

Political Theory 1438

FALL, 2017

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10am to 12noon and 2:20pm to 3:30pm; *OR BY APPOINTMENT* (Please do feel free to contact me to find a time to come by as needed!)

Course Description:

Political Theory will survey the most significant theoretical and philosophical contributions made to Western political thought starting with the Classical Greeks and ending in the late-twentieth century. Students will be required to understand and speak to the formulation of ideas, as they concern society and politics, over the past 3000 years. The student will see the continuities and failures in the Western effort to balance the need for communal security with a desire for political and individual freedoms. The introduction to these specific political theories will also potentiate the student's experience and knowledge gained in American and World Studies. Students will accomplish this by reading excerpts from the actual writers, looking at the historical context, and through extensive class discussion and debate. Knowledge gained in this course will enable the student to be an effective and intelligent participant in their political discourse.

Course Objectives:

- a. Students will trace the development of Western political thought from its origins in Classical Greece to its impact on global politics in the late 20th Century.
- b. Students will develop their analytical skills through intense analysis of primary sources.
- c. Students will hone their critical writing skills through a variety of long and short written assignments.
- d. Students will explore the complex relationship between political ideals and the realities of constructing and implementing public policy in different and diverse societies.
- e. Students will confront the issues of ethical policy-making in the context of varied political theories.
- f. Students will look to evaluate the fulfillment (or failures) of developing political theories in light of contemporary events and political systems.

Course Evaluation:

Quizzes	40%
Class Participation	35% (That means speaking: answering and asking questions.)
Papers and Projects	20%
Final	5%

Student Expectations:

Absences and Lateness (Tardy):

Class is mandatory (as per the Handbook). Any unexcused absence will result in “no credit” for that class period. Anyone late up to ten minutes will receive a “tardy” report and after ten minutes, an “absent” one. Please, as is humanly possible, do not be late. If you have a good reason for being more than ten minutes late, still come to class and we can discuss it after the period, but *never* during. If you do not have a good excuse, be honest about it.

There is also no automatic right to make-up a quiz or hand in a late assignment. Make-ups will be allowed, and late assignments accepted, only with a valid excuse. All work missed due to illness must be finished within a week of your return or will not count. Example of a valid excuse: An illness requiring medical care, a family crisis, a pre-arranged/approved attendance at a school function, or in the case of accidental dismemberment.

Assignment Policy:

All assignments are due in class the day assigned. Period. There really are *no* good computer excuses. All short assignments that fall under class participation must be turned in that class period, no later. Failure to have materials in hand will result in no credit. Papers and projects are due in class or will suffer a late penalty. Any paper turned in by the end of the day will lose one full letter grade. If turned in by the end of the second day, they lose another full letter grade, and after the third day the assignment will not be accepted at all (you receive a zero). This rule is not negotiable except in the case of recognized illness or having to leave IMSA for an emergency. Finally, for all late work, it is your responsibility to find me and give it to me, not just to “leave it on my chair.”

Class Room Decorum:

Each student is expected to behave in a civilized and scholarly fashion toward his or her peers. Respect will be shown for those speaking and in addressing differences. Also, no headgear (i.e. baseball caps or bandanas) will be worn during the class period. Phones will not be permitted (if you have it, turn it off and put it away). If your phone or device goes off during class, I will take it, and you can get it from me the following day, in my office. Finally, sleep is an issue at IMSA. Don’t do it in my class or you will be told to stand, or worse, leave.

If you are caught “IM”ing in any fashion, so Facebook, Tumblr, etc, you will be given a “0” for the day. That is a “first” warning. The second time you will be asked to leave the classroom and be given an “unexcused absence.” Please take this seriously, as three unexcused absences will result in withdrawal from the course. Seriously. The best solution for this is that you close all non-class associated windows on your screen.

Assigned Readings, etc:

The reading assignments are given in detail and are listed on the day they are due. Failing to read them will undermine your ability to participate and undermine your grade on pop quizzes. Projects and written assignments will be injected into the schedule and are therefore not listed. However, all assignments will be given with ample time to complete.

Academic Dishonesty:

Due to the limits of time here at IMSA, there will be the temptation to pass off other people's work as your own. In a culture where the value of ideas is rarely in their value for their own sake, it is crucial to appreciate them at an institution that thrives on developing new ones. All of the work you turn in for this course should be your own. Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams in their book *The Craft of Research*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) explain:

"You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else's words or ideas but fail to credit that person. . . . You plagiarize even when you do credit the source but use its exact words without using quotation marks or block indentation. . . . You [also] plagiarize when you paraphrase a source so closely that anyone putting your work next to it would see that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow."

Claiming as your own the work of others, in whole *or in part*, will result in an immediate failure (here no credit) for the assignment and referral to Keith McInstosh for disciplinary action. See the IMSA Student Handbook for specific details and be sure to refer to the IMSA [Chicago Style](#) website for written assignments. Such activity can result in being dismissed from IMSA, so if you are in doubt, come see me.

Assigned Text:

Michael Curtis, *The Great Political Theories*, , Volumes 1 and 2.

These two books are a compendium of primary documents taken from the great political philosophers of the Western Tradition. To supplement these there will, from time to time, be handouts. You will see them as GPT1 and GPT2.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*.

N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead*.

August

Week 1:

UNIT 1: The Greeks

VD Hanson, "Thinking Like a Greek." And GPT1 p23-34.

Week 2:

Plato's Republic, GPT1, p34-64.

Aristotle's Ethics, Books I

September

Week 3:

Aristotle's Politics, GPT1, p64-101.

Week 4:

UNIT 2: Roman Republic and Stoicism

Roman Stoicism. GPT 1, p120-139.

Roman Law, (H-O).

Week 5:

UNIT 3: Early Christianity & St. Augustine & the Medieval

Early Christianity and St. Augustine, GPT1, p140-156.

Medieval Europe

Week 6:

UNIT 4: Machiavelli

The Prince

October

Week 7:

Machiavelli Simulation

Week 8:

UNIT 6: Luther, Calvin and Divine Right

The Protestant Reformation and Politics, GPT1, p234-262.

Divine Right, GPT1, p301-313.

Grotius and International Law, p319-325.

Week 9:

UNIT 7: English Constitutionalism

The English Constitutionalists, GPT1, p357-389.

Week 10:

UNIT 8: French Enlightenment and A. Smith

Skepticism, GPT 1, p397-411.

Enlightenment, GPT 1, p412-419 & 422-440.

Kant and the Categorical Imperative, GPT2, p40-47.

Political Economy: Adam Smith and Capitalism, GPT2, p108-117.

Week 11:

UNIT 9: The American Revolution; Federalists vs Anti-Federalists and the French Revolution.

Summation of Process: The American Revolution and Constitution,
The Federalists and Anti-Federalists.

Failure of Process: The French Revolution – Rousseau and Robespierre, GPT2,
p15-17 and p18-34 (H-O).

November

Week 12:

UNIT 10: The Reaction to Revolution, Romantic Idealism and Utility.

Reaction to Revolution, GPT2, p48-64.

A “Libertarian Lean,” and Utility, GPT2, p105-108 and p117-129.

Romanticism and the Romantic Ideal, GPT2, p76-104.

Week 13:

UNIT 11: Socialism, Marxism and “Science”

Reacting to Industrialism: Socialism and Marxism, GPT2, p130-154
and p155-180.

Science and Politics, GPT2, p254-284.

Week 14:

UNIT 12: Nationalism and Totalitarianism

Nationalism and Fascism/Nazism, GPT2, p234-253.

Week 15: Thanksgiving (Catch up time)

December

Week 16:

UNIT 13: The Modern, Part I

The Modern, Part I: GPT2, p287-8 & 305-319 & 320-322 & 332-347.

Democratic Socialism and Modern Marxism, p348-394.

Week 17:

UNIT 14: The Modern, Part II

Democratic Triumph?: GPT2, p411-21 & 422-426 & 440-444 & 457-467.

Week 18: 19th – 21st: **EXAMS:** Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead*.