

Ohio State University
Political Science 2400H
Introduction to Political Theory
11:30-12:50 MW Fall 2012
Eric MacGilvray

Office hours: M 1:30-2:30 or by appt.
2127 Derby Hall

macgilvray.2@osu.edu
292-3710

Overview

This course will introduce students to the study of political theory, one of the four major subfields of political science. The intelligent conduct of social scientific inquiry depends on sustained reflection about the concepts and values that guide it. This is the role that political theory plays within the discipline of political science. We will reflect in particular on three values that play a central role in our political culture: freedom, equality, and justice. We will see how these ideas have been used to address some of the leading problems faced by modern societies, including the problem of diversity and toleration, the problem of social inequality and domination, and the problem of political obligation and legitimacy. Students will be encouraged to draw connections between the assigned texts and current political debates.

Readings

All of the required readings have been placed on e-reserve through Carmen.

Requirements

- (1) Three in-class exams will be given over the course of the term, on **Monday, October 1**, **Monday, October 29**, and **Monday, December 3**. I will distribute review sheets for the exams at the beginning of each of the three segments of the course, and we will hold a review session before each exam. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade.
- (2) Students will write three response papers over the course of the term, one for each segment of the course. Each paper will pose and respond to a question of your choice raised by one or more of the readings, and will be graded both on quality (significance of the question and sophistication of the response) and originality (uniqueness of the question and creativity of the response). Responses should be approximately 500 words in length and are due at or before each of the review sessions (**Wednesday, September 24**, **Wednesday, October 24**, and **Wednesday, November 28**). They are worth 25% of the final grade taken together.
- (3) Class attendance and active participation are expected. Grades will be adjusted up or down by as much as one-third of a grade for exceptionally good or poor participation.

Policies and procedures

Academic honesty: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp

Disabilities: If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307; TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>

GE Social Sciences/Organizations & Politics Expected Learning Outcomes

Develop an understanding of the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; of the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

- (1) Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of organizations and politics.
- (2) Students understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts.
- (3) Students comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

Schedule

August 22 Introduction: What is political theory?

I. What is freedom?

August 27 Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “The Four Freedoms”
Ronald Reagan, Address at the Brandenburg Gate

August 29 Charles de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, book 11 (selections)
James Madison, *The Federalist* #10 & 51

September 3 NO CLASS (Labor Day)

September 5 T. H. Green, “Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract”
John Dewey, “Liberty and Social Control”

September 10 Friedrich Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, chapters 1 & 9

September 12 Hannah Arendt, “What is Freedom?”

September 17 NO CLASS (Rosh Hashanah)

September 19 Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (selections)

September 24 Review session – First response paper due

September 26 NO CLASS (Yom Kippur)

October 1 First exam

II. What is equality?

October 3 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., “Harrison Bergeron”
Irving Kristol, “About Equality”
Michael Walzer, “In Defense of Equality”

October 8 Bernard Williams, “The Idea of Equality”
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 232-8

October 10 Ronald Dworkin, “Liberalism”

October 15 Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?” (selections)

October 17 Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition” (selections)
Michael Walzer, “Comment”

October 22	Susan Moller Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" Katha Pollitt, "Whose Culture?" Bonnie Honig, "My Culture Made Me Do It" Azizah al-Hibri, "Is Western Patriarchal Feminism Good for Third World/Minority Women?"
October 24	Review session – Second response paper due
October 29	Second exam
III. What is justice?	
October 31	Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"
November 5	John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §§ 1-4, 11-13 (selections)
November 7	Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> , chapter 7 (selections)
November 12	NO CLASS (Veterans Day)
November 14	Michael Walzer, <i>Spheres of Justice</i> , chapter 1
November 19	Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
November 21	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)
November 26	Thomas Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice"
November 28	Review session – Third response paper due
December 3	Third exam