

POLS 004 – 01: Introduction to Political Theory

Fall 2019 Inabel Burns Lindsay Hall Auditorium
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:10 – 2:00 PM

Instructor: Robinson Woodward-Burns
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Office Hours: Monday 2:00 – 4:00 PM or by appointment, Annex III Room 228

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to political theory. Class readings proceed chronologically, from Plato's *Republic*, discussing justice and the good life, to Machiavelli's *Prince*, concerning luck and skill in ruling, to Hobbes' *Leviathan* on the state of nature and the social contract, to Rousseau's writings on inequality and legitimacy. From there the course pivots, critiquing these theorists' assumptions about race, gender, class, and empire. The class concludes with a discussion of modern concerns over incarceration and policing. Broadly, this course explores political theory, philosophy, and the history of ideas, preparing students for subsequent courses in political theory, political science, and the social sciences generally.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your course grade has three parts:

Pop Quizzes 15%

Participation is based on five in-class pop quizzes. Quizzes include one to two questions based on that day's readings. There are no makeup quizzes, but one missed or failed quiz is automatically dropped from the total grade.

Paper 40%

The midterm is a 5-7 page paper, due by email by as a Word or PDF file **5:00 PM Sunday, Oct. 25**. The instructor will distribute paper topics and instructions by **Oct. 11**. Papers should include citations and/or a bibliography. Students may choose the citation style. Please use 10 to 12 pt. font and one inch margins.

Final Exam 45%

To accommodate graduating seniors, the final is an in-class exam during our final class meeting, **Nov. 25, 1:10 – 2:00 PM in Inabel Burns Lindsay Hall Auditorium**, our normal classroom. Students who wish to take the exam during the University's allotted time may also opt to do so at the allotted time, Dec. 6, 11:00AM-1:00PM, in Inabel Burns Lindsay Hall Auditorium, and should email the instructor three weeks in advance to confirm.

Students are expected to read and follow Howard University's [Academic Code of Student Conduct](#), including rules on cheating, plagiarism, etc. Plagiarized assignments, including papers, tests, quizzes, and presentations, will receive a zero.

Late assignments decrease a third of a letter grade per day for up to seven days. Students missing an exam or quiz for an emergency can retake the assignment given documentation. All assignments, including make ups, must be completed before the final exam.

Readings

- Plato. 2007. *The Republic*. Translated by Desmond Lee. Second Edition. Penguin Classics. ISBN 978-0-14-045511-3
- Machiavelli, Niccoló. 2008. *The Prince*. Edited and translated by Peter Bondanella. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-953569-9
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 2011. *Rousseau: The Basic Political Writings*. Translated by Donald A. Cress. Second Edition. Indianapolis: Hackett. ISBN 978-1603846738
- Mills, Charles W. 1999. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. ISBN 978-0-8014-8463-6
- Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books. ISBN 978-0-679-75255-4

These books are available at the University Bookstore and online, all at relatively low cost. Free open source editions of all of the texts are also available online, though pagination and section headings differ from those on the syllabus. Students are therefore recommended to buy the above editions. The remaining readings are available on Blackboard.

Note: unauthorized in-class recording is not allowed. This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Course Schedule and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings (Page numbers in parentheses)
Aug. 19	Introduction	
Aug. 21	Plato, <i>The Republic</i>	Introduction (xi-xxxix), Part I (1-53)
Aug. 23	Plato, <i>The Republic</i>	Part II-III (53-112)
Aug. 26	Plato, <i>The Republic</i>	Part IV-V (112-157)
Aug. 28	Plato, <i>The Republic</i>	Part VI (157-189)
Aug. 30	Plato, <i>The Republic</i>	Part VII (189-249)
Sept. 2	No Class – Labor Day	
Sept. 4	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>	Introduction (vii-xxxix), Ch.1-5 (1-20)
Sept. 6	No Class – Instructor Away	
Sept. 9	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>	Ch.6-15 (20-57)
Sept. 11	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>	Ch.16-26 (57-90)
Sept. 13	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>	Introduction (ix-xlv), on Blackboard
Sept. 16	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>	Part I, Ch.10-13 (62-91), on Blackboard
Sept. 18	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>	Part I, Ch.14-16 (91-117), on Blackboard
Sept. 20	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>	Part II, Ch.17-21 (117-155), on Blackboard
Sept. 23	Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i>	Ch.1-6 (267-318), on Blackboard
Sept. 25	Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i>	Ch.7-9, 18-19 (318-350, 398-428), on Blackboard
Sept. 27	Rousseau, <i>The Second Discourse</i>	Intro. (ix-xxxiv), Dedication, Preface, Pt. I (27-69)
Sept. 30	Rousseau, <i>The Second Discourse</i>	Part II, Notes (69-120) (skim the Notes)
Oct. 2	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>	Book I (153-170)
Oct. 4	No Class – Instructor at Conference	
Oct. 7	No Class – Convocation	
Oct. 9	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>	Book II (170-191)
Oct. 11	Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts”	(66-93), on Blackboard
Oct. 14	Marx, “The Communist Manifesto”	(469-500), on Blackboard

Date	Topic	Readings (Page numbers in parentheses)
Oct. 16	Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July"	(596-623), on Blackboard
Oct. 18	Mills, <i>The Racial Contract</i>	Ch.1 (1-41)
Oct. 21	Mills, <i>The Racial Contract</i>	Ch..2-3 (42-133)
Oct. 23	Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>	Fanon Ch.1 (35-106), on Blackboard
Oct. 25	Baldwin, "Many Thousands Gone"	(24-45), on Blackboard
Oct. 28	Pateman, <i>The Sexual Contract</i>	Ch.1 (ix-xi, 1-18), on Blackboard
Oct. 30	Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools" bell hooks, <i>Understanding Patriarchy</i>	Lorde, hooks, on Blackboard
Nov. 1	Cottom, "In the Name of Beauty"	(33-71), on Blackboard
Nov. 4	Milgram, <i>Obedience to Authority</i>	(1-12), on Blackboard
Nov. 6	Arendt, "Essays in Understanding" Browning, <i>Ordinary Men</i>	Arendt (146-156), Browning Ch.1-3, 18 (xv-xxii, 1-25, 159-189), on Blackboard (Skim)
Nov. 8	No Class – Instructor at Conference	
Nov. 11	No Class – Veteran's Day	
Nov. 13	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i>	Part I, Ch. 1 (1-32)
Nov. 15	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i>	Part II, Ch. 1 (73-103)
Nov. 18	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i>	Part III, Ch.1 (135-169)
Nov. 20	Bryan Stevenson, "A Presumption of Guilt"	(3-30), Blackboard
Nov. 21	Final Exam Review Session	
Nov. 25	Final Exam	