and women and children died, if not at the hands of others, then ravaged by disease, malnutrition, or work. Through it all political theorists struggled to make sense of how we should live together, some asking what limits or laws might make collective human life at least tolerable, while others were less interested in peace and more interested in understanding how to legitimate and consolidate power. In this class we will study some of the most famous political texts in the Western tradition. We will trace the conceptions of self, morality, rights, community, and most especially power, conceptions that are taken up again and again and that shape political thought, discussion, and our lives and aspirations over the next six hundred years. A study of this breadth cannot, of course, do more than selectively introduce you to some of the many texts and thinkers of the period leaving much for you to return to consider at more depth in the future.

Readings

Most of the readings for the first half of the class can be found in the reader, *Classics of Modern Political Theory*, edited by Steven M. Cahn, or on the class Blackboard. I do occasionally distribute a reading assignment in class. If you are ill and miss class, check the table outside my office (Steiner 208) for anything I may have assigned. I expect you to bring a copy of the text we are working on to all class meetings, as I will often ask you to turn to particular passages so that we can study them together.

You are required to attend all classes unless excused, complete all assigned reading on time, complete all written assignments on time, and keep copies of all your work. I repeat, class attendance is MANDATORY unless you are ill.

Written Assignments:

Four three -page papers, a final paper, and an in-class presentation will be assigned. I encourage you to work with the writing lab. I am happy to talk with you about your papers, but I cannot read drafts of them.

The current due dates are as follows:

Paper one:

Paper two:

Paper three:

Paper four:

Additional Requirements

You are required to contribute (meaningfully) to class discussion at least once a week. Not fulfilling this obligation will cost you a half a grade.

Grading

Each paper will be of equal weight, the grades you receive for them, together with your participation grade, will be the basis for your final grade for the course.

Tentative Calendar (very tentative) it always takes longer than I expect to get through material, so do not rely on the syllabus for assignment dates. You must attend class to know what we are working on, when tests are scheduled, or when papers are due. My syllabi are somewhat flexible, we may fall behind, additional readings will regularly be assigned, and the dates on which assignments are due may change. There will be secondary essays that are to be read in conjunction with the primary texts listed below, I will hand them out, or they will be on library reserve, or I will post them on Blackboard. I will keep you apprised of what we are reading and when papers are due. Before fall break we will discuss what kinds of issues or figures you would like to consider in the last weeks of the semester, and I will choose appropriate readings. All the readings referred to below by page numbers are in the Cahn reader. It has been ordered for you at the college bookstore.

CALENDAR

Introduction

Aug 28- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp.1-26

September 2– Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 26-50, and Machiavelli, *Discourses*, pp.51-72

September 4 -Berlin, “The Originality of Machiavelli,” and Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, “Meditations on Machiavelli” (Blackboard)

September 9- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 80-120 (up to Chapter 14)

September 11- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 120-pp.160, and 161-196 and Christine Di Stephano, “Hobbsian (Hu)Man” from A Feminist Perspective in Modern Political Theory

September 16- Newton, “Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy (Xerox pp.43-47from the Enlightenment Reader) and Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, pp.217-290

September 18- Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, pp.292-319 and excerpt from C.B. Macpherson, “Possessive Individualism and Liberal Democracy,” pp. 263-277

September 23-Kraminck, "The Temple of Reason" pp.168-173, and Thomas Paine, "The Age of Reason," pp.174-180, and Condorcet, "The Future Progress of the Human Mind," pp.26-38 (all Xeroxed excerpts from Kraminick's *The Enlightenment Reader*)

September 25-Montesquieu, pp.320-323 and Shklar, "Montesquieu and the New Republicanism"

September 30-Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* pp.381-419 and Judith N.Shklar, "Rousseau and Inequality" (Xerox from Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*)

October 2-Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, pp.420-436, and Shklar, "Reading the Social Contract" (Xerox from Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*)

October 7- Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 486-499, and *Of the Origin of Government*, p.515-517

October 9- Adam Smith, excerpts from, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations*, pp.524-538 and

October 14-excerpts from Hume, Kant, Diderot, and Jefferson on gender and race, the "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" (adopted in France in 1789)pp.663, Charles Mills, excerpt from "The Racial Contract"

October 16- class cancelled

FALL BREAK

October 28 -- Immanuel Kant, "On the Old Saw They May be Right in Theory but it Won't Work In Practice" and *Perpetual Peace*

October 30 -Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace* and Habermas, "Kant's Idea of Perpetual Peace, with the benefit of Two Hundred Year's Hindsight" from *Perpetual Peace, Essays on Kant's Cosomopolitan Ideal*, ed. Bohman and Lutz-Bachman (Xerox)

November 4- *The Federalist Papers*, (Hamilton, Madison, Jay) Papers #, #10, and #39, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Citizen, Cahn, pp.662-4

November 6-U. S. "The Declaration of Independence" and "The Constitution of the United States" in Cahn, pp.601-619, Sheldon Wolin, "E Pluribus Unum" in *The Presence of the Past* (Xerox)

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November 11- discussion of U.S., "The Declaration of Independence", "The Constitution of the United States" and -*The Federalist Papers* (Publius- a.k.a. - Hamilton, Jay, Madison) in the Cahn text, Federalist #1,#14, and #85 and the introductory pages from the Enriched Classic edition for the historical background to the publishing of the papers.(Xerox) in Cahn

November 13- Sheldon Wolin, excerpt from *Toqueville Between Two Worlds*, pp171-28,(Xerox)

November 18-Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p.665-667

November 20

Jeremy Bentham, *Principles of Legislation*, pp. 685-708 in Cahn

- Hegel, "The Philosophy of Right" in Cahn, and Charles Taylor, "Invoking Civil Society"

- Marx, excerpts from the *1844 Manuscripts* (Xeroxe)
- Marx, excerpts from “The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” (Xeroxe)
- Arendt, selection from the *Origins of Totalitarianism*

- Adorno and Horkheimer, selections from *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment*
- Rawls, “The Law of Peoples” and Anne Phillips”, “Dealing with Difference: A Politics of Ideas or a Politics of Presence”
- Iris Marion Young, “Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship” (Xerox)

- Foucault, “Power, Right and Truth” and Axel Honneth, “Foucault’s Theory of Society”(Xerox)
- Habermas, excerpt from *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Xerox)
- Axel Honneth, “Habermas’ Theory of Society”(Xerox)