

POLISCI 382 – Modern Political Theory*
Fall 2012
Tue-Th 6:30-7:45
CHM 170

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This is an introduction to modern political theory from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century. The modern era begins as the question of legitimacy is posed in a new way: if God is not the source of political authority, what is? If political institutions are man-made, how should they be changed? What is the best way to live collectively, and how might we know? These are among the questions addressed by political theorists from Machiavelli to Nietzsche, and among the questions we will be addressing in this course.

We will focus on the work of five major authors. The first author, the Florentine Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), famously sought to consider things as they are, not as they are imagined or as they ought to be. In pursuing what he called the “effectual truth” of the matter, Machiavelli discovered the importance of appearances in politics, thereby challenged established ideas of what it means for a ruler to be good and earning a reputation as a teacher of evil. Whether the reputation is deserved is a question we shall consider. Over a hundred years later, the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) turned his attention to the question of how to maintain political authority, and devised a model of the state that demands a seemingly absolute obedience to the sovereign. While Hobbes’s vision of the state continues to strike terror in the mind of his readers, Hobbes’s *Leviathan* arguably serves as the basis for our modern notion of popular sovereignty. How can this be? John Locke (1632-1704), by contrast, is reassuringly familiar as we read him today, for he is recognizably one of the founders of liberal constitutionalism. But on close inspection, is there not something disconcerting about his own account of human nature? What potential injustices may be covered up by our commitments to liberty and to the respect of individual rights? These are among the questions that have been asked by the likes of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) – the two authors we shall consider in closing. Karl Marx, whose attack on liberalism did much to change the world, nonetheless shared with his adversaries certain ideals, insofar as he asked how the promise of democracy might one day be realized. Nietzsche’s critique, however, may be described as more radical yet, for it calls into question the very values and subject on which the modern political project had been predicated.

Requirements

The first requirement is that you come to class having done the **reading** carefully and willing to **discuss** it. In order to help focus your reading on particular questions, I will occasionally give a targeted assignment (e.g., taking note of all the passages pertaining to a given topic). In order to facilitate and structure the class discussions, beginning on September 6th and continuing for the rest of the semester, **a question will be posed at the beginning of each class** based on the reading for that day. Students will be given ten to fifteen minutes to write a response to it. These responses will then be collected and the question will be used to open the discussion. Responses will be read and returned by the next class. Grades of “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” will be given for these response papers, based upon evidence that the assigned reading has been completed. **There will be 26 such response papers over the course of the semester, and each student must have completed 22 of them with a grade of “satisfactory” in order to pass the course.** Up to five responses deemed “unsatisfactory” may be rewritten and resubmitted by the

* *This is a draft syllabus (Sept. 5, 2012); it may be subject to change.*

next class after they are returned, but students who miss a class without a reasonable excuse (documented illness, family crisis, religious observance, etc.) will not be allowed to make up the response paper for that class.

In addition to the response papers, each student will be required to write **four 5-7-page interpretive essays** (1375-1925 words). These essays will be on assigned topics. Each essay will account for 20 percent of the final course grade, with participation accounting for the remaining 20 percent.

Time commitment

This course should require a total time commitment of approximately ten hours per week. Of this, students will spend two hours and forty minutes in class; they will spend the remaining time engaged in reading, study, and preparation.

UWM Policies and Procedures

In this course, we will abide by the UWM policies and procedures as described in the following document. <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities should notify the instructor immediately so that we can make appropriate accommodations. We will follow university procedures as described in the following document. <http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf>

Religious observances

Students who plan to observe religious holidays should notify the instructor immediately so that we can make appropriate accommodations. We will follow university procedures as described in the following document. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>

Students called to active military duty

Students who are called to active military duty should notify the instructor immediately so that we can make appropriate accommodations. We will follow university procedures as described in the following document. Students: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

Schedule of Readings & Assignments

Please get a hold of the following texts. These texts are inexpensive, and many copies are available in used bookstores or on-line, but please be sure to obtain the editions specified below. We will be making frequent reference to text, and you will be citing pages in your papers; it is important that we all use the same edition.

The text of *The Prince* will be made available on-line, as will the selections from Marx. If you would like to obtain a print edition of *The Prince*, come talk to me about the available translations.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Publisher: Penguin Classics (1982)
ISBN-10: 0140431950
ISBN-13: 978-0140431957

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*
C.B. MacPherson, editor
Publisher: Hackett (1980)
ISBN-10: 0915144867
ISBN-13: 978-0915144860

Friedrich Nietzsche, '*On The Genealogy of Morality*' and *Other Writings*
Carol Diethe, translator; Keith Ansell-Pearson, editor
Publisher: Cambridge University Press; 2nd edition (2006)
ISBN-10: 052169163X
ISBN-13: 978-0521691635

1. September 4-6.

Introduction
Machiavelli, begin *The Prince* (made available on-line)
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/machiavelli/>

2. September 11-13.

Machiavelli – *The Prince*. (Chapters 1-8)
Machiavelli – *The Prince*. (Chapters 9-19)

3. September 18-20.

Machiavelli – *The Prince* (Chapters 20-26)
Machiavelli – *The Prince*

4. September 25-27.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 9-59.
*** 1st paper due Sept. 25**
Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 69-115.

5. October 2-4.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 117-65.
Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 176-200; 221-44.

6. October 9-11.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 245-69; 280-300.
Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 300-22; 414 (bottom)-15; 419 (full para.); pp. 458-74; 483-91.
(*in-class paper-writing exercise*)

7. October 16-18.

Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*

*** 2nd paper due Oct 16.**

Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*

8. October 23-25.

Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*

Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*

9. October 30-November 1.

Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*

Marx, *Engels' Eulogy, Letter to Father, Letter to Ruge, On the Jewish Question*

10. November 6-8.

Marx, *On the Jewish Question*

Marx, *On the Jewish Question*

11. November 13-15.

Marx, 70-81 (EPM 1844); 148-155 (GI)

Marx, 70-81 (EPM 1844); 148-155 (GI)

12. November 20.

Marx & Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*

Marx & Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*

*** 3rd paper due Nov. 21**

13. November 27-29.

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

14. December 4-6.

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

15. December 11.

*** 4th paper due (date to be determined)**