Political Ideas

Government 6
Winter 2016
Dartmouth College

Professor Julie Rose
Office: Silsby 202
Office Hours: Monday 2:00-4:00

1 (MWF 12:30-1:35)
X: Tuesday 1:00-1:50

12 (MWF 12:30-1:35)

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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to political philosophy. Through reading and analyzing canonical texts, we will examine central political ideas, including obligation, authority, virtue, legitimacy, democracy, rights, utility, equality, liberty, virtue, and conservatism.

We will consider such questions as: What gives some the right to rule over others? Should society be led by those who are wisest, and if so, what is political wisdom? Does legitimate authority depend on the consent of the governed, and if so, what does that require? Are there individual rights no government is permitted to violate? Are citizens obligated to obey the law, even if it is unjust? Is it sometimes right for political leaders to do wrong? What qualifications must one have to participate in politics? When is society justified in limiting personal liberty? What justifies economic inequality? Is there reason to resist rapid social or political change?

Throughout, we will aim to make connections across the centuries of political thought, focusing on the “big” ideas and applying them to contemporary political life.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:
• Identify the difference between normative and empirical approaches to the study of politics
• Explain central questions and concepts in political philosophy
• Construct and evaluate philosophical arguments about politics
• Connect foundational ideas of political philosophy to contemporary debates about politics

Course Requirements

There are four course requirements:

- Participation (incl. quizzes and group presentation) 20% of final grade
- Response Paper 1 10%
- Response Paper 2 20%
- Midterm exam 25%
- Final exam 25%
Participation
Your participation grade depends on your punctual attendance, the regularity and the quality of your contributions to class discussions, your quiz grades, and your group presentation grade. If you have hesitations about participating in class, meet with me so we can work on it.

Quizzes
There will be frequent unannounced short quizzes on the assigned readings. These will be open book and open note. If you have done the assigned reading, the questions should be very easy to answer. You must be in class that day to take the quiz; no make-up quizzes will be granted. If you will not be in class, you must email me in advance with a valid excuse to avoid receiving a zero quiz grade. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Papers
You will write two responses papers over the term. The first should be at least one page and no more than two pages, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in 12 point Times New Roman font. The second should be at least four pages and no more than five pages, with the same formatting. The papers should be, in some way, responses to one of the distributed discussion questions, engaged with the readings but focused on your own opinions and arguments. The papers are due by midnight the day before a discussion session. You must write the first in weeks 2, 3, or 4 and the second in weeks 6, 7, 8 or 9. Unless there is a valid excuse, late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for every day late.

Exams
The midterm exam will be in class on Wednesday, February 3. Alternate times for the midterm exam will not be granted without a valid reason and advance notice. The final exam is scheduled by the registrar; no exemptions will be given from taking the exam at that time.

Readings
The required texts are:


It is important that you buy these specific editions of the texts so that you can easily find and cite passages by page number in class discussions. All of these texts are available for purchase at the
Dartmouth bookstore. There are also used copies available inexpensively online. All other required readings will be posted on Canvas.

The readings will be limited to around 75-100 pages per week. The readings require careful attention, so read thoroughly and carefully. It is to be expected that you will need to read some of the texts more than once to properly understand the arguments.

You are required to bring the assigned readings with you to class.

Class Format

Class sessions will combine lecture and discussion (sometimes in small groups, sometimes as a whole). I encourage you to interrupt the lectures to ask clarifying or substantive questions. It is important that you come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. I will sometimes call on students who have not volunteered an answer; you are welcome to pass.

Class Policies

Office Hours: I will hold regular office hours on Mondays, 2:00-4:00. If you would like to meet another time, do not hesitate to email me and we can make an appointment.

Honor Policy: Students are required to abide by the Academic Honor Principle (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/honor). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are ever in doubt about what the honor code requires, or what citations are required or how much collaborating or paraphrasing is permissible, either ask me or err on the side of caution.

X-Hours: There are no currently scheduled x-hours, but I do reserve the option to use them, with advance notice.

Email: I will reply promptly whenever possible, but am often away from email. If you have not heard back from me within 48 hours, send your message again.

Laptops and electronics: Laptops and other electronics are prohibited in class. You will remember more and be more present if you take notes by hand. See: www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom

Median Grade: The Government Department has a median grade policy, which is: “Except under extraordinary circumstances, median grades in GOV courses will not exceed A- in seminars, and B+ in all other courses.” See more at: https://govt.dartmouth.edu/undergraduate/courses#sthash.T3rZumAB.dpuf Accordingly, the median grade in this course is not expected to exceed a B+.

Learning disabilities: Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services are encouraged to see me privately as early as possible in the term. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student
Accessibility Services office (205 Collis Student Center, 646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

*Religious observances:* Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

*Prize:* The Andrew Warden Edson Memorial Prize of $200 may be awarded to one or two students who, in the judgment of the instructor, perform outstandingly well in the course. The prize is a gift from Mrs. Jean Slater Edson in memory of her husband, a Dartmouth graduate in the Class of 1925.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

*Subject to change with advance notice.*

**Week 1: Political Obligation** (33 pp.)

Monday, January 4: Course overview

Wednesday, January 6: Why obey the law?
Reading: Plato, “Crito” (on Canvas)

Friday, January 8: Discussion
Reading: King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail;” Thoreau, “An Essay on Civil Disobedience” (on Canvas)

**Week 2: Who Should Rule? – Plato** (82 pp.)

Monday, January 11: Plato
(Book II: 357a-376d, Book III: 386a-389d, 412b-417b, Book IV: 427d-434e, Book V: 472b-473e, Book VI: 487d-489c, VII: 514a-521c, 540a-541b)

Wednesday, January 13: Plato
Reading: Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 116, 144-166
(Book IV: 423e-424b, Book V: 449-466d)

Friday, January 15: Discussion
Week 3: Who Should Rule? – Aristotle (76 pp.)

Monday, January 18: *No class in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day*

Wednesday, January 20: Aristotle

Friday, January 22: Discussion

Week 4: Political Virtues – Cicero, Aquinas, and Machiavelli (88 pp.)

Monday, January 25: Cicero, Aquinas, and Machiavelli
    Reading: Cicero, *On Duties*, pp. 63-65, 68-88 (on Canvas)
    Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Book I, Ch. 1 (on Canvas)
    Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 5-6, 53-82 (Dedicatory Letter, Chs. 15-23)

Wednesday, January 27: Machiavelli
    Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 7-8, 19-37, 82-92 (Chs. 1-2, 5-9, 24-26)

Friday, January 29: Discussion


Monday, February 1: Hobbes
    Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, excerpts

Wednesday, February 3: *In-class midterm exam on weeks 1-4 (excluding Hobbes).*

Friday, February 5: Locke
    Reading: Locke, *The Second Treatise*, excerpts

Week 6: Property and Inequality - Locke and Rousseau

Monday, February 8: Locke
    Reading: Locke, *The Second Treatise*, Chapter 5

Wednesday, February 10: Rousseau
    Reading: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

Friday, February 12: Discussion
Week 7: Capitalism and Exploitation - Marx

Monday, February 15: Marx

Wednesday, February 17: Marx
Reading: Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Program”

Friday, February 19: Discussion

Week 8: Utility and Liberty - J.S. Mill

Monday, February 22: Mill
Reading: Mill, Utilitarianism, excerpts
Mill, On Liberty, excerpts

Wednesday, February 24: Mill
Reading: Mill, On Liberty, excerpts

Friday, February 26: Discussion

Week 9: Conservatism - Burke

Monday, February 29: Burke
Reading: Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, excerpts

Wednesday, March 2: The dimensions of conservatism

Friday, March 4: Discussion

Week 10: Review

Monday, March 7: Group presentations

Sunday, March 13: Final Exam, 8:00-11:00am.