1 Course Overview and Objectives

This course is a broad, historical overview of Western political theory. Political theory, as a subfield focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of our discipline, and serves as the foundations of politics. While not discounting the influences of other thinkers from different parts of the world, the American political process that we see today, is a conglomeration of various traditions of Western philosophy, from the earliest inklings of justice, in both natural and human senses of the term, through republicanism, liberalism, pragmatism, rationalism and utopianism. The American system has, quite deliberately, borrowed from all of these traditions, and is, to some degree, a product of their combination. Understanding our own political foundations, in turn, help you understand and compare other countries and make more informed statements about what the “best” system of government might look like. To acquire this skill, you must study political theory.

Understanding “politics”, in a theoretical sense, helps us understand the political processes we observe in everyday life, and gives us a common language in which to converse about those processes. The “theorist” in the sense we will use the term in this class, is the person who will be able to take his or her observations and use them to make more general statements about such topics as “What is a Good state?” “What is Justice?” and “What is the correct balance between order and freedom?” By the end, you may find that you have more questions than answers, but the hope is that you gain the tools to begin a serious and rigorous inquiry, which may be far more rewarding than being handed “the answer” by some individual standing in front of the class.

2 Textbooks

The following books are required for this class:


These books will be available from any one of the local book stores, or may be ordered online.

## 3 Course Format

This course is designed primarily to facilitate survey instruction in Political Thought. As such, you will be exposed to a wide variety of thinkers and a number of topics.

It is my intention to make each of the sessions as engaging as possible for as many as possible. To accomplish the survey of this field, I will employ a mix of lectures, discussions and group simulations. We will also practice clear written communication, which is an essential skill in evaluation and explanation of political phenomena. I will make all reasonable efforts to incorporate feedback, which I will ask for on a regular basis, into the class.

There will be a significant reading load for this course. It is expected that for each credit hour of this course, you will do anywhere from 2-3 hours per week outside of class, in addition to normal. If you do not feel that you are prepared to actively read your assignments, you may want to reconsider your choice to join this class. All readings will come from either the required textbook or from online readings which I will assign from time to time. Students will be expected to read the assigned text each day before class and come to class prepared to discuss it.

To facilitate reading, this semester, I will assign written summaries each week. More information on these summaries is below.

## 4 Components of the Final Grade

### 4.1 Assessment

The class will vote on the distribution of the percentages for this class:

1. **Written Summaries** (30%) Over the Semester, Reading Groups will be required to write and submit 2 page long summaries of assigned readings. Groups will submit two (2) of these summaries, and will receive individual grades based on completeness of summary and individual participation in the group.

2. **Attendance and Participation** (60%) This grade will consist of points for attendance and participation in class.
3. **Mid Term Exam** (5%) The midterm exam will be a mixture between multiple choice and one page essay. The midterm exam will be taken in-class.

4. **Final Exam** (5%) The final exam will consist of two sections:
   - An in-class cumulative Multiple Choice test to be administered at the scheduled final exam time, and
   - A take-home cumulative essay, due at the beginning of the scheduled final exam time, for which you will spend the entire semester preparing.

5. **Extra Credit** In addition to the formal grades, I will offer opportunities for extra credit. More will be discussed below.

### 4.2 Grading Scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 and Above</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80-89.9</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70-79.9</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60 - 69.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.9 and Below</td>
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### 4.3 Grading Procedure

In an effort to ensure that all grading is conducted as objectively and as scientifically as possible, all grades will be assigned by a publicized rubric that I will create for each assignment or exam. You will have access to all rubrics in advance of completing the assignment or exam. In order to get full credit on any assignment or exam, you should make sure that you have hit every point on the rubric.

### 4.4 Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required and will be taken everyday, for many reasons. The most important of these is that there is no way you can possibly learn this material if you are not present in class. The policy on absences and tardiness is stated explicitly below. In the first few weeks, I will call roll each day.

For full attendance and participation points each day you, the student must be in class, ready to begin taking notes or discussing when the class is scheduled to begin, and remain through the entire class, fully engaged, and actively learning. Lack of appearance without either prior and accepted arrangement or documentation from a doctor, the police, the funeral home or whatever will be counted as an un-excused absence. Tardiness without prior arrangement will result in loss of participation points for the class.

Excused absences do not count against one’s attendance grade for the day. Unexcused absences count against the day’s attendance and participation grade and will, eventually
count against the final grade. Each day you are in class or your absence is excused, you will receive one point for attendance.

The class needs to decide on a grace period for tardies, specifically if there should be one, and if so, how long it should be. The grace period is intended to cover the rare unforeseen circumstance, though it will be up to my discretion about whether or not a student is abusing this grace period or excessively disrupting the class. Excessive tardiness will result in the student being counted absent for the day, whether or not he or she actually finally shows up.

In addition to being present in class, when class begins, participation will be graded. The instructor will assess participation each day. Participation grades will be a combination of the quantity but more importantly the quality of your discussion in class. Discussion should reflect your knowledge and synthesis of the reading materials, the lecture and the other discussion. Participation in class, which includes answering when being called upon, contributing in a meaningful way to the discussion, and offering intelligent insights on your own, will be worth one point per day. Being unprepared for class each day, not paying attention to lecture and discussion, falling asleep in class, and etc. will result in the loss of the day’s participation point.

4.5 Written Summaries

At the beginning of the course, I will divide the class up into six (6) groups. You will stay with this group for the entire semester. Each week, a selected group will be responsible for leading a discussion on the topic and reading(s) for the week. This assignment will consist of

1. Composing a written overview of the week’s topic and reading(s), between 3 and 4 pages long, to submit as a group,

2. a set of at least 5 discussion questions to pass out to the class, and

3. a short presentation about the week’s topic which you will deliver to the class, not longer than 10 minutes.

Both of the written assignments are due at the beginning of your groups appointed discussion days. Your presentations will be at the beginning of your appointed discussion days. I will then base the discussion off the questions your group has provided. This assignment is meant to evaluate:

1. Your ability to coherently summarize

2. Your ability to present your summary in a concise manner

3. Your ability to challenge classmates with thoughtful questions
4.6 Quizzes

Unannounced quizzes will be administered in this class. The quiz will be short answer format (1-5 words) and will be anywhere from one to 50 questions long. They will include questions which are germane to the class discussions or readings. Poor performance on these quizzes will affect your participation grade. So be prepared.

5 Extra Credit

There shall be ample opportunity to earn extra credit, which will be used toward improvement of either one particular assignment or toward the improvement of the final grade. To earn any extra credit, you must demonstrate a commitment to excellence in this class. Students may earn extra credit in the following ways:

• By visiting the SIUC Writing Center in the Library to improve your papers before turning them in
• By earning points on unannounced quizzes
• By fully and consistently attending and participating in class
• By outstanding participation in a class activity or a discussion

Extra Credit will be awarded along the following metric:

1. A documented visit to the SIUC Writing Center to get help proofing and revising a written summary will improve the grade on the paper by 10% of whatever you originally earned on the paper for which you visited the center. For example, if you earned an 80 out of 100 on a paper, a documented visit to the writing center will increase the grade to 88. If you earned a 100 out of 100 on the paper, a visit to the writing center will increase the grade to 110. Extra credit will however be awarded once per paper, but may be awarded for each paper. Only one visit per group is necessary to earn extra credit on the group paper.

2. Each time you score perfectly on an unannounced quiz, you will earn half of one percent toward your final grade. If you take 10 unannounced quizzes and score perfectly on each of them, you could literally increase your final grade by 5 percentage points.

3. If you earn 95% of all attendance and participation points, you will automatically receive a 100 on the objective portion of your final exam, meaning you don’t have to take the multiple choice portion of the final exam. You will, however still be required to take the essay portion of the final, regardless of how often you attend class.

4. Any other extra credit you earn as a result of winning in a simulation, or some strange mistake that I may make, or offering a particularly excellent insight in class room discussions.

Extra Credit will be tracked along with your grades. Except where specifically noted, extra credit will translate to a percentage which will be added to the participation score, and will
be calculated into the final grade. For example, if you earn 6 extra credit points, you will improve your attendance grade by 6 percent. These are opportunities for you to improve your grades, and all students are encouraged to avail themselves of these opportunities.

6 Class Policies

6.1 Disabilities

It is the policy of this university and the instructor to assist those with disabilities. You should notify me as soon as possible of any disability that might impact your performance in this course. Disabilities Support Services can assist you with taking notes, testing, and other accessibility issues.

6.2 Emergency Response

SIU is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIU Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in every building on campus and in the Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. It is also available on BERTs website at http://www.bert.siu.edu/ and on the Department of Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

6.3 Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a tentative agreement. It is subject to change in one of two ways:

1. Agreement between Instructor and Class, negotiated in class, on initiative of the class, or
2. Will of Instructor, without input of class.

If any of the policies or schedules in the class are altered in either way, the changes will be announced by me in the next class, and via an all class email over blackboard. All changes will go into effect immediately upon the delivery of this written notice. In addition, a written amendment to the syllabus will be provided online. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes.
6.4 Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is of paramount importance. All students in this course are responsible for their own work. Additionally, if you notice a classmate violating this section, you have an ethical obligation to inform me as soon as possible, so that I may deal with the situation. I do not tolerate academic dishonesty, and neither should you. If you work hard and have earned your grade, there is no reason that less honest individuals should receive their grade by cheating.

The following points are examples of violations of our code of academic integrity. This short list is not exhaustive:

- Submitting another’s work as your own is prohibited and constitutes plagiarism.
- Using information from an external source (such as another student, book, article, Internet site, etc.) without proper citations also constitutes plagiarism.
- Cheating on tests, in any fashion, is strictly and explicitly prohibited and will result in being awarded a zero for the exam.

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in SIUC’s Student Conduct Code (Section II, Articles A and B). Violations of this code can lead to failure of the course and a hearing with the university’s judicial board to suspend you from the university. If you have any questions about anything in this section or anything resembling a breech in academic integrity, please do yourself a favor and ask me first, before we ever get to any issue. I will be more than happy to help you remain within the limits of this policy, or resolve a breech that has already been committed by another to the fullest extent of my ability.

6.5 Professional Discussion

Class discussions of the issues in political science can lead to strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussion must be respectful and scholarly. My policy is that egregious use of unacceptable comments will result in being asked to leave the class for the remainder of the day and loss of participation and attendance points.

What constitutes scholarly comments? Scholarly comments:

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement. You don’t have to agree with any comment made, but if you disagree, you must still respect the right of a person to hold an opinion and to state it in a scholarly way.
- should engage ideas, and not people.
- are related to class and/or the course material
- focus on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs, and
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.
And more importantly, what constitutes *unacceptable comments*? Unacceptable comments:

- are personal in nature. This includes attacks on a persons, appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs.
- include racist or sexist comments, or any other form of bigoted or hateful speech. Rule of thumb on this: If you wouldn’t say it to your professor in any other class, don’t say it in this class.
- include rudely interrupting the instructor or other students. If several people have things to say, please raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
- often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed in a scholarly way (see above).
- may include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner.
- include ignoring the instructors authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom environment.

### 6.6 Absences and Tardiness

The following policies on Absence and Tardiness

- **Excused Absence policy**- There shall be no penalty for excused absences.
- **Excuse for Absence policy**- For an absence to be excused, the student must provide documentation from some legitimate source (doctor, coach, professor, police, etc., all of whom will happily write a note on official paper.) Absences may also be excused if students contact the instructor before class by email, though acceptance of emails as excuses is at the sole discretion of the instructor. The excused absence of one member of any group does not relieve the rest of the group from turning in their papers on time.
- **Unexcused Absence policy**- The Class has decided that we shall allow 5 unexcused absences. Any absence beyond the decided amount will result in the loss of one letter grade per additional absence after all extra credit is figured into the grade.
- **Tardiness Policy**- The policy for acceptance of excuses for absence also holds for tardies: excessive tardiness (by my determination) will result in the loss of participation points for the day. I do not tolerate excessive tardiness. It is disruptive and quite rude. Since I will be taking role at the beginning of class, those who come to class after roll is completed will need to see me after class, or they will be counted absent.

### 6.7 Papers

The Policy on submission of Papers is as follows:
1. All papers, if they are to be graded, must be turned in as a hard copy to the instructor on Wednesday of the week you are assigned. Submission to online anti-plagiarism sites will not be necessary.

2. Email submissions of papers will not be accepted for a grade. However, they will be useful if a paper is due on a certain date, and the student runs into some unforeseen problem with printing or has an excused absence. The student may then submit the paper by email to prove that it has been completed on time and provide the hard-copy of the paper at the next class period.

See the rubric which I will provide beforehand for information about precisely what I would like on these papers.

Note: If you fail to turn in any one of these papers, you cannot get an “A” in this course.

6.8 Make-Up Exams and Assignments

I have adopted the following policies for make-ups.

• Make-up exam policy- I do not accept make-up exams. It is not fair to those who prepared for a test to allow some students to take the test after the assigned period. I will allow students to take tests before the scheduled test date, in emergency cases.
• Late Paper policy- I will not accept late assignments in this course. In order to conduct discussions, all work assigned to your group must be completed before class begins.

6.9 Student Conduct

We are all expected to behave as adults and as professionals, and we all have the right to expect the same of our peers and fellow classmates, as well as the instructor. I have adopted the following policies on in-class behavior.

• Disruptive behavior in-class- Discussion among students not directed toward the class and outside of discussion periods is not permitted. Leaving before class ends is also not permitted without penalty. Egregious disruption of the class will cost the participation points for the day.
• Usage of Cell Phones and other electronic communications devices- Use of cellular phones and other electronic communications devices are not permitted. Texting is also not permitted in this class. I will make an exception in the event of an emergency. If there is some pressing reason that you need to keep your cell phone turned on, please notify me before class. Otherwise, cell phones, pagers, and PDA’s are to be kept off during class.
• Usage of Laptops- I permit the use of laptops for note taking purposes only. Students are on the honor system with regards to proper usage of these devices. Use of laptops for purposes other than taking notes during class, (such as web surfing, email, playing
Bejeweled Blitz or other video games, etc.) will result in loss of participation points for the day. Laptops will not be permitted during tests.

6.10 Contacting the Instructor

You may contact me through email, visit the office during office hours, or call by phone. Email is better for shorter questions or questions that require clarification. Email is also acceptable to let me know if you will not be able to make it to class. If you call and don’t talk to me directly, assume that I haven’t heard anything. Don’t assume that voice mail will ever be checked.

7 Tentative Schedule and Itinerary

7.1 Important Dates and Deadlines

- Tuesday, January 15: First Day of Class
- Tuesday, March 12: NO CLASS (Spring Break)
- Thursday, March 14: NO CLASS (Spring Break)
- Thursday March 21: MIDTERM EXAM
- Tuesday, October 9: NO CLASS- Fall Break
- Monday, May 6, 12:50 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.- FINAL EXAM

7.2 Weekly Schedule

Note 1: Readings are signified by either CMPT, LB, FIFE or OL. CMPT = Classics of Moral and Political Theory. LB = Looking Backward. FIFE = Feminism is for Everyone OL = I will post these online

Note 2: This schedule is subject to change based on the discretion of the instructor, student needs, or to spend extra time highlighting certain concepts. I will announce any changes verbally and by mass email, but ultimately it is your responsibility to keep up with those changes.

Topic 1: Front Matter

- Jan 15- Introduction/ Syllabus/ Policy Discussion
- Jan 17- Intro to Political Theory- What is it? OL- Strauss 1957

Topic 2- Virtue
• Jan 22- Virtue

**OL- The Meno**
Selection from *de Officiis*

**CMPT-**Selection from *Nicomachean Ethics*

• Jan 24- **Group 1** Discussion on Virtue

**Topic 3- The Republic**

• Jan 29- Justice and the Soul in Society

**CMPT- The Republic** Book I-IV

• Jan 31- **Group 2** Discussion on Justice

• Feb 5- Social Organization of a Just Society

**CMPT- The Republic** Book V-VI
Selection from *The Politics*

• Feb 7- **Group 3** Discussion on Just Society

• Feb 12- Allegories of the Cave and Ship

**CMPT- The Republic** Book VII-IX

• Feb 14- **Group 4** Discussion on the Allegories

**Topic 4- Power, Morality and Rule**

• Feb 19- God’s Law vs. Man’s Law

**CMPT- The City of God**
Selections from *Summa Theologica*

• Feb 21- **Group 5** Discussion on Obedience to God

• Feb 26- Power, and the Rise of Modernity

**CMPT- “Letter to Francesco Vettori”**
*The Prince*, Chs. 1, 2, 3 and 5

**OL- “The Melian Dialogue”**

• Feb 28- **Group 6** Discussion on Power

• Mar 5- Modern Statecraft

**CMPT- The Prince**, Chs. 7-26

• Mar 7- **Group 1** Discussion on Statecraft

**SPRING BREAK** Mar 9- Mar 17
Enjoy yourself, and Study for your Midterm
Topic 5- Midterm

- Mar 19- Review for Midterm and Evaluation
- Mar 21- MIDTERM EXAM (Bring your Pencils)

Topic 6- Rationalism and Liberalism

- Mar 26 Midterm Review and State of Nature
  
  CMPT- The Leviathan Intro and Parts 1 and 2

- Mar 28- Group 2 Discussion on The State of Nature
- Apr 2- Rationalism and the Social Contract
  
  CMPT- Second Treatise on Government Intro., Chs. 1-9

- Apr 4- Group 3 Discussion on Social Contract
- Apr 9- On the General Will
  
  CMPT- Selections from On the Social Contract

- Apr 11- Group 4 Discussion on the General Will

Topic 7- American Political Thought

- Apr 16- Madison and Federalism
  
  OL- Selections from The Federalist Papers

- Apr 18- Group 5 Discussion on Federalism
- Apr 23- Socialism and Pragmatism
  
  LB- Selections from Looking Backward
  
  OL- Selections from Dewey

- Apr 25 Group 6 Discussion on Socialism and Pragmatism
- Apr 30- Feminism and Liberalism
  
  FIFE- Selections from Feminism is for Everybody

- May 2 Discussion on Feminism and Preview of Final

Topic 8- Final

- Monday, May 6, 12:50 p.m.- 2:50 p.m. FINAL EXAM- Make Sure you Bring Pencils!