



## Course Description

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 of 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.

## Learning Objectives

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.
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.

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## Important Dates

<b>January 19:</b>	First paper due
<b>January 24:</b>	Drop/add deadline
<b>January 24:</b>	Notification deadline for religious conflicts
<b>February 22:</b>	Midterm exam
<b>February 24:</b>	Spring break begins
<b>March 16:</b>	Last day to drop
<b>April 12:</b>	Second paper due
<b>April 24:</b>	Final exam at 1:30–3:30 p.m.

## Summary of grading:

Papers:	20%
GSI assigned:	15%
Midterm:	15%
Final exam:	35%
Participation:	15%

# Introduction to Political Theory

## Rules of the Game for the Course

(Modeled after Thomas H. Benton, "Tough-love Manifesto for Professors," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 9, 2006.)

### I. Students and teachers have obligations to each other.

### II. Here is what we expect from students:

- You will treat everyone in the class, including the professor and the GSI, with respect.
- You will understand that you may encounter opinions and material you disagree with and even find objectionable.
- You will attend every class, give your full attention to the material, and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner.
- You will keep all your appointments.
- You will agree to do the work outlined in the syllabus on time.
- You will acknowledge that there is no "A for effort," but that effort is necessary for a good grade.
- You will not cheat, plagiarize or otherwise steal the work of others.
- You will not make excuses for your failure to do what you ought.
- You will accept the consequences — good and bad — of your actions.

### III. Here is what students can expect from us:

- We will treat you with the respect.
- We will manage the class in a professional manner. That may include educating you in appropriate behavior.
- We will begin and end class on time.
- We will return your assignments quickly with detailed feedback.
- We will pursue the maximum punishment for academic misconduct.
- We will keep records of your attendance and performance.
- We will investigate every excuse for nonattendance of classes and noncompletion of assignments.
- We will be available to you for advising.
- We will maintain confidentiality concerning your performance.
- Your grade will reflect the quality of your work and nothing else.

### Incompletes

The university policy on the grade of "incomplete" will apply in this course. It is generally not in a student's interest to have an incomplete, so try to avoid getting one.

### Students with Disabilities

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).

### Religious Observances

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. Please note that, according to the Provost's policy on religious holidays, **you must give notice of a religious conflict by the drop/add deadline.** After that, requests cannot be honored.

# Introduction to Political Theory

## General Course Requirements

### I. Readings

Complete the reading before the lecture. Everything listed below is required; the books are available at Ulrich's, Michigan Book & Supply, and the Union Bookstore. You don't have to use those bookstores, but you must get the edition listed:

Okin, Susan Moller *et al.*, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, third edition, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 2000).

Wootton, David, ed. *Modern Political Thought from Machiavelli to Nietzsche* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1996).

Additional required readings are available through the CTools site for the course.

### II. Lectures

Attendance in lectures is required and may be monitored. The exams will require you to know material discussed only in lectures. You may use your computer to take notes in lecture, but accessing the internet — for email or surfing — will count as academic misconduct.

Printable versions of the presentation 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.

Podcasts of the lectures will be available through iTunesU. The podcasts will include the slides of the presentations, synchronized with the audio.

### III. Sections

Participation in the section is very important. You must attend it regularly; you must 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 policies on this.

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

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## IV. Papers

The structure of the paper assignments is as follows:

- **Short paper 1** (2 pages, 500 words) due on **Friday, January 19**.
- **Short paper 2** (5 pages, 1,250 words) due on **Thursday, April 12**.
- **Short writing assignments**, totaling five pages (1,250 words). Your GSI will assign these. Some of them may be similar to the essay questions you will have to answer on the exams.

All writing assignments will be accessible through your **section-specific CTools site**. You submit and receive the papers electronically. **No hard copies are acceptable except for in-class writing assignments** (if any). **Your papers must be in Microsoft Word format or in rich text format (RTF).**

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 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 of 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).

**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. You are responsible for understanding the rules governing Standard Written English, and usage and grammar rules are important.

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## ***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 an 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>.

## **Summary of grading:**

Papers:	20%
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## **Academic integrity**

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity and so violations of the LSA Academic Conduct Code, and they will **automatically result in a failure in the course**. Furthermore, as the LSA 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 mean

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 is available on the course website. **You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with those cases. Note that the paper-grading principles above specify a score of E for a paper that does not cite material correctly. You are also responsible for avoiding even the appearance of plagiarism.**

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 counts as academic misconduct**. You will automatically fail this course if we catch you using such resources.

# Introduction to Political Theory

## Calendar

Jan. 4 Introduction: **What is political theory?**

### Political Critiques, Obedience & Resistance

Jan. 9 Plato, "Apology," in *The Trial & Death of Socrates*.

Jan. 11 Plato, "Crito," in *The Trial & Death of Socrates*.

Jan. 16 Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."\*

### Political Action: Dirty Hands

Jan. 18 Machiavelli, "Letter to Francesco Vettori" (W, pp. 6–8).  
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 1–7 (W, 9–23).

### Jan. 19 First short paper due at 5 p.m.

Jan. 23 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 8–26 (W, 23–57).

Jan. 25 Michael Walzer, "Political Action."\*

### Fearful Creatures: Hobbes's Social Contract

Jan. 30 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* chs. 6, 13–14 (W, 140–145, 168–177).

Feb. 1 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 15–17 (W, 178–189).

Feb. 6 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 18–21 (W, 189–209).

Feb. 8 Mike Davis, "Beyond Blade Runner," in *The Ecology of Fear*.\*\*

### Life, Liberty & Property: Locke's Social Contract

Feb. 13 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 1–9 (W, 312–351).

Feb. 15 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 10–13 (W, 351–360).

Feb. 20 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 18–19 (W, 372–386).  
Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet."\*

### Feb. 22 Midterm exam

Feb. 27 **SPRING BREAK.**

Mar. 1 **SPRING BREAK.**

### Born Free, Everywhere in Chains: Rousseau's Social Contracts

Mar. 6 J-J Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pt. I (W, 401–431).

Mar. 8 Rousseau, *Discourse*, pt. II (W, 431–448).

Mar. 13 Rousseau, *Social Contract*, bk. I (W, 464–474).

Mar. 15 Rousseau, *Social Contract*, bk. II (W, 474–490).

Texts marked with an asterisk (\*) are accessible in the "Readings" folder on the course website's Resources.

Texts marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) are in Library Reserves.

Texts marked with a W are in Wootton, ed., *Modern Political Thought*.

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## Worrying about the Swinish Multitudes

- Mar. 20 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (W, 551–572).  
Mar. 22 Hannah More, “Village Politics.”\*  
William Paley, “Reasons for Contentment.”\*

## Against the Tyranny of the Majority

- Mar. 27 J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, chs. 2–3 (W, 613–647).  
Mar. 29 Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 4 (W, 648–659).

## Alienation, Exploitation, Ideology

- Apr. 5 Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (W, 800–825).  
Apr. 7 Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (part), (W, 826–839).  
Apr. 10 Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* (excerpt).\*\*

## Feminism, Multiculturalism, Liberalism

- Apr. 12 Susan Moller Okin *et al.*, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (pp. 9–24).  
**Second short paper due.**  
Apr. 17 Okin *et al.*, *Multiculturalism* (27–131).

**Apr. 24 Final exam in Angell Auditorium B, 1:30–3:30.**