Political Science 101:  
Introduction to Political Theory  
FALL SEMESTER 2002  
https://coursetools.ummu.umich.edu/2002/fall/polsci/101/001.nsf

MW, 11 a.m.– noon  
Angell Hall, auditorium A

Instructor:  
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Office Hours:  
Mondays, 1:30–2:30  
Thursdays, 10:30–11:30  
and by appointment

OVERVIEW  
This course is a chronological introduction to a selection of major — and some minor —  
works in Western political theory. Some of the central themes that the course will cover are  
‘justice,’ ‘human nature’ and ‘political action.’ What is justice, and injustice? What are people like, what  
do they want and what may they hope for? Do we all want the same from our lives? How may  
and how should different political ideals be pursued? We will survey answers offered by many  
different kinds of thinkers, writing under a variety circumstances. Finally, we will pay attention  
to what our theorists themselves are up to: how they argue for their views, whom they are  
addressing, and how they can be interpreted.

A common question students taking this course ask is, “What do the texts and issues for this  
course have to do with our politics?” Here’s a possible answer: It is up to you to decide whether  
they indeed have. Your answer, at the end of the day, may reasonably be “no.” But before you  
jump to that conclusion, you should note that many people — many generations, in fact — have  
taken these texts to deal with the most important political questions there are. Along with the  
“canonical” texts, we will also read short supplementary pieces that should help you think about  
the connections.

IMPORTANT DATES  
September 18: First short paper due  
October 14: Fall study break; no class  
October 16: Midterm exam  
November 25: Paper due  
November 27: Thanksgiving recess; no class  
December 11: Last class.  
December 18: Final exam at 10:30 a.m.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives for student learning in this course can be roughly categorized into two main categories: knowledge and skills. However, since the skills are cognitive (have to do with your ability to process knowledge), they can only be met if the knowledge goals have been met.

Let’s be more concrete: At the end of the semester, you should:

1. Be familiar with the texts we have read and the kinds of arguments you have encountered during the course. (For example, if your relatives ask, “What’s that Machiavellianism we hear about?”)
2. Have an understanding of what political theory is and have at least a general comprehension of major themes in political theory (e.g., you should know what liberalism, marxism and conservatism are). The course website lists a set of concepts you will need to know at the final exam.
3. Be able to read other similar texts and analyze other political arguments. In other words, you should be able to engage in inquiry into political theory.
4. Be able to express your views on these matters both verbally and in writing.

These objectives are in an ascending order of importance: (2) is more important than (1), and so on. It doesn’t matter if after a year or so you have forgotten the details of, say, Hobbes’s arguments; it is more important that you develop the cognitive skills. This is because (a) thinking about the process as inquiry prepares you for other courses in political science, both in political theory or in other sub-fields. You will learn how to ask the right kinds of questions and how to go about answering them. Put simply: you will learn important scholarship skills. Furthermore, these skills will (b) make you a more informed citizen, (c) get you into law school and get you other good jobs (employers like people like people who can think, you know), and (d) make you a better person because you will be open-minded to the complexity of viewpoints in the world. And, importantly, you will be cool because you can show off at cocktail parties with your knowledge: “Oh yeah, it was Socrates who said that the unexamined life is not worth living. But I rather prefer Machiavelli’s principle of ends justifying the means.”

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

Disabled student accommodations. If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please make an appointment to see Prof. LaVaque-Manty. If you haven’t done so already, you are also encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), Rm. G-625 Haven Hall 1045, tel. 763-3000 (Voice/TTY/TDD).

Office hours. You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of Professor LaVaque-Manty’s office hours for any course-related issues whatever. You can also e-mail questions.

Course website. This syllabus, paper topics, announcements and other course material will be available at the course website on um.coursetools (accessible through your personal U-M space). Every student has reasonably convenient access to the web, so this should not pose insurmountable difficulties. If it does, please contact Professor LaVaque-Manty with an explanation for why it is insurmountable.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. Readings
Complete the assigned reading before the lecture. Everything listed below is required.

The following books are available at Ulrichs, Michigan Book & Supply, and the Union Bookstore. You don’t have to use those bookstores, but you must get the listed edition:


A number of required readings are in electronic reserves, accessible through the course website.

II. Lectures
Attendance in lectures is not required, but strongly encouraged. The exams will require you to know material discussed only in lectures.

Printable versions of the PowerPoint slides used in lectures will be available on the course website before each lecture. You are welcome to use them to help your note taking. Please observe, however, that they will not make much sense without the lectures. Don’t try to rely on them alone for the exams.

III. Sections
Participation in the section is very important. You should attend it regularly; you should also bring the relevant reading(s) into the section as careful textual analysis is often necessary. Your section participation will account for 15% of your course grade. Your GSI will decide how participation is determined. It may include additional homework, presentations, quizzes. Your GSI will provide information on his or her policies on this.

In all matters regarding your work, you should first turn to your GSI.

IV. Papers
You will write often, but not very much. The purpose of the assignments is to give help you practice your writing and thinking skills. The structure of the paper assignments is as follows:

- **Diagnostic “micro” paper** (2 pages, 500 words) due on Wednesday, September 18. This paper will be graded, but it will not count toward your final course grade.
- **Short writing assignments**, totaling five pages (1,250 words). These will be assigned by your GSI. Some of them may be similar to the essay questions you will have to answer on the exams. Together, they count for 15% of your final course grade.
- **Short paper** (5 pages, 1,250 words) due on Monday, November 25. The paper will count for 20% of your course grade. Topics for the paper will be assigned at least two weeks in advance.

The following offers the rough principles on the basis of which your papers will be graded:
A/A– Paper offers a clearly stated, interesting thesis which is supported with valid and sound arguments. The paper shows that the writer has thought about the assignment and developed his or her own ideas about it, instead of just offering minimal responses to the different components of the assignment. Interpretations of theories are sophisticated and supported with textual evidence; more than one source is considered. Writing is between good and brilliant; the organization of the paper is clear, prose is good and grammar flawless.

B/B+ Paper offers a clearly stated thesis which is supported with for the most part valid and sound arguments. The paper stays on topic, considering all the relevant aspects of the assignment. Interpretations of theories are plausible and supported with textual evidence; more than one source is considered. Writing, including outline and grammar, is solid.

B– Paper offers a thesis and attempts to support it with arguments. However, the thesis is simplistic and/or the arguments weak or unconnected to the thesis. Interpretations are weak or problematic, textual evidence minimal or weak. Paper only uses one textual source. Writing and organization have problems that affect readability.

C/C+ Paper offers a minimal thesis and minimal or no arguments in its support. Interpretations thoroughly misguided and/or unsupported with any evidence. Writing — both at the level or paper organization and grammar — seriously problematic.

D+/C– No thesis, no arguments or no textual evidence. Organization incoherent, writing very awkward and unintelligible.

D No thesis, no arguments, no evidence. Writer has no conception of most rudimentary aspects of writing (paragraphs, outline).

E The paper displays a fundamental lack of understanding of the principles that guide scholarly endeavors. Examples include but aren’t limited to gross mistakes in citing source materials as well as significant errors in framing the paper (e.g., writing a short story instead of an essay).

V. Exams
There will be two exams in the course: an hour-long midterm on Wednesday, October 16 and a two-hour final exam on Wednesday, December 18 at 10:30 a.m. in the usual lecture room.

IF YOU CANNOT TAKE THE FINAL EXAM AT THE DESIGNATED TIME, DO NOT REGISTER FOR THIS COURSE. There will be no early examinations for any reason whatsoever. Late make-up exams may be offered in cases of documented serious emergency.

The midterm and the final follow the same format, but the final is longer and cumulative. Each consists of three parts: identifications, short conceptual questions, and essay questions. Further details, including a list of concepts we expect you to have mastered by the end of the semester, are provided on the course website.

The midterm counts for 15% and the final 35% toward your final course grade.
A Note About Grades
We realize that grades matter to you very much. To maximize your chances of getting a good grade, we recommend that you keep up with the reading, come to lectures and sections, and do the work on time. The final exam will be designed in a way that it rewards those who have both done the reading and attended lecture. It will be completely straightforward and even easy for anyone who has done the work and understood, even minimally, the theories and concepts.

V. Summary of Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>GSI-assigned writing</td>
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<td>Paper</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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VI. Grade grievances
Your GSI is responsible for your grades. If you believe that you have been unfairly graded, you must follow this procedure:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching your GSI.
2. Provide a brief explanation in writing for why the grade you received was unfair.
3. Approach your GSI first. If you fail to reach an agreement, you may take your grievance to Prof. LaVaque-Manty.

GENERAL POLICIES

I. Class sessions
The class will start at exactly 11:10 and end at noon; you must be in lecture on time.

Cell phones and pagers must silenced for class and may not be used. In general, disruptive behavior — conversations, reading a newspaper or texts for other classes — won’t be tolerated.

II. Religious Observances and Other Scheduling Conflicts
In keeping with the University of Michigan policy of respecting students’ religious commitments, all attempts will be made to accommodate conflicts arising out of religious observances. The following is a list of some major religious holidays during the semester:

- Rosh Hashanah: September 7-8
- Yom Kippur: September 16
- Sukkot: September 21-22
- Shemini Atzeret: September 28-29
- Diwali: November 4-6
- Ramadhan: November 6
- Id al-Fitr: December 6

This list is not inclusive, and you are encouraged to let your GSI and/or the professor know about other religious commitments and holidays. (Documentation may be necessary.)
Furthermore, we are aware of and, in principle, sympathetic to the many other pressures students have in their lives and are willing to accommodate reasonable requests for extensions (except in the case of exams) and other issues that involve scheduling conflicts. It is, however, your responsibility to bring conflicts to the professor’s attention, and to do so in advance. Student athletes will, in most cases, need a letter from the Athletic Department about the scheduling conflicts. As a rule, no late assignments will be accepted without prior permission except in cases of a documented emergency.

III. Incompletes
The university policy on the grade of “incomplete” will be followed in this course. It is generally not in a student’s interest to have an incomplete, so try to avoid getting one.

IV. Academic integrity
Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity and thus violations of the LS&A Academic Conduct Code, and they will result automatically in a failure in the course. Furthermore, as the LS&A Academic Judiciary Manual of Procedures specifies, a student may be expelled from the university for academic misconduct. For the purposes of this class, plagiarism will be defined as submitting a piece of work which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source. Additional information on what does and does not count as plagiarism can be accessed through the course website. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with those cases. Note that the paper-grading principles above specify a grade of E for a paper that does not cite material correctly.
**COURSE CALENDAR**

This is the calendar of readings and main assignments. Additional assignments and/or changes will be posted on the calendar on the course website or provided by your GSI.

Texts marked with an asterisk * are in David Wootton, ed., *Modern Political Thought*. Texts marked with E will be accessible through the course website.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td><strong>Introduction: What is Political Theory?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Socratic Politics: Critique &amp; Obedience?</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Plato, “Apology,” in <em>The Trial &amp; Death of Socrates</em></td>
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<td>9/11</td>
<td>Plato, “Crito,” in <em>The Trial &amp; Death of Socrates</em></td>
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<td>Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience” (E)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td><strong>Just Do It</strong></td>
<td>Machiavelli, <em>The Prince</em>, chs. 1–17 (pp. 9–40)*</td>
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<td>9/18</td>
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<td><em>The Prince</em>, rest*</td>
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<td>George Orwell, “Reflections on Gandhi” (E)</td>
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<td>9/25</td>
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<td>Mike Davis, “Beyond Blade Runner” (E)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9/30</td>
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<td>Thomas Hobbes, <em>Leviathan</em>, chs. 17–19 (pp. 187–199)*</td>
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<td>10/2</td>
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<td>John Locke, <em>Second Treatise on Government</em>, chs. 1–5 (pp. 312–327)*</td>
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<td>10/9</td>
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<td>John Locke, <em>Second Treatise</em>, chs. 6–12 (pp. 327–357)*</td>
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<td>Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (E)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/14</td>
<td><strong>Fall Recess; no class</strong></td>
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<td>10/16</td>
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<td><strong>Midterm exam</strong></td>
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<td>10/23</td>
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<td><em>Discourse</em>, pt. II (pp. 431–448)*</td>
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<td>10/30</td>
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<td>Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (pp. 573–577)*</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11/4</td>
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<td>Edmund Burke, <em>Reflections on the Revolution in France</em> (pp. 551–572)*</td>
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<td>11/6</td>
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<td>Eric Raymond, “The Cathedral and the Bazaar” (excerpt) (E)</td>
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<td>11/11</td>
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<td>Hannah More, “Village Politics” (E)</td>
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<td>11/13</td>
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<td>William Paley, “Reasons for Contentment for the Labouring Parts of the British Public” (E)</td>
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<td>11/18</td>
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<td>John Stuart Mill, <em>On Liberty</em>, chs. 2–3 (pp. 613–647)*</td>
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<td><em>On Liberty</em>, ch. 4 (pp. 648–659)*</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>11/18</td>
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<td>Mill, “The Subjection of Women,” chs. 1–3 (pp. 673–719)*</td>
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<td>Karl Marx &amp; Friedrich Engels, <em>The German Ideology</em> (pp. 800–813)*</td>
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<td>Arlie Hochschild, <em>The Managed Heart</em> (excerpt) (E)</td>
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| 11/25 | German Ideology (pp. 814–825)*
       | Paper due |
| 11/27 | **Thanksgiving recess; no class** |
| 12/2  | Welcome to the Fight Club: Nietzsche |
| 12/4  | Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, First essay (pp. 906–924)* |
| 12/9  | The Century of the Color Line |
|       | *Souls of the Black Folk*, rest |
|       | James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook” (E) |
| 12/18 | **Final exam at 10:30 a.m.** |