

POSC 160

Political Philosophy

Spring 2013

Class Hours: MW 9:50AM- 11:00AM, F 9:40AM-10:40AM

Classroom: Weitz 133

Professor: Mihaela Czobor-Lupp

Office: Willis 418

Office Hours: **MW: 3:15 PM-5:15 PM and T: 4:00-5:00, or by appointment, or by appointment**

Course Description

In this course we will explore and discuss ancient and modern responses to questions such as: What are the nature, the causes, and the effects of good government? How far are people able to influence the regimes that govern them? Can political philosophy help us identify the best form of government? What are the qualities of a good citizen? Who should rule? What are the qualities of a good ruler? How should political change occur: by reform or by revolution? Is democracy the best form of government? What is liberty? Why is liberty politically and morally relevant? What is the relationship between history and politics?

In answering these questions we will understand the differences between ancient and modern political philosophy. We will also understand how modern political philosophers differed from each other in the way they theorized about politics and its relationship with moral, socio-economic, and cultural aspects.

Course objectives

- To understand what political philosophy is: what are its main concerns and its specific method;
- To grasp the foundations of Western political philosophy, as set by Greek political philosophy, particularly, by Plato and Aristotle;
- To learn about the specific concerns and ideas of ancient and, respectively, of modern political philosophy;
- To understand the differences (and the similarities) between ancient and modern political philosophy;
- To know some of the differences between modern approaches to politics;
- To become better readers, thinkers, speakers, and writers

Achieving the Course Objectives:

We will learn about the specific nature of political philosophy, particularly, of ancient and modern political philosophy by carefully and closely reading the following books:
Plato, *The Republic*, translated by Richard W. Sterling and William C. Scott, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, ISBN: 9780393314677

Aristotle, *Politics*, translated and with an introduction, notes, and glossary by Carnes Lord, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984, ISBN: 9780226026695
Th. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, ISBN: 9780521567978
Im. Kant, *Political Writings*, translated by H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge University Press, 2000, ISBN: 9780521398374
J.S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, Oxford's World Classics, ISBN: 9780199535736
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, Hackett Publishing Company, 1980, ISBN: 9780915144945

Course Requirements:

Four short (two page) essays on the following topics (10% each):

- (i) Present Plato's argument for the best form of government and then provide one reason for which you agree with him and one reason for which you disagree (due on **April 18**, a hard copy should be dropped in the box outside my office).
- (ii) Present Aristotle's conception of the best form of government and then provide two reasons for which Aristotle disagrees with Plato on this issue (due on **May 2**, a hard copy should be dropped in the box outside my office).
- (iii) Present Hobbes' argument about the state of nature and its consequences for the political arrangements that the English philosopher recommends. Then, relying on Kant's conception of the state of nature and history, as well as of the role of human reason and freedom in the advancement of human societies, show the limitations of Hobbes' view of both domestic and international politics (due **on May 21**, a hard copy should be dropped in the box outside my office).
- (iv) Present Mill's argument for the value of individuality and its full development. One assumption that underlies Mill's argument is provided by his recommendation about what kind of values and attitudes a society's culture should encourage in its members. Identify this assumption and then compare it with Nietzsche's argument for historical education and its benign and harmful benefits (due **on June 4**, a hard copy should be dropped in the box outside my office).

Final Exam (45%)

Active and informed class participation: This includes: (i) attending classes; (ii) doing the readings for the day; and (iii) in class assignments that will test your degree of familiarization with and understanding of the reading that you were requested to prepare for the current day (15%).

What is Expected from the Students?

Students will be expected to read, think, form arguments and counter-arguments, understand the fundamental concepts, and participate (in a critical and creative manner) in class discussion. That means that students must keep up in their reading assignments and attend class regularly. Students must be fully prepared *at all times* to discuss the arguments and concepts from the previous readings. The best students will be knowledgeable, critical but balanced in their critical assessments, and will develop coherent and sound arguments that they can defend in their essays, in their exams, and in class discussion.

Academic dishonesty:

"All assignments, quizzes, and exams must be done on your own. Note that academic dishonesty includes not only cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism, but also includes helping other students commit acts of academic dishonesty by allowing them to obtain copies of your work. You are allowed to use the Web for reference purposes, but you may not copy material from any website or any other source without proper citations. In short, all submitted work must be your own.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with strictly. Each such case will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee via the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of the College. A formal finding of responsibility can result in disciplinary sanctions ranging from a censure and a warning to permanent dismissal in the case of repeated and serious offenses.

The academic penalty for a finding of responsibility can range from a grade of zero in the specific assignment to an F in this course."

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS:

April 1: *Introduction: What is Political Philosophy? Why Study Political Philosophy? How to Study Political Philosophy?*

April 3: *Justice: the just soul and the just city*
Reading: Plato, Republic, Book I and II

April 5: *Politics and education: the education of the guardians*
Reading: Plato, Republic, Book III and Book IV

April 8: *Political virtues and political life in the just city: property, family, and the education of the philosopher*
Reading: Plato, Republic, Book V, Book VI

April 10: *The decay of the city: types of political regimes (the critique of democracy)*

Reading: Plato, Republic, Book VII and Book VIII

April 15: *The enemies of justice: the tyrant and the poets (orators included)*

Reading: Plato, Republic, Book IX and Book X

April 17: *The place and role of political partnership in the human life*

Reading: Aristotle, Politics, Book 1

April 19: *Citizenship, qualifications for citizenship: the difference between the good citizen and the good man*

Reading: Aristotle, Politics, Book 3, Chapters 1-13, 18

April 22: *The nature of the political regime, types of political regimes, and the stability of political regimes*

Reading: Aristotle, Politics, Book 4, Chapters 1-4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, Book 5, chapters 1-3, 5-8

April 24: *The best (practicable) political regime*

Reading: Aristotle, Politics, Book 4, Chapters 8, 9, 11, Book 7, chapters 1-3, 7, 13-15

April 26: *Hobbes: Rethinking the foundations of politics*

Reading: Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Introduction

April 29: *Speech, reason, and power*

Reading: Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Part One, Chapters I, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, viii, x, and xi

May 1: *The natural condition of man: natural law and natural rights*

Reading: Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Part One, Chapters xiii, xiv, xv, and xvi

May 3: *The commonwealth*

Reading: Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Part Two, Chapters xvii, xviii, xix, xxi

May 6: Mid-term break

May 8: *Introduction to Kant: Enlightenment and politics*

Reading: Kant, An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?, in Political Writings

May 10: *Human nature, history, and reason*

Reading: Kant, Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose, in Political Writings

May 13: *Morality and politics*

Reading: Kant, On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, But It Does Not Apply in Practice, in Political Writings, 61-73

May 15: *Kant's view of domestic and international government*

Reading: Kant, On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, But It Does Not Apply in Practice, in Political Writings, 73-93

May 17: *Politics and reason*

Reading: Kant, Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch, in Political Writings, 93-115

May 20: *Politics and reason*

Reading: Kant, Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch, in Political Writings, 116-130

May 22: *How to get there? Prophetic history and human freedom*

Reading: Kant, The Contest of Faculties, in Political Writings

May 24: *Why does liberty matter? What kind of liberty?*

Reading: J. S. Mill, On Liberty, Chapter One

May 27: *The Value of individuality and its development*

Reading: J. S. Mill, On Liberty, Chapters Two and Three

May 29: *The value of individuality of its development*

Reading: J. S. Mill, On Liberty, Chapters Four and Five

May 31: *History for and against life*

Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life, 7-32

June 3: *Modern society, culture, and politics*

Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life, 32-64

June 5: *Final review*