



**TEXAS A&M**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
**CENTRAL TEXAS**

**POLI 5388:**  
**Classical Political Philosophy**  
**Section 110 (Spring 2023)**  
**Independent Study**  
**January 17 - May 12, 2023**  
**Meetings: Tues 3:30-4:30pm**



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Tues 4:30-5:45 PM, Wed 5-5:45 PM

**Course Objectives**

The core objective of this course is for students to gain an understanding of how foundational works of Western political philosophy, especially normative political philosophy, inform the field of political science, in a more intense and in-depth environment than is possible at the undergraduate level or even in a usual graduate seminar. Questions the curriculum prepares students to answer include:

- A. *What determines “right” and “wrong” in political life – the duties of citizens and rulers -- and how are such distinctions intellectually justified?*
- B. *What institutions of governance and participation best serve the polity?*
- C. *How far do rightful freedom and legitimate authority extend?*

Learning Outcome 1: By the end of the course, students should be able to compare prominent theorists’ answers to A, B, and C (both as general statements and as concrete solutions to hypothetical or historical choices) and defend one answer for each as better than the alternatives, using evidence and arguments from and about the course readings.

Learning Outcome 2: By the end of the course, students should demonstrate significant improvement in critical thinking skills related to argument analysis in the realm of political thought.

These learning outcomes are both reinforced and assessed through readings and rigorous discussion of source materials in weekly one-one-one meetings with the professor and weekly written memoranda evaluating the essential ideas and arguments of assigned authors as they pertain to one or more of the listed questions.

## Required Readings

**Be sure to get the proper edition and translation of each.** If you purchase electronic copies (not advised), be sure that the page numbers match up or you may find yourself struggling to find the paragraphs we are discussing in our sessions.

Plato. [2004]. *The Republic*. Transl. C.D.C. Reeve. Hackett Publishing Company ISBN: 978-0872207363

Niccolo Machiavelli. [1995]. *The Prince*. Transl. David Wootton. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872203167

Thomas Hobbes. [1994]. *Leviathan: With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668*. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872201774

John Locke. [1980]. *Second Treatise of Government*. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0915144860

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. [2012]. *Of The Social Contract and Other Political Writings*. Transl. Quintin Hoare. Penguin. ISBN: 978-0141191751

Immanuel Kant. [1993]. *Grounding For the Metaphysics of Morals*. 3rd Ed. Transl. James W. Ellington. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872201668

Immanuel Kant. [1983]. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. Transl. Ted Humphrey. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0915145478

Edmund Burke. [2009]. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Reissue Ed. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0199539024

John Stuart Mill. [2015]. *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*. 2nd Ed. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0199670802

Friedrich Nietzsche, [2000]. *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Transl. Kaufmann. Modern Library. ISBN: 978-0679783398

### Overall Course Rubric

Item	Points	Percent of Grade
Weekly Memos (16)	400	40%
Weekly Discussion (16)	600	60%
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100%</b>
895+ = A	795-894 = B	695-794 = C
595-694 = D	594 or lower = F	

Weekly Memos (2-5 pages, normally on the lower end of that scale): Describe which elements of the assigned work(s) for the week are substantially relevant to one, two, or all of the three questions on the front page of the syllabus. For at least one such combination, argue (with a claim, warrant, and evidence) that the author got the answer correct or incorrect. Since one-on-one discussions should easily determine whether you have done the reading, the focus of these papers is analytical/argumentative rather than merely descriptive.

Weekly Discussions (about 60-90 minutes, depending on the week): These accelerated discussions ensure that students process the readings and also assists students who may have read a theorist but not yet understood their theories to grapple with the challenges the theorist poses for normative political thought. These are not cross-examinations or “oral exams;” rather, they are focused on key points in the theorists’ arguments, identified by student and instructor before the sessions.

## Course Schedule

Date/ Session	Theorist & Time Period	Readings
Week 1 17 Jan	Plato 428-338 BC	<u>The Republic</u> : Books I-IV
Week 2 24 Jan	Plato Part 2	<u>The Republic</u> : Books V-IX
Week 3 31 Jan	Aristotle 384-322 BC	<u>Nicomachean Ethics</u> and <u>Politics</u> , Excerpts ( <b>Canvas</b> )
Week 4 7 Feb	Niccolo Machiavelli 1469-1527	Machiavelli, <u>The Prince</u> , all (pp. 5-80)  Excerpts from Machiavelli's Post- <u>Prince</u> Writings ( <b>Canvas</b> )
Week 5 14 Feb	Thomas Hobbes 1588-1679	<u>Leviathan</u> : Chapter 46, then skim Chapters 1-9 and really focus on the argument in Chapters 10-16
Week 6 21 Feb	Hobbes Part 2	<u>Leviathan</u> : Chapters 17-21, 24, 26-30 and Conclusion (pp. 489-497)
Week 7 28 Feb	John Locke 1632-1704	Excerpts from the <u>First Treatise on Government</u> ( <b>Canvas</b> ) <u>Second Treatise on Government</u>
Week 8 7 Mar	Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778	<u>On the Social Contract</u> <i>Recommended</i> : Rousseau, "Principles of the Right of War" in the <u>Geneva Manuscripts</u> in our textbook <b>and</b> Rousseau, "Letters Written from the Mountains" in the <u>Geneva Manuscripts</u> in our textbook
Week 9	Spring Break (No Session)	Spring Break
Week 10 21 Mar	Immanuel Kant 1724-1804	<u>Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals</u> and "Letter on a supposed Right to Lie" in the same volume
Week 11 28 Mar	Immanuel Kant Part 2	<u>On Perpetual Peace and Other Essays</u> : "Perpetual Peace," "What is Enlightenment?" and "On the Proverb: That May Be True in Theory, but is of No Practical Use" <i>Recommended</i> : Excerpts from <u>Metaphysics of Morals</u> ( <b>Canvas</b> )
Week 12 4 Apr	Edmund Burke 1729-1797	<u>Reflections on the Revolution in France</u> : pp. 3-65
Week 13 11 Apr	Burke Part 2	<u>Reflections on the Revolution in France</u> : pp. 125-129, 139-180, 183-197, and 221-224 <b>and</b>  "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly" in our edition of <u>Reflections on the Revolution in France</u> : pp. 251-29

Week 14 18 Apr	John Stuart Mill 1806-1873	(Recommended) <u>Utilitarianism</u> (in our Mill volume), esp. pp. 121-126 on what utility means and Chapter 5 on the utility of justice and rights Required: <u>On Liberty</u> (all chapters, in our Mill volume) (Also Recommended): <u>The Subjection of Women</u> (in our Mill volume), pp. 409-414 on the principle of equality and Chapter 4 on the utility of that principle
Week 15 25 Apr	Frederick Nietzsche 1844-1900	Seventy-five Aphorisms: 381 (pp. 176-178) <u>Beyond Good and Evil</u> : Preface and Parts 1 – 3 Seventy-five Aphorisms 317, 322, and 323 (p.165)
Week 16 2 May	Nietzsche Part 2	<u>Beyond Good and Evil</u> Parts 4 – 6 <u>Genealogy of Morals</u> , Third Essay: Sections 10 - 12 only (pp. 551 - 555) Seventy-five Aphorisms 92 (p.148), 89 (p.154), 33 (pp.159 - 162), 1 (p.166)
Week 17 9 May	Nietzsche Part 3	<u>Beyond Good and Evil</u> Parts 7 – 9 Seventy-five Aphorisms 112 (pp. 168 - 170), 51 (p.171), 173 (p.172), 325 (p. 175) <u>Ecce Homo</u> Preface, Why I Am So Wise, Why I Am So Clever (Sections 1, 9, 10 only)