

Modern Political Thought
Political Science 271
Monday and Wednesday, 9:00am to 9:50am, Hanes Auditorium
Spring 2009

Course Description

This course surveys the foundations of modern political thought. We will critically examine the origins and development of the many contemporary Western political concepts which developed during the period we will cover, including equality, individual rights, consent of the governed, the right to property, the ethics of capitalism, and feminism. We will read primary texts in this course, some of which are difficult, and so you need to plan to spend several hours a week doing the readings. If you take your time, however, it can be very rewarding to read Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Marx and the other founders of modern political thought.

Requirements

Students are expected to come to both the lecture and recitation section. You should come to the latter prepared to discuss the readings. Students *should bring the assigned reading to both lecture and recitation*. You must turn in *all* the assignments to pass the course.

Exams

There will be three exams in this course, all marked on the syllabus. The final exam will be cumulative. The first exam is worth 10% of the grade; the second exam is worth 15%; the final exam is worth 25%. Questions on the exams will request a short (one half to one full page) answer, or they will ask you to compare how two authors treat the same concept, which will require a longer answer. You will be able to avoid at least one question in each exam. Absences from an exam are excused only if there is a documented medical or family emergency.

Papers

You are required to write five short papers, about one page each during the course of the semester. The papers will be about the readings for the week the paper is due. Your teaching assistant will present you with the schedule of when these papers are due, and give you more information about these papers. Each short paper is worth 4% of your grade, for a total of 20%.

Instructor:

Professor Jeff Spinner-Halev
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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30pm;
Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30am

Teaching Assistants

Amanda Barnes Cook (sections 604,
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Summary of Grading:

Papers: 40%
First exam: 10%
Second Exam: 15%
Final exam: 25%
Participation: 10%

You are also required to write one five page paper in this course, worth 20% of your grade. The paper will not require any outside reading; good papers will show an understanding of the texts we read in class. Your TA will give you more information about the expectations in papers in section.

Participation and Section

You must be signed up for a recitation section; if you are not, you cannot take the course. If you need or want to get into a closed section, you must ask the Teaching Assistant if you can do so, and then ask her or him to tell me you have permission to sign up for the recitation section. I will then give you an override slip. Please do not ask me about getting into a section without first talking to the correct TA. Attendance in recitation sections is required; participation in the section is worth 10% of your grade.

Office Hours and Email Policy

You should come to see either me or your TA if you want to discuss the course materials or an assignment. If you want an explanation about a grade you received for a paper, you must first appeal to your Teaching Assistant. If you are not satisfied, then you need to present to me a written explanation of why you think your assignment was wrongly graded. All concerns about exam grades should come to me directly, but also must be written.

Laptop and Electronics Policy

All cellphones and other electronic devices must be turned off and out of view during class. If you want to use a laptop in class, it can *only* be used for taking notes. If you are seen using your laptop for another purpose, you will lose the privilege to use it during class. If laptop use becomes distracting, I will ban them from class.

Grading Scale

All grades will be given on a scale of 0 to 100, with each ten points (between 60 and 100) representing a full grade.

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
F	62 or below

I sign on to email during the week, but only occasionally on the weekend. Do not expect me – or your TA -- to reply to your email immediately, though I will respond within 24 hours during the week. I use email for questions that can be answered briefly; I do not use email to get into extended discussions. Email is an excellent way to make an appointment with me.

Readings

There will be questions to help guide the readings and other information about the course on Blackboard. The following books have been ordered for class. I expect you to bring the actual physical book to both lecture and recitation (reading online is not an acceptable substitute for the books). Try to get the right edition of each book. I frequently refer to particular passages in the books in class; you will have trouble following along if you have a different edition.

Hobbes, Leviathan (Hackett)
Locke, Second Treatise of Government (Hackett)
Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration (Hackett)

Rousseau, The Basic Political Writings (Hackett)
Hume, Political Writings (Hackett)
Mill, On Liberty and Other Essays (Oxford)
Marx, Marx-Engels Reader (Norton)
Kant, Perpetual Peace, and Other Essays, (Hackett)
Dürrenmatt, The Visit (Grove)

Calendar

August

- 26 Introduction
- 31 Hobbes, Leviathan, Hobbes's introduction, chs. 1, 7, 11-13

September

- 2 Hobbes, Leviathan, chs. 14-16
- 7 Labor Day
- 9 Hobbes, Leviathan, chs. 17-18, 20-21
- 14 Hobbes, Leviathan, chs. 29-31
- 16 Locke, Second Treatise, chs. 1-7
- 21 Locke, Second Treatise, chs. 8-19
- 23 Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration
- 28 No Class
- 30 First Exam



October

- 5 Rousseau, Basic Political Writings, pp. 25-60 (read Rousseau's footnotes)
- 7 Rousseau, Basic Political Writings, pp. 60-81 (and the footnotes)
- 12 Rousseau, Basic Political Writings, pp. 141-172
- 14 Rousseau, Basic Political Writings, pp. 173-227
- 19 Kant, Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, pp. 29-48; 61-92
- 21 Kant, Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, pp. 107-143
- 26 Hume, Political Writings, pp. 80-97, 1-33
- 28 Hume, Political Writings, pp. 33-79

November

- 2 Hume, Political Writings, pp. 101-113, 157-181, 184-189, 230-240
- 4 Second Exam
- 9 Mill, On Liberty, chs. 1-3
- 11 Mill, On Liberty, chs. 4-5
- 16 Mill, On the Subjection of Women, chs. 1-2

[Second paper due during section between November 16th and November 20th]

- 18 Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, chs. 4, 7 (to page 317), 10, 16
23 Marx, Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 473-500, 367-376
25 Thanksgiving
30 Marx, Marx-Engels Reader, 70-105

December

- 2 Marx, Marx-Engels Reader, 147-193
4 Finish Marx
9 Dürrenmatt, The Visit and Conclusion
11 Final Exam (8:30am to 10:30am)

Important Dates

First Exam: September 30th
First Paper due: Week of October 12th
Second Exam: November 4th
Second Paper due: Week of November 16th
Final Exam: December 11th, 8:30am

