OVERVIEW

This course is a chronological survey of the history of modern political thought. It begins in the 17th century with the study of Thomas Hobbes and ends in the late 19th century with Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. The other thinkers include John Locke, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft, Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill.

Despite the more than 200-year span between the first and the last, each thinker confronted, in his or her own way, the central aspect of the modern world: that the world was rapidly and profoundly changing. Old values, beliefs, technologies and political systems were under constant challenges, and the authors tried to make sense of those challenges, celebrate them, or issues warnings against them. In many ways, their various answers create a legacy that is still with us, and that is one the reasons the study of each is relevant in the early 21st century.

This course satisfies an upper-level writing requirement.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Political theory is a type of social inquiry which studies arguments made in texts. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to some of the most important arguments made in the modern period, and to teach you to interpret and analyze the texts and evaluate the arguments. Most of the steps require your own expressive skills, particularly your own writing. This means that while the knowledge objectives of the course are limited to the theories we study, mastering the skill objectives will make you prepared more broadly. In general, in keeping with the goals of the LSA upper-level writing requirement, this course should help you understand some of the central concepts, approaches, and materials of political science, particularly political theory.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. WRITING

You will write much and often in this course, but you will also get much help. There are two key ideas guiding the writing pedagogy in the course: (1) The idea of writing as a process from an initial half-baked thought to a polished expression of sophisticated ideas, with many steps in between. (2) The modularity of the types of writing: work by political theorists includes argument paraphrases, summaries and comparisons; counterarguments; and new normative arguments. Good work incorporates these into seamless wholes, but to be able to do that, one needs to learn to work with the modules by themselves. Throughout this course, we will practice these various steps and modules, and you will be able to incorporate others’ feedback as you develop your ideas.

It is important to keep in mind that although we both study and produce texts, they are different kinds of texts. You won’t be writing like Hobbes, Rousseau, or Marx; you will be writing like political theorists who study those texts now. In this sense, political theory is no different from any other subfield of political science: you do not replicate the object of your study, but illuminate it for others.

There are two types of writing assignments in the course: short papers, which help you practice the modular aspects of theoretical writing, and a term paper, in which you bring the different modules together. In both cases, you will also practice revising your work.

i. Short papers

You will write three very short papers (500 words or two double-spaced pages). The first of these papers is due is January 15. Topics for the other two will be assigned weekly, beginning at the end of January, with specific due dates. You may choose which topic you want to write on; the only requirement is that you complete two additional papers.

The short papers ask you to practice the different components of theory writing: paraphrasing, reviewing and comparing arguments as well as making counterarguments and developing normative arguments of your own.
Each of these papers has a revision requirement. The first paper, which everyone will write, will be graded and commented on and returned to you for revision on January 22. You will have a week to revise the paper. After you turn it in, it will be graded again. The final grade for the paper will be a weighted average of the first and final draft, with the weights 25% and 75%, respectively.

You will revise the two other short papers on the basis of a peer review. You will submit your draft to two other selected students, who will have several days to comment on the draft. After making revisions, you will turn in your final version as well as your original version and your peers’ comments. Your grade on the assignment depends on the quality of the final version (75%) and the original version (25%).

Each of the short papers will count for 10% of your final course grade. Radical improvement throughout the semester may change the weights of the individual papers up to five percentage points. (Only to your benefit, though. If you deteriorate, the weights will remain at 10% each.)

**How the peer review works.** Students in the course will be randomly assigned to groups of four for the duration of the semester. Each member of a group must comment on two short papers by his or her peers in the group. The quality of your comments will be graded and will count for 10% toward your final course grade.

**ii. Term paper**

The purpose of the term paper is to allow you to combine the different types of writing you have practiced in the short papers in a more sustained piece of work. The term paper will be 2,500–3,000 words long (roughly 10–12 double-spaced pages). A draft and a revised final version are required; again, their respective weights for the combined grade will be 25% and 75%. Due dates for both the draft and the final version will vary somewhat, depending on the topic you choose to write on.

Each topic will be comparative and require you to focus on at least two different theorists.

The term paper will count for 40% toward your final course grade.

**Expectations**

We don’t assume you already have mastered the styles of writing we focus on in this course. Quite the contrary: our purpose is to teach those styles to you now. We will provide many resources to give you a sense of what we hope you will have mastered by the end of the semester. For example, the course website has

- general and specific tips on writing political theory papers,
- links to resources on, for example, grammar, and
- examples of the different kinds of papers we are asking you to write. Some of these are from professional political theorists; others are from undergraduates like you.

We also urge you to take advantage of the professor’s and particularly the GSI’s office hours. The GSI’s job is to help you work on your writing, and ignoring this great resource puts you at a disadvantage — and wastes your tuition dollars.
We realize grades are important for you, and we therefore want to make it clear in advance what you will need to do well in this course. The following offers the rough principles on the basis of which your papers will be graded:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/A−</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/B+</td>
<td>Paper offers a clearly stated thesis which is supported 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B−</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/C+</td>
<td>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 of paper organization and grammar — seriously problematic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+/C−</td>
<td>No thesis, no arguments or no textual evidence. Organization incoherent, writing very awkward and unintelligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>No thesis, no arguments, no evidence. Writer has no conception of most rudimentary aspects of writing (paragraphs, outline).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
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**A word on grammar.** Students often ask whether they will be “graded for grammar.” The answer is no and yes. “No,” in the sense that grammar alone isn’t a grading criterion. But “yes” in the sense that bad grammar — and awkward style — detract from the argument: they make it difficult to follow the writer’s logic, and they make it tiresome for the reader to go through the text. Your goal is not to entertain, but you also shouldn’t make the reading harder work than it needs to be.

Being able to write grammatically correct prose is therefore an important element, and we will occasionally spend some time talking about grammatical problems and teach you some
important rules of grammar. We will also have the following policy: After we have introduced a grammatical rule, work that violates the rule will not be accepted.

II. Readings

All writing is about something, and in this course it is about the texts we read. You will therefore need to keep up with the readings and, in particular, show up in class having read the material.

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:

**Author. Title. Publisher**
Wollstonecraft, Mary. *The Vindications*. Broadview.
Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings*. Hackett.

Harvey, Gordon. *Writing with Sources*. Hackett.

Every book is required. Gordon Harvey’s book is a reference on proper citation practices; you will need to be familiar with it before turning in any written work. The reading schedule for the other books is at the end of this syllabus.

III. Quizzes

In order to motivate you to keep up with the readings and to attend lecture, there will be five surprise quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will count for 5% of your final course grade, with your worst score discounted entirely. They will be graded according to the following scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⊑</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that this rewards attending the lecture: even an unacceptable answer is much better than missing the quiz entirely, which will earn you an E.

Lectures in this course will be interactive. Particularly weak student participation in a given lecture may bring about an immediate quiz, so it is in your interest both to be prepared and to participate actively.
IV. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three 500-word papers</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One 2,500–3,000-word term paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two peer review commentaries</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five quizzes (with worst one discounted)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. GRADE GRIEVANCES

If you believe that you have been unfairly graded, you must follow this procedure:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching the GSI or the professor.
2. Provide a brief explanation in writing for why the grade you received was unfair.

Departmental grade grievance procedures are outlined on the political science website, at http://www.polisci.lsa.umich.edu/undergrad/grievance.html.

GENERAL POLICIES

I. Class sessions
The class will start at exactly 10:10 and end at 11:30; you must be in lecture on time.

Cell phones 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 and cultural holidays during the semester:

- Feast of the Epiphany: January 6
- Eastern Orthodox Christmas: January 7
- Sankrant: January 14
- Chinese New Year and Tet: February 1
- Id al-Adha: February 12
- Ash Wednesday: March 5
- Eastern Orthodox Beginning of Lent: March 10
- Baisakhi: April 13
- Passover (Pesach): April 17-18, April 23-24
- Good Friday: April 18

This list is not inclusive, and you are encouraged to let 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.

Meeting the learning objectives in this course requires that you apply your current knowledge and skills to the questions and exercises and, through them, improve that knowledge and those skills. Shortcuts won’t get you there, however appealing they might seem. Because of this, the use of commercial study guides such as Cliff Notes, Sparknotes.com, and other similar resources outside this course is considered a violation of academic integrity. You will automatically fail this course if we catch you using such resources.

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 materials are available at the course website on um.coursetools. 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 CALENDAR

This is the calendar of readings. Additional assignments and/or changes will be posted in the calendar on the course website.

You must complete the reading before the lecture on the date indicated.

1/6/03  Introduction; no reading.
1/8/03  Anonymous, “Homily on Obedience” (Online)
        Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 6, 11–13

1/13/03  *Leviathan*, chs. 14–21
1/15/03  *Leviathan*, chs. 29–30

1/20/03  **MLK Day — no class**
1/22/03  *Leviathan*, chs. 32, 37, 39, 44 (focus on ¶¶1–10), 47

1/27/03  Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (pp. 23–58)
1/29/03  Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 1–5

2/3/03  *Second Treatise*, chs. 6–15
2/5/03  *Second Treatise*, chs. 16–19

2/10/03  Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters*, pp. 7–180
2/12/03  *Persian Letters*, pp. 181–272

2/17/03  Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*,¹ pp. 33–60 (including notes on pp. 83–106)
2/19/03  *Discourse*, pp. 60–80 (including notes, pp. 106–109)

2/24/03  **“Spring” break**
2/26/03  **“Spring” break**

3/5/03  *Social Contract*, pp. 203–227

3/10/03  Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 1–79
3/12/03  *Reflections*, pp. 79–99, 110–133

3/19/03  *Vindication*, pp. 198–216, 226–232, 277–288

3/24/03  Mill, *On Liberty*, pp. 41–100 (chs. 1–2)
3/26/03  *On Liberty*, pp. 101–121 (ch. 3)

¹ In *The Basic Political Writings*, trans. by Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).
3/31/03  On Liberty, pp. 122–142 (ch. 4)
James Fitzjames Stephen, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity
(excerpts)²

4/2/03  Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” pp. 1–26³

4/7/03  Marx & Engels, The Communist Manifesto, pp. 157–186

4/14/03  Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morality, pp. 9–33
4/16/03  Genealogy of Morality, pp. 35–66

² This excerpt is on pp. 239–259 in Alexander’s edition of On Liberty.
³ All Marx readings come from the Selected Writings (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).