



**ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL THEORY – GOVT-080-20**  
**Georgetown University – Summer 2022**

**Instructor:** Prof. Joseph E. Hartman  
Email: [jeh93@georgetown.edu](mailto:jeh93@georgetown.edu)

**Class times/location:** July 11 – August 11, 2021  
Monday – Thursday, 10:50 AM – 12:45 PM

**Office Hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 3:05-4:00 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 to eight authors (time permitting), each of whom writes in a different mode 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? for Arendt, why do we *choose* totalitarianism? For King, how and on what foundations can we achieve equal justice for all?

**Course Materials**

We will read the books on the reading list in historical order, beginning with Plato and ending with King. 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  
Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1994.  
ISBN 978-015670153-2  
King, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (distributed via pdf)

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**

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)

### **Technical Support**

- **Canvas** - Students have 24/7 access to <http://canvas.georgetown.edu/getting-help>, including live chat and a support hotline at (855) 338-2770
- **Zoom** - For support with Zoom, email: [zoom@georgetown.edu](mailto:zoom@georgetown.edu)
- **Use of Georgetown University-issued accounts** for Google Mail, Calendar, Groups, Talk, Docs, Sites, Video, and Contacts is governed by the contract between Georgetown University and Google. For help managing your Google Documents, visit [Google Drive Help Center](#).
- **Contact the UIS Service Center** at [help@georgetown.edu](mailto:help@georgetown.edu) if you have a question regarding:
  - your GU netID and/or password
  - your GU email account
  - any connectivity issues

### **Academic Resources**

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](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**

Two 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 two 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 *your time zone* 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 Saturday by 5pm with two 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.

### **Virtual Classroom Policies**

Given that Zoom will serve as the primary tool for our synchronous sessions, please adhere to the following practices:

- Attend class on time and remain on Zoom throughout the session;
- Arrive to the Zoom class prepared to discuss readings, current events, and other assigned materials;
- Unless you have received my prior approval, keep webcams and speakers on throughout the entire class session;

- Keep your microphone muted unless speaking;
- Dress appropriately for class;
- Limit eating to before or after class (or during breaks);

### **Readings**

Because of the compressed timeframe and relatively brief 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.

- WEEK 1:** July 11-14      **Plato, *The Republic*** (entire text).
- WEEK 2:** July 18-21      **Aristotle, *Politics***, 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, *City of God***, 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 25-28      **Hobbes, *Leviathan***, 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:** Aug. 1-4      **Tocqueville, *Democracy in America***, 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. 8-11      **Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals***, Preface; First Essay, §§1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17.
- Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism***, Preface, Part Three: Totalitarianism, Chs. 10, 11, 13
- King, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail***

## **Assignments**

Thursday, July 21	<b><i>First Essay Assignment Handed Out</i></b>
Thursday, July 28	<b><i>First Essay Due</i></b>
Thursday, Aug. 4	<b><i>Second Essay Assignment Handed Out</i></b>
Thursday, Aug. 11	<b><i>LAST DAY OF CLASS—Second Essay Due; Final Essay Assignment Handed Out</i></b>
<b>DATE TBD</b>	<b><i>Final Essay Due</i></b>

*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 2022)

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 2022)

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.