



ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL THEORY – GOVT-080-20
Georgetown University – Summer 2020

Instructor: Prof. Joseph E. Hartman
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Class times/location: July 6 – August 6, 2020
Monday – Thursday, 10:45 AM – 12:45 PM
Room TBD

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, 12:45 - 2:00 PM, by appointment

Class Description and Objectives:

The goal of this class is to introduce students to the field of political theory. Rather than attempting a broad survey of roughly 2,500 years of the history of political thought, however, we instead will engage in a close reading of six authors, each of whom writes in six different modes and each of whom can be thought of as posing a particular intractable question: for Plato, why are we resistant to truth? for Augustine, why are we unable to do the good? for Hobbes, what are the conditions under which civil peace is possible? for Rousseau, why are we moderns lost to ourselves? for Tocqueville, how are we able to contend with the “democratic age”? for Nietzsche, what is the nature of the civilizational crisis that is upon us?

Course Materials

We will read the books on the reading list in historical order, beginning with Plato and ending with Nietzsche. The following texts are required for this class, and are available at the University Bookstore:

- Plato, *Republic*, Sterling and Scott trans., New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985.
ISBN 978-0393314670
- Aristotle, *Politics*, Lord trans., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.
ISBN 9780226921846
- Augustine, *City of God*, Bettenson trans., New York: Penguin Books, 1984.
ISBN 978-0140448948
- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Curley ed., Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Co., 1994.
ISBN 978-0872201774

Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings*, John Scott trans., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

ISBN 978-0226921860

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Mayer ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

ISBN 978-0061127922

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Kaufman trans., New York: Vintage, 1967.

ISBN 978-0679724629

From time to time I may suggest or recommend supplemental readings relevant to the subject matter of the course, although those readings are not required.

Preparation for and Participation in Class

We will meet Monday - Thursday, from 10:45 to 12:45 in ICC 117. Class time will be devoted less to lecture than to an exegesis of these often difficult and at times even scandalous texts. The readings should be approached with the conventional encouragements about "critical thinking," but also with a willingness to suspend disbelief. Said otherwise, *both* the hermeneutics of suspicion *and* the hermeneutics of deference will be part of our enterprise. To understand the philosophical questions these authors adduce, and the wagers they offer in way of an answer, requires both.

You must bring the book that we are currently reading to class each day. I will spend much of the period elaborating what we have read and raising questions about the larger debate into which it fits. This exercise is designed to facilitate discussion of the issues involved, and I will make every effort to encourage a lively conversation in class; indeed, your participation through questions and discussion will determine its quality. Accordingly, please come prepared; additionally, *your papers will be much better if you keep up on the readings.*

Outside of class, I urge you to talk about this material with your classmates, friends, and acquaintances. *The material we are considering can be truly learned only by talking about it with others.*

Course Grading and Requirements:

Your grade will be determined by your overall average, with each assignment graded on a zero to 100-point scale. In addition to readings and class attendance, you are required to complete two short papers (1000-1500 words) on selected topics during the semester and a longer final paper (2000-2500 words) at the close of the semester. The point distribution is as follows:

Short Papers:	25 percent
Final Paper:	35 percent
Class Participation**:	15 percent

**Attendance is not optional. If you are not in class on time at the beginning of the hour, you will be marked "absent" for the class session.

The grade ranges are defined as follows:

- A= unusual excellence (A- 90-93; A 94-100)
- B= work distinctly above average (B- 80-82; B 83-86, B+ 87-89)
- C= work of average quality (C- 70-72; C 73-76; C+ 77-79)
- D= below average work, the lowest passing mark (D 60-69)
- F= Failure, no course Credit (59 and below)

Please note that the University offers a number of valuable academic resources, including:

- Georgetown University Writing Center (Lauinger Library, 217A; 202-687-4246; <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>)
- Academic Resource Center (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>)

Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow their office time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

Academic Integrity, Classroom Conduct, and Extensions Policy

Students must follow the University Honor Code, which states:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Failure to comply with the Honor Code will result in a grade of F in the course. Additional information concerning Georgetown's honor system is available at: https://www11.georgetown.edu/programs/gervase/hc/honor_system.html.

While classroom discussions will often be spirited and intense, students should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions. Student communications through email and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) should remain respectful and professional as well.

Late Assignments

Three 24-hour extension "coupons" are included in this syllabus, which you may use to obtain extensions on an assignment due date. You may use the coupons all at once, individually, or in any combination you choose. No student may use more than three coupons over the course of the semester. I will keep track of student coupon use. Other

than death in one's immediate family or a Dean's excuse attesting to a medical emergency, I will not permit extensions beyond those available through the coupons. A coupon allows a paper to be turned in by 5pm the next **calendar** day after the original due date. Thus, a paper due on a Thursday may be turned in at 5pm on Friday without penalty, if a coupon is used. Note that a paper due on a Thursday must be turned in on Sunday by 5pm with three coupons to be considered on time. For papers that exceed the coupon extension limit, I will deduct **five points** (out of a possible 100) for every day a paper is late.

Electronic Media Policy

Students must turn off all cell phones, pagers, or other communication devices while in class. ***Unless you have a need documented by the Academic Resource Center, you may not use laptop computers, phones, tablets or other electronic devices during class time.*** Recent studies have confirmed not only that laptops and tablets tend to distract users and those around them, but also that taking handwritten notes rather than typing results in superior information retention and conceptual grasp of the material studied, as it requires students to process the material rather than simply take dictation. In any event, this course seeks to develop your capacity to think with agility, analytical rigor and depth and engage you in the questions raised by our texts, not just to transfer information.

Readings

Because of the short duration of the course, in most cases we will be unable to attend to the complete texts of all the authors we will be considering here. The reading selections follow below. I will make an effort to give you advance notice of the passages we will be reading for the next several classes. In general, plan to read ahead just a bit—and then reread the passages the night before class.

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| WEEK 1: July 6-10 | Plato, <i>The Republic</i> (entire text). |
| WEEK 2: July 13-16 | Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Bk. I; Bk. II, Chs. 1-9; Bk. III, Chs. 1-18; Bk. IV, Chs. 1- 11; Bk. VI, Chs. 1-5; Bk. VII, Chs. 1-3, 13-17.

Augustine, <i>City of God</i> , Bk. I, Preface, Chs. 1, 8, 9, 11, 18, 21, 30, 31, 33, 35; Bk. II, Chs. 2, 7, 14, 20; Bk. IV, Chs. 15, 34; Bk. V, Chs. 10, 19; Bk. VII, Ch. 32; Bk. XIX, Chs. 14-17. |
| WEEK 3: July 20-23 | Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Part I, Author's Introduction, Chs. 1, 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16; Part II, Chs. 17, 26, 29, 31; Part III, Chs. 32, 35, 39, 43.

Rousseau, "First Discourse" (entire text). |
| WEEK 4: July 27 - 30 | Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> , Author's Introduction, Vol. I, Part I, Chs. 1, 2, 3, 4, Vol. I, Part II, Chs. 5 (pp. 212-30), 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Vol. II, Part I, Chs. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; |

Vol. II, Part II, Chs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 20; Vol. II, Part III, Chs. 1, 8, 10, 12, 19, 21, 22; Vol. II, Part IV, Chs. 1, 2, 3, 6, 8.

WEEK 5: Aug. 3 - 6

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Preface; First Essay, §§1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17.

Assignments

Thursday, July 16

First Essay Assignment Handed Out

Thursday, July 23

First Essay Due

Thursday, July 30

Second Essay Assignment Handed Out

Thursday, Aug. 6

LAST DAY OF CLASS—Second Essay Due; Final Essay Assignment Handed Out

DATE TBD

Final Essay Due

Syllabus Modification: In some instances, the syllabus might need to be altered, and I retain the right to do so. In those instances, I will give notice of those changes to the class in a timely manner.

Extension Coupons



COUPON #1 – ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL THEORY (SUMMER 2020)

This coupon entitles you to an automatic, no questions asked, 24-hour (one calendar day) extension on any paper for Elements of Political Theory, subject to limitations detailed in the syllabus.



COUPON #2 – ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL THEORY (SUMMER 2020)

This coupon entitles you to an automatic, no questions asked, 24-hour (one calendar day) extension on any paper for Elements of Political Theory, subject to limitations detailed in the syllabus.



COUPON #3 – ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL THEORY (SUMMER 2019)

This coupon entitles you to an automatic, no questions asked, 24-hour (one calendar day) extension on any paper for Elements of Political Theory, subject to limitations detailed in the syllabus.