

Prof. Schaeffer
Fenwick 307

What is the best way for human beings to live, individually and collectively? Are there different ways to think about equality, freedom and justice? What is the foundation and purpose of government? What kind of human beings are presupposed by various political theories? Are human beings political by nature, or are they naturally in a state of war? Does such a thing as “human nature” exist across history and culture, or is our understanding of our nature produced by history and culture? Moreover, if it is possible to know something about the nature of human beings, is that knowledge relevant to politics? How? Must the laws be in accordance with nature, or should they be designed to correct and/or control human nature? Is justice natural? Does it matter whether it is or not? What is justice, anyway, and how do we know it?

These are examples of the kinds of questions that have occupied political philosophers, and will occupy us as we think through these questions along with Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx and Nietzsche. We are not merely spectators, and we are not merely interested in their “nuts and bolts” prescriptions. We will pay close attention to the view of the human condition that informs each philosopher’s understanding of politics. Over the course of the semester, we hope to gain some insight into fundamental (and perennial) political problems, as well as a grasp of political philosophy as a mode of inquiry.

Required Texts:

Plato, *Republic*, trans. Bloom

Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. C. Lord

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. H. Mansfield

Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett)

Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Masters

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Nietzsche, *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life* (Hackett)

There will also be several readings on reserve in the library.

Grading:

5-7 page paper - 20%

Mid-term exam - 20%

7-8 page paper - 30%

Final Exam - 30%

Students are expected to attend all class meetings, read and think carefully about all assignments, and participate in class discussion. Class attendance is required. Excessive absences will have a negative impact on your final grade. Students are responsible for obtaining assignments and notes from any missed class. **Exams cannot be rescheduled.** Papers are due on the due date; late papers will lose one-half letter grade per day late. There will be no exceptions or extensions except for extraordinary, documented circumstances, such as hospitalization.

Office Hours

Mondays and Thursdays from 2-4 p.m. (and by appointment).

Assignments

- Jan. 22 -Th Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, sections 1-5; 7-8; 13
(available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.1.i.html>)
- Jan. 26 -M Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I (Ch. 1-7; 11-13)
- Jan. 27 – T Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II (2-3); Book III (6-13); Book IV, (1; 4-11)
- Jan 29 – Th Aristotle, *Politics*, Book
- Feb 2 – M Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Introduction; Dedication Letter; Ch. 1-3
- Feb. 3 - 16 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Ch. 4-end
- Feb. 17 - T Plato, *Republic*, Book I
- Feb. 17 –T Plato, *Republic*, Book II - 357a-377e (pp. 35-54)
- Feb. 18 – WEDNESDAY - PAPER #1 DUE by NOON
- Feb. 19 – Th Plato, *Republic*, Book IV: 419a-444a (pp. 97-123)
- Feb. 23- M Plato, *Republic*, Book V
- Feb. 24-26 Plato, *Republic* Book VII: 514a-528a and 540c-end (pp. 193-207; 220)
- March 1 - M Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 11; 13
- March 2 - T Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 14-15
- March 4 – Th Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 17-21
- SPRING BREAK
- Mar. 15 - M Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 26, 29
- Mar. 16 - T Mid-Term Examination
- Mar. 18-
Mar. 22 Locke, selections from *Second Treatise of Government* (on reserve)
- Mar. 23 - T Finish Locke
Rousseau, *Second Discourse (Discourse on the Origins of Inequality)*,
“Preface” (pp. 91-98)

Mar. 25 – Th Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, pp. 101-141

Mar. 29 – M Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 141-181

Mar. 30- Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, “Dedication to the Republic of Geneva”

Apr. 1 Finish Rousseau

Apr. 5 – 6 Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

EASTER BREAK

Apr. 13 -T Marx, “The Premises of the Materialist Method” from *The German Ideology* (on reserve)

Apr. 15- 22 Nietzsche, *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*

Apr. 26 Plato, *Republic*, Book VIII: 543a-564c (pp. 221-243)

Apr. 27 Plato, *Republic*, Book IX

Apr. 29 - Plato, *Republic*, Book X
May 3 -