

FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT, CSUSM
POSC 370 – Fall 2017 (online)

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Course Outline

This course is designed as an undergraduate introduction to some of the most important works in Western social and political thought, with a view to gaining insight into key questions organizing the conduct of our political life. These include (but are not limited to) the role of reason in political life; the relationship between wealth and political organization; the emergence of modernity and its attendant problems; the relationship between truth, political authority and consent; and the relationship between human nature, conflict and cooperation. To this end, Political Philosophy examines ancient (Plato and Aristotle), modern (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, and Marx) and contemporary (Rawls, Nozick, Sandel, Foucault, Held, Nussbaum, and Young) works from the tradition of political thought.

Required Course Materials

The lectures for this course, associated readings and all supplemental materials will be made available on Cougar Courses. If you wish to have a hardcopy of the readings, you can find all of them in: *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts Third Edition*, ed. Steven M. Cahn, ISBN: 978-0-19-020108-1

Class Modules

Each week of class (with the exception of module twelve, which will combined weeks 12/13 in recognition of Thanksgiving break) will correspond to a class module on Cougar Courses. These modules contain lecture videos, discussion forums, and any supplemental materials for that week. Each week you are expected to **read** the associated materials, **watch** the corresponding lecture, and **discuss** these elements based on specific topics.

Apart from the introductory module, **all modules will only be available on Cougar Courses for seven days, unless specified otherwise.** Thus, you must complete the assigned reading, watch the lectures and other posted videos, and keep up with the on-line discussions in order to be successful in the course. Each will become available no later than **9am on the Monday associated with that week** and will be **closed by 9pm the following Sunday. This includes access to the lecture video(s), discussion boards and other content associated with that week.** It is your responsibility to stay on pace with the course—I highly suggest you engage with each module at the beginning of the week to avoid illness, emergencies, or other technical issues precluding you from accessing module content. **Only under very rare circumstances will I make module content available after it has been closed.**

Communication

If you are having technical issues (e.g. a module is not accessible) or a question that is time sensitive, please include (URGENT) in your email subject line and I will respond as soon as possible. I will provide general student forum so that you are able to assist one another in addressing common problems, concerns, etc.

Emails regarding substantive questions pertaining to course content will be **aggregated and answered in announcement via Cougar Courses by Saturday afternoon each week.** If I am unable to respond to your specific question (e.g. what does X mean by liberty?) in 3-4 sentences,

you will need to reformulate and specify your question. **All email questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus will not receive a response.** In rare situations, I will be available to chat via Skype by appointment.

Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Midterm & Final **(50%)**
- Term Paper **(30%)**
- Active Learning Assignments **(10%)**
- Online Forum Participation **(10%)**

Midterm & Final (50%)

There will be a midterm and final examination for this course. Both will be in essay format and found through Cougar Courses via a link that will become available during the designated exam time frame. You will see 3-5 questions in advance of the exam to consider and answer. When you open the exam link, only **one** of the previously provided questions will be selected (randomly) for you to answer: you are to answer whichever question is generated for you - you will not all get the same question. You will have 30 minutes to complete the exam - not nearly enough time to write a quality essay if you wait to see your question before you begin, so the only workable approach is to have thorough answers already prepared for each possible question in advance, before opening the exam link. Again: once you open the exam link and the first question appears, you have a half-hour to submit your essay.

The exams are weighted equally and count towards 50% of your course grade. The final examination will not be cumulative!

The **midterm** will be made available to take online from **October 13 (10am) until October 15 (10pm)**.

The **final exam** will be made available from **December 8 (10am) until December (10pm)**.

Term Paper (30%)

There will be a 6 – 8 page term paper for this course. The paper prompt will be posted **October 16** and directly relate to course themes and materials. Please be aware that specifics pertaining to the course paper may change, so you should always consult the course prompt for the most up-to-date deadlines and requirements. **An electronic copy of your term paper is due via Turnitin on December 15 by 10pm.**

Active Learning Assignments (ALA) (10%)

For **each class module**, there will be one active learning component **embedded in the video lectures**. Think of this as a participation grade, which asks you to engage the material and be an active participant in your own education. These will be graded on a **1-3 points scale** and will **only be available to submit during the associated module window** (i.e. late submission will not receive credit).

Online Forum Participation (10%)

For each class module, I will post a discussion question pertaining to that week's reading and/or lecture. The questions are designed to foster informed conversation about the issues raised in each topic area. I will provide the animating question(s) and steer the subsequent conversation, when

and if necessary. Your role is to engage in the conversation by responding to the prompt, engaging with your peers, and demonstrating you have an understanding of how the discussion questions(s) relates to our course content. **You will only be able to contribute to the discussion board during the week each module is open (i.e. from Monday-Sunday).**

Your discussion grade is based on both the quantity and quality of your participation. For quantity, you must be a frequent and consistent contributor to the discussions. This does not mean you must post on every question, or respond to everything others say; it does mean that at the end of the term, when I review all the forum discussions, I can see that you have participated on a regular basis. The quality of your discussion participation refers to whether your comments reflect an understanding of the assigned material. Are they on point? Are they well reasoned and logical? Comments that contain only your opinion, are irrelevant, that suggest you do not actually grasp the topic, etc., will lower your score. Also, posts in which you merely agree with someone else's point or contribute little to the dialogue will not be regarded as quality participation.

I anticipate considerable and lively conversation in our discussion forums, and I expect that conversation to be **polite and respectful**. Disrespectful or disruptive comments will not be tolerated. There can be a tendency to say things on-line that one might not say in person; this, combined with the fact that many of the topics we will consider are controversial and sensitive, means we should take care to exercise sound judgment in our discussions. **Comments that I deem to be rude, aggressive, insensitive, disrespectful, etc., will have a substantial negative impact on your on-line participation grade and may involve further sanctions.**

Grade Scale

A+ = 100 – 97%	B = 86.9 – 84%	C- = 73.9 – 70%
A = 96.9 – 94%	B- = 83.9 – 80%	D+ = 69.9 – 67%
A- = 93.9 – 90%	C+ = 79.9 – 77%	D = 66.9 – 60%
B+ = 89.9 – 87%	C = 76.9 – 74%	F = 59.9% & Below

Add/Drop Deadlines

Students are responsible for understanding all processes and timelines associated with adding or withdrawing from a course. Published detailed information can be found with the Class Schedule on the CSUSM website.

Assignment Deadlines & Failed Technology

Assume that technology will fail at some point. Do not assume that everything will go smoothly when it comes to computers. Plan ahead. Do not leave completion/submission of assignments/projects for the last possible moment.

Copyright

My lectures and course materials, including Keynote presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use. You may not and may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly, whether or not a fee is charged, without my express written consent. Similarly, you own copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or papers on the course web site, I will ask for your written permission.

Make-up Exam, Late Paper Policy & Incomplete Policy

All exams must be taken at the scheduled time. No make-up exams or paper extensions will generally be granted. Excuses that may prove acceptable include: serious injury and family emergencies (serious illness of a family member or death in the family), serious accident (such as those requiring immediate hospitalization, and so forth), or the observance of a religious holiday. In order to be excused, students need to bring documentation and provide ample advance, when appropriate. Late assignments, if accepted, will be assessed a penalty at my discretion.

Academic Honesty

Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All assignments must be original work, clear and error-free. All ideas/material that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated accordingly.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: Students are responsible for honest completion and representation of their work. Your course catalog details the ethical standards and penalties for infractions. There will be zero tolerance for infractions. If you believe there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring it to the instructor's attention. The instructor reserves the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty, in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole.

It is recommended that students be referred to the full Academic Honesty Policy at:
http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/Academic_Honesty_Policy.html

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TDD (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive accommodations should meet with me during my office hours or in a more private setting in order to ensure your confidentiality.

Syllabus Disclaimer

Please be advised that this syllabus is "subject to change." **If changes are made, I will make it known to the class via a Cougar Corse announcement.** However, it is ultimately your responsibility to make sure you are up-to-date with any changes made throughout the semester.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1 Summarize key concepts relevant to the study of political thought foundations.
- 2 Analyze and evaluate various theories within the discourse and study of political thought foundations.
- 3 Apply concepts and arguments from the study of political thought foundations to contemporary events.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

Students who graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science will be able to:

- 1 Summarize the foundational principles and key concepts in all four subfields of Political Science (American Politics, International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Political Theory).

- 2 Describe and analyze the roles played by race, ethnicity, gender, and class in historical and contemporary political environments and analyze and evaluate the impact of such factors across the four subfields of Political Science.
- 3 Analyze and evaluate the role of state and non-state actors, institutions and organizations, and policy in at least two of the four subfields of Political Science.
- 4 Apply theories, political thought, ideologies, and ideas to historical content and contemporary empirical realities in at least two of the four subfields of Political Science.
- 5 Apply critical thinking skills and knowledge of research methods to formulate and implement a research design to analyze political phenomena.
- 6 Utilize effective writing skills to analyze political issues, ideas, and policies; these skills include formulating a thesis, making arguments, and providing evidence.

Schedule

While this course is entirely on-line and will not entail any real-time interaction, **it is not self-paced**: we will follow the schedule outlined below. **For each topic we examine, there will at least be one reading, a lecture to watch (usually broken up into two parts), and a discussion forum.**

Exactly how much time you require to finish each module will depend on you: if you have good computer skills and work well independently, you will proceed more quickly than if you do not. Regardless, however, you should expect to devote a significant amount of time to this course.

MODULE ONE

August 28-3

Topic:

- Syllabus, Course Plan, Goals, Grading & Assignments
- What is Political Philosophy?

Reading:

- Syllabus—carefully!
- Plato, *Defense of Socrates*, in *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*, pp. 1 – 22

Watch:

- * Course introduction
- * What is political philosophy?
- * Plato

Discuss

- * Tell us about yourself!

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to describe the study of political philosophy and discuss the types of questions that thinkers in this tradition attempt to address.
- 2 Students should be able to discuss metaphysics and epistemology as areas of philosophic study.
- 3 Students should be able to explain what the canon of political philosophy refers to and discuss some of the criticism of this so-called canon.
- 4 Students should be able to discuss the apparent tension between politics and philosophy. What

is it about the nature of these two things – politics and philosophy – that causes a certain persistent tension? How does this come out in the *Apology* or *Defense of Socrates*?

- 5 Students should be able to discuss the significance of the Delphic Oracle as it pertains to Socrates' development as a moral philosopher and foundational figure in the study of philosophy writ large.
- 6 Students should be able to identify in what ways Socrates plays the role of a principled abstainer and a gadfly.

MODULE TWO

September 4-10

Topic:

--Man as the Political Animal

Reading:

– Aristotle, *Politics*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 137 – 141 & 165 – 197

Watch:

* Aristotle (parts 1 and 2)

Discuss

* Is man truly the 'political animal'?

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to define teleology, discuss what it means to think teleologically, and apply Aristotle's teleological thought to the way he thinks about politics and its study.
- 2 Students should be able connect Aristotle's teleological thinking to his discussion of the naturalness of inequality and then discuss how he connects this to politics and political rule.
- 3 Students should be able to explain what Aristotle means when he claims that man is a "political animal" by nature. Students should also develop their own argument in support or against Aristotle's argument.
- 4 Students should be able to explain Aristotle's definition of a regime and discuss his views on citizenship, especially as they pertain to citizenship in a democratic or mixed regime.
- 5 Students should be able to identify Aristotle's preferred regime (not ideal) and discuss the reasons why he opts for this regime type over all others. What specific political problem does this regime best address and why?
- 6 Students should be able to discuss a more contemporary appropriation of Aristotelian political thought.

MODULE THREE

September 11-17

Topic:

Machiavelli's Pivot Towards Modern Political Thought

Reading:

– Machiavelli, *The Prince*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 268 – 292

Watch:

* Machiavelli (Parts 1 and 2)

Discuss

* What are contemporary examples of a Machiavellian prince?

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to explain how Machiavelli's conception of politics differs from that of the ancients.
- 2 Students should be able to define political realism and apply its rationale to contemporary events.
- 3 Students should be able to explain why Machiavelli represents one of the first modern political thinkers. That is to say, students should be able to explain what makes a modern thinker different from an ancient thinker?
- 4 Students should be able to discuss the problem of dirty hands as it pertains to politics and provide examples from Machiavelli's own writings where this problem emerges.
- 5 With the last objective in mind, students should be able to explain what Machiavelli means when he claims that a political leader must "learn how not to be good."
- 6 Students should be able to define Machiavelli's notion of *virtu*, compare it to his discussion of *fortuna*, and contrast it to the ancient and Christian conceptions of virtue.

MODULE FOUR**September 18-24****Topic:**

Machiavelli, with a New Face

Reading:

--Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 309 – 343

Watch:

*Hobbes (Parts 1 and 2)

Discuss

* What would you be willing to give up for security?

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to explain why Hobbes is such an influential thinker in the history of political thought.
- 2 Students should be able to describe Hobbes' characterizes life in the state of nature.
- 3 With the previous objective in mind, students should be able to explain what the state of nature is, how it operates in Hobbes' account, and how it fits into his larger political theory.
- 4 Students should be able to explain Hobbes' theory of human nature and how that theory fits into his descriptive account of the state of nature. Students should also be able to explain how Hobbes' view of humans informs the way he thinks about the necessity of the state and its role as a political institution.
- 5 Students should be able to identify Hobbes' solution to the state of nature and then discuss both the originality and conservative nature of that argument as it applies to a justification for the state.

- 6 Students should be able to discuss the political and philosophic disagreements between Hobbes and Aristotle. Why is Hobbes the great anti-Aristotle and how might Aristotle respond?

MODULE FIVE

September 25- October 1

Topic:

The Lockean Liberal State

Reading:

--Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 360 – 393

Watch:

* Locke (Parts 1 and 2)

Discuss

* What does a good citizen look like today?

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to define classic liberalism.
- 2 Students should be able to explain what natural law refers to and how it plays an important part in Locke's political theory.
- 3 Students should be able to discuss Locke's account of the state of nature and draw out relevant distinctions between his account and the account of Hobbes.
- 4 Students should be able to explain the rationale Locke provides in favor of private property rights. Students should also be able to connect this moral claim to the way Locke thinks about the purpose of government.
- 5 Students should be able to explain why consent is so pivotal to Locke's account of government and how consent plays into his argument for our natural right to revolt.
- 6 Students should be able to draw relevant connections between Locke's account of the purpose of government and classic liberal and libertarian doctrines.

MODULE SIX

October 2-8

Topic:

The Social Contract & Democracy

Reading:

– Rousseau, *Of the Social Contract*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 418 – 421 & 437 – 465

Watch:

* Rousseau (Parts 1 and 2)

Discuss

* What might the 'general will' look like today?

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to describe Rousseau's theory of human nature and explain how he thinks about the relationship between the individual and society. What is unique about Rousseau's account here?
- 2 Students should be able to define *amour-propre* and discuss how it differs from *amour de soi*.
- 3 Students should be able to explain how Rousseau's conception of the social contract differs from that of Locke and Hobbes. What does he add to the social contract that is absent in Locke and Hobbes' formulation?
- 4 Students should be able to identify in what ways Rousseau is one of the first major proponents of direct democratic rule. Students should also be able to define popular sovereignty.
- 5 Students should be able to discuss the general will and identify the conditions under which Rousseau thinks that the general will can arise.
- 6 Students should be able to provide an account of what a Rousseauian political community might look like.

MODULE SEVEN

*****MIDTERM: October 13 (10am) until October 15 (10pm)*****

October 9-15

Topic:

--Hume's Critique of the Social Contract Tradition

Reading:

- Hume, "Of the Original Contract/Origin of Government," in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 466 – 474, 477-487

Watch:

* Hume

Discuss

* Open discussion for midterm

Learning Objectives:

- TBA

MODULE EIGHT

October 16-22

Topics:

- Priority of Moral Philosophy in Political Theory
- Term Paper

Reading:

- Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 507 – 521

Watch:

- * Kant
- * Writing a political theory paper

Discuss

* In politics, what matters more, the ends or the means?

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to explain the general aim of Kant's moral project as outlined in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. What is the task that he sets out for himself?
- 2 Students should be able to discuss the relevant differences between deontology and consequentialism.
- 3 Students should be able to explain what a categorical imperative is and how it differs from a hypothetical one.
- 4 Students should be able to identify the three formulations of the categorical imperative and discuss the larger significance of the categorical imperative as it pertains to the way we treat others and ourselves.
- 5 Students should be able to draw inferences from Kant's moral philosophy and apply them to contemporary moral, social, and political debates.
- 6 Students should be able to discuss the relevant similarities and differences between the social contract theories of Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.

MODULE NINE**October 23-29****Topic:**

Capitalism's Perceptive Critic

Reading:

- Marx, "Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 696 – 708
- Marx, "The German Ideology," in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 708 – 714
- Marx, "Communist Manifesto," in *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts* pp. 714 – 726

Watch:

* Marx (Parts 1 and 2)

Discuss

* Is there a 3rd way? Charting a course between Marxism and Capitalism.

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to explain Marx's theory of alienation and its four forms.
- 2 Students should be able to define and discuss the larger significance of Marx's theory of historical materialism.
- 3 Students should be able to discuss what the base and superstructure are and explain how Marx sees the relationship between those two things.
- 4 Students should be able to explain the various features of Marx's critique of capitalism and discuss why Marx's overall stance on capitalism is to a large extent ambiguous.
- 5 Students should be able to explain what Marx means when he claims that capitalism above all else "creates its own gravediggers."
- 6 Students should be able to discuss Marx's conception of politics and its driving force(s).

MODULE TEN

October 30 - November 5

Topic:

Utilitarianism & Mill's Defense of Liberty

Reading:

– Mill, *On Liberty*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 738 – 740 & 747 – 808

Watch:

* Mill (Parts 1 and 2)

Discuss

* TBA

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to define utilitarianism and discuss its various features.
- 2 With the previous objective in mind, students should be able to discuss the Greatest Happiness Principle and apply the Greatest Happiness Principle to moral, social, and political debates.
- 3 Students should be able to identify some of the major criticisms of utilitarianism and discuss how Mill attempts to reformulate the theory so as to address those criticisms.
- 4 Students should be able to explain why Mill believes stifling the opinions of others is wholly misguided.
- 5 Students should be able to discuss the reasons why Mill objects to the paternalistic state and believes it inhibits progress for both the individual and society.
- 6 Students should be able to explain the harm principle, discuss how it fits into Mill's political theory, and apply that principle to current political debates.

MODULE ELEVEN

November 6-12

Topic:

Reviving Political Theory: Rawls & His Chief Challengers

Reading:

- Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 911 – 932
- Sandel, "The Procedural Republic & the Unencumbered Self," in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 940 – 952
- Nozick, *Anarchy, State, Utopia*, in *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts* pp. 953 – 969

Watch:

- * Rawls
- * Sandel
- * Nozick

Discuss

* What do we owe our fellow citizens? Birth lottery vs. birthrights.

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to discuss how the original position fits into Rawls' theory of justice and how it is different from the state of nature used by other thinkers in the earlier social contract tradition.
- 2 Students should be able to explain what justice as fairness means for Rawls. Students should also be able to explain why justice as fairness does not mean justice is fairness.
- 3 Students should be able to discuss the reasons why Rawls believes placing individuals under a veil of ignorance is an essential constraint under which principles of justice are to be decided upon.
- 4 Students should be able to identify the two principles of justice that Rawls believes will be chosen by rational individuals in the original position under a veil of ignorance.
- 5 With the previous objective in mind, students should be able to explain what it means for Rawls to claim the principles of justice are lexically or serially ordered.
- 6 Students should be able to explain the difference principle and how it applies as a distributive principle to the structure of income, wealth, and opportunity. Given the difference principle, why would it be improper to characterize Rawls as a strict egalitarian?
- 7 Students should be able to explain what the minimal state is, how it differs from the welfare state, and how the minimal state fits into Nozick's political theory.
- 8 Students should be able to explain Nozick's Entitlement theory and its three corresponding principles.
- 9 Students should be able to discuss Nozick's critique of what he calls time-slice principles of justice.
- 10 Students should be able to explain what Nozick means when he claims his Entitlement theory is a historical non-patterned principle theory.
- 11 Students should be able to discuss why where Sandel fall in this debate.

MODULE TWELVE**November 13-21****Topic:**

Power, Knowledge and Feminist Thought

Reading:

- Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, in *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts* pp. 970 – 987
- Held, "Non-contractual Society: A Feminist View," in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 1006 – 1023

Watch:

- * Foucault
- * Held

Discuss

- * Correctional facilities or dungeons: what is the purpose of modern day prisons?

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Students should be able to explain Foucault's conception of power/knowledge.
- 2 Students should be able to draw inferences from Foucault's conception of power/knowledge and apply that to the academy, prisons, hospitals, and other social institutions.

- 3 Students should be able to explain what implications Foucault's conception of power/knowledge has for the notions of objectivity and impartiality, which are central to most academic disciplines.

MODULE THIRTEEN:

November 27 - December 3

Topic:

--Feminist Critique of Liberalism & Five Faces of Oppression

Reading:

- Nussbaum, *The Feminist Critique of Liberalism in Political Philosophy*, pp. 1024 - 1053
- Young, "Five Faces of Oppression," in *Political Philosophy*, pp. 1054 - 1071

Watch:

- * Nussbaum
- * Young

Discuss

- * How ought we understand liberty and oppression in polarized societies?

MODULE FOURTEEN

*****FINAL EXAM: available from December 8 (10am) until December (10pm)*****

December 4 - 10

Topic:

-Concluding Thoughts & Final Remarks

Reading:

- No New Reading

Watch:

- * Concluding thoughts

Discuss

- * Open discussion for final

FINALS WEEK

***** Upload Electronic Copy of Term Paper to Turnitin on December 15 by 10PM *****