

Poli 2060 - 02
MWF: 2:30 - 3:30
324 Hodges Hall
Instructor: Mr. Alex D. Cole
Office Hours - MWF 12:30 - 2:15 - Stubbs 324

Description: This course serves as an Introduction to Political Theory and, indeed, political *thinking*. This entails that this course is *not* a spectator sport — reading is *required* and attendance is *highly recommended*. The goal is to learn *how* to think like a philosopher, not to merely know the content of the following texts. We, as a class, will be reading both the classics of the tradition of political philosophy and some overlooked texts as well. An emphasis on *narrative*, moreover, will be placed on all texts we read throughout the semester. Thus, if you have a question regarding a text as you read, ask it. Question these texts and, above all, *challenge them*. Furthermore, *be prepared to discuss these texts in class*. Failure to communicate questions, concerns, and analysis of the texts may result in the administration of weekly quizzes or a formal final.

This course is also designed with the LSU learning competency statement in mind:
“LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.”

Course Calendar

NB: I have included a question for each text that we explore together — by the time you finish reading, you should have some idea as to a possible answer, as well as questions you may want answered in class.

Section 1: A Return

Mon, August 22 - Introduction and Syllabus

Wed, August 24 - Hannah Arendt - *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Chapters I-III; XIV-XV
Question: Why thinking?

Fri, August 26 - Leo Strauss - “Three Waves of Modernity”
Question: Why think like the ancients?

Mon, August 29 - Iris Murdoch - *The Sovereignty of Good* Essay 3; “Against Dryness”
Question: Why return to thought?

Section 2: Ancient Virtue

Wed, August 31 - Plato - “The Apology”
Question: What is philosophy?

Fri, September 2 - Plato - *Republic*, Books I-III
Question: What is political philosophy?

Mon, September 5 - Labor Day - No Class

Wed, September 7 - Plato’s *Republic* IV-VI.
Question: What is political philosophy good for?

Course Calendar Cont.

Fri, September 10 - Aristotle - *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I-II.

Question: What is moral philosophy?

Mon, September 12 - Aristotle - *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books III, X.

Question: Can moral questions also be aesthetic questions?

Section 3 - Modern Realism

Wed, September 14 - Machiavelli - *The Prince*

Question: What of technique?

Fri, September 16 - Hobbes - *Leviathan*, Part One: i, ii, iv v, vi & xiii & xiv

Question: What of security?

Mon, Sept 19 - No class

Wed, September 21 - Hobbes - *Leviathan*, Part Two: xviii, xxi, xxii, xxvi.

Question: What of sovereignty?

Fri, September 23 - Clausewitz, *On War*, Chapters. 1-3, 6, 8

Question: What of war?

Section 4 - Ancient Realism

Mon, September 26 - Thucydides - *History of the Peloponnesian War*; Intro, Melian Dialogue, Pericles' Funeral Oration

Question: How did we get here?

Wed, September 28 - Augustine - *City of God*, Books XI - XIV;

Fri, September 30 - Augustine, *City of God*, Books XIX - XXII. (If possible, read some of Augustine's letters on capital punishment.)

Question: Where do we go now?

Mon, October 3 - Montesquieu - *The Spirit of the Laws* (Books I, II, XI)

Question: What do we do once we get there?

Wed, October 5 - Aristotle - *The Politics* (Books I, II, & IV)

Question: Can virtue and realism coexist?

Fall Break - October 6-9

Monday, October 10- ** TEST #1 Multiple Choice Only**

Section 5 - Social Contractarianism

Wed, October 12 - Locke - *Second Treatise of Government* - Chapters 1 - 3; 6 - 7.

Question: What of property?

Fri, October 14 - Locke - *Second Treatise of Government* - Chapters 8-9, 11-12

Course Calendar Cont.

Mon, October 17 - Rousseau - *The Social Contract* - Book I
Question: What of community?

Wed, October 19 - Rousseau - *The Social Contract* - Book IV

Fri, October 21 - Burke - *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (first half)
Question: What of continuity?

Monday, October 24th - **TEST # 2 Multiple Choice and Short Answer**

Section 6: The Analytic Situation

Wed, October 26 - Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, preface, Chapter 1
Question: How do we start again without losing sight of the real?

Fri, October 28 - Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Ch 3
Question: Can we alienate ourselves to know the other?

Mon, October 31 - Nozick - *Anarchy, State and Utopia* "Distributive Justice"
Question: Is any of that even worth doing?

Wed, November 2 - G.A. Cohen, *If You're An Egalitarian How Come You're so Rich?*, Chapters 1-2, 4
Question: How does Marxist thought develop in history and the life of the individual?

Fri, November 4 - G.A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian How Come You're so Rich?*, Chapters 8, 10
Question: If you're an egalitarian, how come you're so rich?

****Mon, November 7th - Test #3, All Essay Questions ****

Section 7: Towards a Narrative Theory of Politics

Wed, November 9th - Camus, "Helen's Exile"; "Return to Tipasa."
Question: How do we return beautifully?

Fri, November 11th - Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (skim)
Question: What of intoxication?

Mon, November 14th - Nietzsche, "The Problem of Socrates" from *The Twilight of the Idols*
Question: What of philosophy?

Wed, November 16th - Taylor, *Sources of the Self* - Chapters 17, 18, 20, 21
Question: What of narrative?

Fri, November 18th - Taylor, *Sources of the Self* - Chapters 22, 24

Mon, November 21st - Taylor, *Sources of the Self* - Chapter 25

Course Calendar Cont.

November 23-25 - No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday

Mon, November 28 - Discuss final paper

Wed, November 30 - Evaluations, final lecture, "Bringing it All Back Home."

Fri, December 2 - Final class period, papers due

Grading:

As of Fall 2015, LSU has switched over to a plus/minus grading scale, which will be used for grades in this course. This grading scale works as follows:

A+ = 100-97

A = 97-93

A- = 92-90

B+ = 89-87

B = 86-83

B- = 82-89

C+ = 79-77

C = 76-73

C- = 72-70

D+ = 69-67

D = 66-63

D- = 62-60

F = 59 and Below

Additionally, this course has five assignments, that are unequally weighted. They are:

Introductory Card (5%) (explained on the first day of class.)

Test 1 - Multiple Choice Only (15%)

Test 2 - Multiple Choice and Short Answer (20%)

Test 3 - Essay Only (25%)

Final Exam - A four to five page paper that evaluates one of three novels/plays. This assignment is detailed further on the next page. (35%)

NB: A curve of five points will be added to each test, including the final.

Final Exam:

This final project takes the place of a formal final exam (however, if the quality of reading is not up to task, a formal final taking place during finals week can and will be written.) The aim is to produce an original essay of four to five pages (not counting citations) that will analyze one of the three novels/plays using the material we have covered throughout the semester.

Three novels/plays:

Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

The Sea, The Sea by Iris Murdoch (note, if you choose this work, you may not use Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* to evaluate it.)

The Zoo Story by Edward Albee

What I expect is **not** a book review. What I am looking for is a thoughtful, intelligent reading/interpretation of these works from the perspective of political theory. I also do not want summaries that extend beyond a few paragraphs. The goal is to *say something original* about the text, not to merely tell me what the text says. Further, the use of secondary material from databases such *Jstor*, while interesting, is not wholly necessary for this assignment - the use of material assigned in class will be privileged much higher.

ADA Compliance

"Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

As amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008

The ADA is a federal, civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. The five sections of this law include employment, public services, public accommodations and services operated by private entities, telecommunications, and miscellaneous provisions. The ADA provides additional protection for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA is designed to remove barriers that prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.

Universities are covered in many ways under the ADA. Employment is addressed by Title I, accessibility provided by public and private entities as addressed by Titles II and III, transportation is addressed under Title IV, and miscellaneous items are addressed under Title V."

Essentially, this is "legalese" for, "if you have a disability that requires additional help or accommodation, please contact the Department of Disabilities Services and let me know how I can help." Any information exchanged is wholly confidential between me, you, and the university and I *highly* recommend these services if they are needed.