

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to some of the concepts and questions encountered in a major subfield of political science, that of political thought or political philosophy. It is not a course in the history of political thought, in which we would study chronologically the views of these who are considered great political thinkers. Neither is it a course in ideologies or belief systems, in which we would examine worldviews and their variations typical of liberals, conservatives, socialists, feminists, and so forth. That is, it is not a course in "isms."

It is, rather, a course in which we shall examine concepts and ideas, and what particular thinkers, both past and present, have said about these concepts and ideas. How can we justify political authority? Is adopting policies that promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people a good basis for government? Why are rights important, and on what bases may they be justified? What are some of their weaknesses? What are some of the conflicting ways in which people have defined justice? What is liberty, and how much liberty is compatible with a working society? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of democracy? What are some current critiques of liberal democracy, and what are some responses to these? To what extent does ethical behavior require us to think beyond the boundaries of our own nations, and why? Finally, on what bases might war be justified? Can terrorism ever be justified as a tactic of war?

Each of these questions is taken from one of the ten general topic areas we will be studying this semester, spending one to two weeks on each area. Bowie and Simon's The Individual and The Political Order (4th ed.) contains nine chapters that not only present in some detail alternative ways of approaching the chapter topics, but also include questions to help guide your own thinking. Louis & Pojman's edited volume, Political Philosophy: Classic and Contemporary Readings, contains articles or book excerpts each of which takes a particular point of view on a topic related to the chapters in the other book. I have assigned the readings in the second book as illustrations of the larger topics we shall be discussing from the first book.

Class will consist of a mixture of lecture and discussion. I hope to minimize lecture and concentrate on discussion, and I expect your active participation. You will need to read each assignment by the day it is listed for discussion. On the calendar of assignments below, the assignments listing authors other than Pojman are in the large, edited volume.

Course Requirements

1. Mid-term exam (30%) March 12
2. Final exam (30%) during first 75 minutes of final exam period (see reverse).
3. Three two-page reaction papers to assigned readings, due on the day for which the reading is assigned. You may only hand in one paper related to each general topic on the syllabus. (10% each, 30% total)
4. Class participation (10%)

Exams. Much of each exam will be essay, but there will also be some multiple choice and/or short answer questions. The exact mix will be announced prior to each exam.

Reaction papers. These are to be no more than two pages long. They are designed not to summarize the reading, but should focus on a particular aspect or point which you found important or interesting. Briefly summarize the author's argument and then supply your own intelligent commentary. Back up your argument with sound reasoning. Again, these are due the same day as the reading on which you are commenting.

CALENDAR

Jan. 22	Introduction
Jan. 27	Political Authority. B & S, Introduction and Ch. 1, 1-13
Jan. 29	B & S, Ch. 1, 13-20; Hobbes, 8-15, 21-22, 26-30
Feb. 3	B & S, Ch. 1, 20-25; Wolff; 131-136
Feb. 5	Utilitarianism, B & S, Ch. 2, 29-39; Hume, 63-72
Feb. 10	B & S, 39-48; Rawls, 143-150; Smith, 163-176
Feb. 12	Rights. B & S, Ch. 3, 51-58; Feinberg, 460-468
Feb. 17	B & S, 58-63; Locke, 31-40, 45-50
Feb. 19	B & S, 64-78; UN, 496-500
Feb. 24	MacIntyre, 479-482; Wolgast, 482-489
Feb. 26	Justice. B & S, Ch. 4, 83-90; Hume, 252-256; Rawls, 270-285
March 3	Finish Rawls
March 5	B & S, 90-94; Nozick, 256-270
March 10	B & S, 95-101; Marx, 92-95; Frankfurt, 380-391; Roberts, 247-250
March 12	TEST 1
March 17, 19	SPRING BREAK
March 24	Liberty. B & S, Ch. 5, 105-111; Berlin, 179-192
March 26	B & S, 111-114; Mill, 95-129
March 31	B & S, 114-122; Devlin, 311-318; Hart, 318-321
April 2	NO CLASS--Prof. Gill at Midwest Political Science Association
April 7	B & S, 122-127; Feinberg, 192-198; Dworkin, 198-208
April 9	B & S, 127-146; Fish, 239-247
April 14	Democracy. B & S, Ch. 6, 153-166. Rousseau, 51-63
April 16	B & S, 166-178; Dworkin, 333-345
April 21	Liberalism & Its Critics. B & S, Ch. 7, 183-194; Galston, 345-352
April 23	B & S, 194-202; MacIntyre, 518-526
April 28	Ethics & International Affairs. B & S, Ch. 8, 207-221; Machiavelli, 2-8
April 30	B & S, 221-229; Barry, 546-556; Buchanan, 556-563
May 5	War, Morality, Terrorism. B & S, 235-254; Valls, 565-573
May 9 (Sat.)	TEST 2: Sec. 2, 2:30-3:45 p.m.
May 12 (Tues.)	TEST 2: Sec. 1, 2:30-3:45 p.m.