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American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

School of Arts and Humanities

POLS213

Political Theory

3 Credit Hours - 8 Weeks

Prerequisite(s): None

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COURSE DESCRIPTION (CATALOG)

An overview of political thought from the Ancient Greeks to the present. The course is an examination of the debate about human nature, governance regimes, justice, equality, liberty, and human rights. This course is an essential foundation for the political science major.

COURSE SCOPE

This course is intended for undergraduates and meets a core requirement for political science. The scope of this course is survey in nature. It covers Western political thought from the ancient Greeks, to the modern political liberal tradition and its critics, to contemporary political thought and debate. We will examine prominent political philosophers and their key contributions to understanding competing ideas about human nature, reason, virtue, liberty, equality and rights pertaining to civil society, justice and governance. This course closes with a few influential political theorists who variously carry forward these concepts and debates giving meaning to them in pluralistic liberal democratic societies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- CO-1.** Explain the intellectual origins of Western political tradition, beginning with Plato and Aristotle's understanding of human nature, reason, virtue, politics and the good and just society.
- CO-2.** Explain the origins of Western political thought according to early-to-medieval Christian thinkers, Augustine and Aquinas, on human nature, reason, natural law, virtue and political rule.

CO-3: Explain the dawn of the political liberal tradition according to Machiavelli and Hobbes on human nature (state of nature), reason, equal freedom, natural right, and emerging ideas of sovereignty and consensual political rule.

CO-4: Explain classical liberal political thought according to John Locke's social contract theory on developing ideas about the state of nature, reason, natural law and rights, equality and freedom and popular sovereignty and consent.

CO-5: Explain the differences from classical liberal thought according to the critiques of liberal thinkers Rousseau and Kant on human nature (state of nature), modern reason, equality and freedom and the social contract.

CO-6: Explain the continued differences on ideas about equality, freedom and rights in the modern liberal state and institutions according to critical historical theorists Hegel and Marx.

CO-7: Explain the debates in modern liberal thought and politics according to J.S. Mill's discourse on liberty, equality, individuality, consent and coercion, and best forms of government.

CO-8: Explain the ideas and debates among contemporary political theorists on key concepts of liberty, equality, rights and justice in pluralistic liberal democratic societies.

Course Delivery Method

Each week's lesson has a course announcement, assigned readings, and discussion questions based on course readings, the instructor's lesson notes, and supplemental website resources. Each student is expected to participate fully in discussions each week by interacting with other students and the instructor in the discussion Forum.

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Steven M. Cahn, *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*. (2nd ed.) New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
2. Web Readings

GRADING SCALE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Course Requirements: Grades for this course will be based on eight weekly discussion assignments and two exams. Both *mid-term* and *final exams* consist of short essay questions. The grade scale for each of the evaluations is provided below:

Grade Instruments:

Forum Questions
Mid-Term Exam
Final Exam

% of Final Grade

40%
30%
30%
100%

For optimum course and classroom experience, I urge you to get your Forum assignments posted by Friday 11:55 pm ET. This leaves time for fruitful discussion. Sunday at 11:55 pm ET is the deadline for at least two replies to classmate posts. See Course Announcement page.

POLS: 213 Course Schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Course Objectives</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
1	Classical Political Thought: Ancient Greeks	CO-1	Plato's <i>Republic</i> and Aristotle's <i>Ethics and Politics</i> in Cahn **See Lessons for <i>required sections</i> in Republic. Lesson Readings: <i>Required</i>	Forum Introduction & Discussion Questions
2	Early & Medieval Christian Thought: Augustine & Aquinas	CO-2	In Cahn: Augustine - Introduction by Paul J. Weithman, pgs. 225-228. - <i>The City of God</i> , p. 229-236 Aquinas - Introduction by Paul J. Weithman, pgs. 237-240. - <i>Summa Theologiae</i> , pgs. 241-252 Lesson Reading: <i>Required</i>	Forum Discussion Questions
3	The Dawn of Modern Political Thought: Machiavelli & Hobbes	CO-3	In Cahn: Niccolo Machiavelli - Introduction by Roger D. Masters, pgs. 253-255 - <i>The Prince & Discourses</i> , pgs. 256-281 Thomas Hobbes - Introduction by Jean Hampton, pgs. 282-284 - <i>Leviathan</i> , pgs. 285-310 Lesson Reading: <i>Required</i>	Forum Discussion Questions
4	Early Modern Liberal Thought: John Locke	CO-4	In Cahn: John Locke - Introduction by A. John Simmons, pgs. 311-314 - <i>Second Treatise & Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , pgs. 315-350 Lesson Reading: <i>Required</i>	Forum Discussion Questions *Mid-Term Exam*
5	The Continental Difference: Rousseau & Kant	CO-5	In Cahn: Jean-Jacque Rousseau - Introduction by Joshua Cohen, pgs. 351-354 Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, pgs. 355-370	Forum Discussion Questions

			<p>- Of the Social Contract, pgs. 370-396</p> <p>Immanuel Kant Introduction by Paul Guyer, 495-498, II. & III. , pg. 514-525</p> <p>Lesson Reading: <i>Recommended only</i></p>	
6	Critical Historical Theorists: Hegel & Marx	CO-6	<p>In Cahn: G.W.F. Hegel - Introduction by Steven B. Smith, 537-540 - Introduction to the Philosophy of History, pgs. 556-565</p> <p>Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels - Introduction by Richard Miller, 566-569 - Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, 569-576 - Manifesto of the Communist Party, 583-594</p> <p>Lesson Reading: <i>Recommended only</i></p>	Forum Discussion Questions
7	Modern Liberal Thought and Debate: Liberty and Government, J.S. Mill	CO-7	<p>In Cahn: J.S. Mill - Introduction by Jeremy Waldon, pgs. 596-597 - On Liberty: Chpts. I & II 633-657; Chpt IV. 659-666 - Considerations on Representative Government, pgs. 667-674</p> <p>Lesson Reading: <i>Recommended only</i></p>	Forum Discussion Questions
8	Contemporary Political Thought and Debate: John Rawls, Robert Nozick, Charles Taylor and Virginia Held	CO-8	<p>In Cahn: John Rawls - Introduction by Joshua Cohen, pgs. 690-693 - A Theory of Justice, pgs. 694-708.</p> <p>Robert Nozick - Introduction by Thomas Christiano, pgs. 710-712 - Anarchy, State and Utopia, pgs. 713-723</p> <p>Charles Taylor - Introduction by Robert B. Talisse, 726-728 - Atomism 729-742</p>	<p>Forum Discussion Questions</p> <p>*Final Exam*</p>

COURSE POLICIES

PLAGIARISM PENALTY

The instructor has the option of awarding any assignment that has been found to have been plagiarized a zero. Subsequent violations may result in an F in the class.

LATE POLICY

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date (Sunday, midnight EST) and to complete the course according to the class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals I understand you must manage competing demands. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and may result in a five percent deduction per late day.

CITATION STYLE

All assignments for the School of Security and Global Studies and in this class (exams and discussion forums) must follow the Turabian Style. Students should refer to the APUS On-Line Library *Turabian Style Manual* for the correct citation method.

NETIQUETTE

Online universities promote knowledge and learning through positive, constructive debate. Discussions online, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insult often due to misunderstanding. Good manners and basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" can go a long way. Please remember you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning. Personal attacks not only detract from this, but stifle conversation and present obstacles to reaching learning objectives.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple.
- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and satire can easily get lost or be taken seriously. If you enjoy humor (which I do), you may wish to add "emoticons" to help alert your readers: ;-), :), ☺

OTHER POLICIES: Please see the Student Handbook for all University policies, including: Drop/Withdrawal, Plagiarism and Extension policies

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The AMU/APU institution complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. In compliance with federal and state regulations, reasonable accommodations are provided to qualified students with disabilities.

A request for accommodation is deemed reasonable if the request:

- is based on documented individual needs.
- does not compromise essential requirements of a course or program.
- does not impose an undue financial or administrative burden upon APUS.

A qualified student can, with or without reasonable accommodations, perform the essential functions of program or course requirements. The essential requirements of an academic course or program need not be modified to accommodate an individual with a disability.

Final responsibility for selection of the most appropriate accommodation rests with the University's Disability Support Services Committee and is determined on an individual case-by-case basis, based on the nature of the student's disability. Students are encouraged email registrar@apus.edu to discuss potential academic accommodations and begin the review process. It is the student's responsibility to:

- follow the accommodation procedure outlined in this section,
- identify the disability to the staff and/or faculty of the university,
- provide (and incur expense for) current appropriate documentation of disability and accommodation needed from a qualified medical or other licensed professional, and
- request specific accommodations or services.

Academic Services

ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES

The Online Library Resource Center is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Center provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to orc@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.
- **Turnitin.com:** [Turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) is a tool to improve student research skills that also detect plagiarism. Turnitin.com provides resources on developing topics and assignments that encourage and guide students in producing papers that are intellectually honest, original in thought, and clear in expression. This tool helps ensure a culture of adherence to the University's standards for intellectual honesty. Turnitin.com also reviews students' papers for matches with Internet materials and with thousands of student papers in its database, and returns an Originality Report to instructors and/or students.
- **Tutor.com:** Students have access to ten free hours of tutoring service per year through [Tutor.com](http://tutor.com). Tutoring is available in the following subjects: math (basic math through advanced calculus), science (biology, chemistry, and physics), accounting, statistics, economics, Spanish, writing, grammar, and more. Additional information is located in the Online Library. From the Online Library home page, click on either the "Writing Center" or "Tutoring Center." All login information is available.
- **Request a Library Guide for your course:** (<http://apus.libguides.com/index.php>)
- The AMU/APU Library Guides provide access to collections of trusted sites on the Open Web and licensed resources on the Deep Web. The following are specially tailored for academic research at APUS:

- Program Portals contain topical and methodological resources to help launch general research in the degree program. To locate, search by department name, or navigate by school.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, Garrett Wallace and David Held. *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, Malden, Ma.: Polity Press, 2010
- Coole, Diana. *Women in Political Theory* (Second Edition), Boulder, Co.: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1993
- Goodin, Robert and Philip Petite. *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995
- Held, David. *Political Theory Today*, Stanford, CA: Polity Press, 1993
- Pateman, Carol. *The Sexual Contract*, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1988 (Also in digital 2003).
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- Wolff, Jonathan. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy* (Revised Edition), UK: Oxford University Press, 2006