

PSCI 392: WIP: Contemporary Political Philosophy: Theories of State and Governance

Northeastern Illinois University
Fall 2008
MW 2:25-3:40
Science Building Rm. S323

Dr. Sophia Mihic
Office Hours:
Classroom Building, Rm. 2074
Monday 4:00-6:00 p.m.; Wednesday 12:00-1:00 p.m., 7:00-9:00 p.m.
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Course Description

State and governance are among the most traditional, and one might think settled, themes in modern political thought. But recent 21st century events have given these themes a new significance. Were these events, and related problems, prefigured in earlier crises of political order? How does “globalism” affect theories of state and governance? Are the liberal democratic and republican traditions able to meet the dilemmas of security and freedom presented by an increasing inter-connectedness among nation-states? To investigate these questions, we will read classics on state and governance and also read selected contemporary theories, histories and literary perspectives on political order.

This course has been approved as a Writing Intensive course as part of the Writing Intensive Program (WIP). Successful completion of this course fulfills the Writing Intensive graduation requirement for Political Science majors who entered the university in Fall 2008 or later. Speak to your advisor or visit <http://www.neiu.edu/~wip> for more information. (Writing Intensive courses require ENG 101 with a grade of “C” or above as a prerequisite.)

Course Objectives and Requirements

This class is a reading, writing, and discussion course. Participation in class discussion is essential and regular attendance is required.

Discussion Memos. To enrich our conversations about the texts, discussion memos on each week’s assigned readings (300-500 words, typed and double spaced with citation) will be due at the beginning of class every Monday. In these memos, you will reflect on the main and most compelling points from each week’s reading. Good memos report on and briefly engage some of the reading’s main assumptions, arguments, and conclusions. Each memo assignment will be guided by a question handed out in class the week before the assignment is due. Since this will be the start of your thinking, well articulated—and textually grounded—statements of confusion could sometimes qualify as good first steps. Read and refer back to Writing with Sources to develop your understanding of the theory and practice of textual interpretation required in all writing

assignments in this course. Memos will be evaluated with a pass (a check mark), pass-minus (a check mark followed by a minus sign), or failing grade (a minus). Students who fail 4 or fewer of the memos will receive an “A” for their memo grade (a higher A with a majority of good passes, a lower A if pass-minus grades must be counted). *With more than 4 failed (or missed) memos, the memo grade declines steeply* (“B” for 5 failed memos, “C” for 6, etc.). Think of the 4 memos you can miss as “freebies” and use them wisely. *Please note, also, that the grading scheme holds throughout the semester and includes work missed due to illness or other necessity.* Memos will not be accepted on days you do not attend class.

In-Class Writing and Exchange of Ideas. Throughout the semester, we will have between 7 and 9 unannounced in-class writing assignments. For these assignments, each student and the professor will write on a question for 15 minutes and then we will exchange and discuss the thinking recorded in these assignments. These assignments will not be graded.

Alternative Media Project. In preparation for the level of analysis required by the formal essays, a substantive review of a film will be written. You will be asked to apply themes of the course in writing a movie review (4-5 pages, typed and double spaced with citation).

Essays. The major written work for this course will be two 8-10 page formal essay papers, typed and double-spaced with citation, in which you will be asked to analyze and/or synthesize themes from the assigned readings. Drafts and rewrites will be required on the first paper, and drafts will be optional on the final essay. I look forward to discussing each of these papers with you through the various stages of their composition. Topics will be given out in class. If you would like to design your own topic for any paper, you must talk with me before doing so.

The essay assignments and the film review will be graded on the following scale: 90-100 A; 80-99 B; 70-79 C; 60-69 D; 59 and below receives a failing grade.

The following ***required texts*** are available for purchase at Beck’s, the campus bookstore.

Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, Stanford (Meridian)
Falkoff, ed., Poems from Guantánamo: The Detainees Speak, Iowa
Foucault, History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume One, Vintage
Kant, Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, Hackett
Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Hackett
Mauss, The Gift, W.W. Norton
Mill, On Liberty, Dover Thrift Editions
Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, Cambridge
Montesquieu, Persian Letters, Penguin
Gordon Harvey, Writing with Sources, Hackett
Strunk and White, The Elements of Style

*The remainder of the **required reading** will be on electronic reserve in the library.* My expectation is that you will purchase or copy each of the assigned texts and bring them to class with you each day for discussion.

Please use only the assigned readings. If you acquire a copy of a text somewhere else, it is crucial that you get and read the same version as the rest of the class.

And please heed these caveats on the written work. We will chat wildly and at length about these texts in class, and my hope is that you do so with each other when you are on your own time, *but you are to do your own written work*. If this distinction between thinking together and writing alone puzzles you, please speak with me for clarification at any time. Additionally, see the university policy on academic misconduct at the end of this syllabus. Students must complete all assignments to pass the course.

You should not consult secondary texts or the inter-net when doing these assignments. If you feel the need to, you do not understand the requirements of this course, and you should definitely talk to me as soon as possible. Any outside consultation of sources, however, must be cited. If it is not: you have plagiarized. So, think of it this way: (1) you violate the policies of this course if you consult secondary sources; (2) if you do this, you have to cite the outside sources in order to not plagiarize. Short version of this story: do close readings of the primary texts yourself.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING PERCENTAGES:
10% - Participation (attendance, and the extent and quality of your participation)
20% - Alternative Media Project
30% - Discussion Memos
40% - Two formal essay assignments (20% each)
*See “Schedule of Assignments and Course Outline” below for reading assignments and paper dues dates.

Course Outline and Schedule of Assignments

I. Introduction: The Commons and the Rule of Law

Week One

M-8/25 and W-8/27

- Course Overview
- The Magna Carte (in-class hand out)
- Harvey, Writing with Sources

Week Two (*Memo Due Wednesday*)

M-9/1 and W-9/3

- Monday Class Cancelled: Labor Day
- Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, pp. xli-41, pp. 154-212

Week Three (*Memo Due Monday*)

M-9/8 and W-9/10

- Kant, “Perpetual Peace” and “What is Enlightenment”

Alternative Media Project Assigned:

film will be shown week of Monday 9/22;
projects due under my door on Friday, 10/3 by 5:00 p.m.

Week Four (*Memo Due*)

M-9/15 and W-9/17

- Locke, Second Treatise of Government, pp. 2-124

Week Five (*No memo due this week: enjoy the movie and start reading for next week!*)

M-9/22 and W-9/24

- In-Class Film Presentation: Be Kind/Rewind

II. State Sovereignty and Violence

Week Six (*Memo Due*)

M-9/29 and W-10/1

- Hobbes, Leviathan Chps. 13, 17 (on reserve)
- Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, pp. 246-263
- Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” (on reserve)

Media Projects due this Friday, 10/3, under my door by 5:00 p.m.

Week Seven (*Memo Due*)

M-10/6 and W-10/8

- Schmitt, selections from “The Concept of the Political” (on reserve)
- Mitchell, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics” (on reserve)
- Foucault, “Two Lectures” (on reserve)

Paper Topic One Assigned: First draft due under my door by 5:00 on Friday, 10/24

Graded drafts available Monday, November 3

Rewrites due Friday, 11/7

III. Market Orders and Social Governance

Week Eight (*Memo Due*)

M-10/13 and W-10/15

- Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman, “The Power of the Market” (on reserve)
- Marx, “Wage Labour and Capital” (on reserve)

Week Nine (*Memo Due*)

M-10/20 and W-10/22

- David Harvey, “How America’s Power Grew,” The New Imperialism (on reserve)
- Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex” (on reserve)

Papers Drafts Due on Friday, 10/24, under my door by 5:00 p.m.

Week Ten (*Memo Due*)

M-10/27 and W-10/29

- Foucault, History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction, pp. 1-114

IV. Incoherences and/or Outcomes?

Week Eleven (*Memo Due*)

M-11/3 and W-11/5

- Foucault, History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction, pp. 135-159

Week Twelve (*Memo Due*)

M-11/10 and W-11/12

- Montesquieu, Persian Letters

*Paper Topic Two Assigned: Final papers due in-class on Monday, 12/8
Students choosing the draft option must turn in drafts by Monday, 11/24*

Week Thirteen (*Memo Due*)

M-11/17 and W-11/19

- Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life

V. Conclusion: Democracy without Honor?

Week Fourteen (*Memo Due*)

M-11/24 and W-11/26

- Duras, “The War” (on reserve)
- Marc Falkoff, ed., Poems from Guantánamo: The Detainees Speak

Optional drafts due Monday!

Week Fifteen (*Memo Due*)

M-12/1 and W-12/3

- Nietzsche, “European Nihilism” (on reserve)

Week Sixteen

M-12/8

- Discussion and catch up

Papers due in-class at the beginning of hour.

From NEIU’s Student Conduct Code:

A student is subject to University discipline for participating or conspiring in the following acts of misconduct. Academic misconduct is an offense against the University. Acts of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: 1. Cheating. Use or attempted use of any unauthorized assistance in taking an exam, test, quiz, or other assignment. (Please note, cheating on exams includes all required University, state, and/or national assessment exams.) 2. Encouraging Academic Dishonesty. Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to persuade and/or influence another to violate the University's rules, policies, and regulations governing academic integrity. 3. Fabrication. Deliberate falsification or design of any material or excerpt in an academic assignment or exercise. 4. Plagiarism. Appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work. This includes (1) paraphrasing another's ideas or conclusions without acknowledgement; (2) lifting of entire paragraphs, chapters, etc. from another's work; and (3) submission as one's own work, any work prepared by another person or agency.