

*University of Montana*  
*Department of Political Science*

PSC 250E  
Spring 2021  
MWF 9-9:50am

Dr. Grey  
**Remote Synchronous via Zoom**  
Email: [ramona.grey@mso.umt.edu](mailto:ramona.grey@mso.umt.edu)  
Office Hrs: MWF 10-10:50 by appt. **via Zoom**

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TA Office Hrs: TBA

***Introduction to Political Theory***

*Course Description:*

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 250E) familiarizes students with the basic concepts and issues that preoccupy the political theorist, including the origins of government and society, the nature of justice, and the meaning of political legitimacy. We will begin by considering the tension between politics and philosophy and continue with an examination of the major political thinkers from Plato to Marx, who have influenced the way we think about human nature, justice, the good life, government, freedom, citizenship, etc. We will conclude with the "end of political theory" debate.

At the outset, let us consider some basic questions about the relationship between political philosophy and ideology. First, is there a political theory that is not an ideology, or a theorist that is not an ideologue? If ideology is not the same as political philosophy or as good (as Plato suggests), then how does one avoid being labeled an ideologue? Lastly, what does it mean to you when someone says: "today it is no longer possible to construct a genuine political philosophy"?

*Course Objectives:* upon successfully completing the course work, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the political and ethical standards associated with classical and modern thinkers, including Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Burke and Marx.
2. Identify major themes and ideas associated with the ideologies of liberalism, classical and reform liberalism, utilitarianism, conservatism, feminism, Marxism, as well as contemporary variations such as neo-Marxism.
3. Provide an interpretative, critical essay on a dystopian novel, examining how the ethical ideals of Plato are embraced, perverted and/or negated. (See attached Paper Guideline.)

*Texts:*

R. Grey (editor) **POLITICAL THEORY & THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT: AN INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR POLITICAL THINKERS**, San Diego: Cognella Publishing, 2013 (ISBN 978-1-62131-525-4); can be purchased on-line at: <https://students.universityreaders.com/store/>.

George Orwell, **1984** (any edition)

*Grading (Total points for the course: 105):*

**PSCI 250E will be taught as a lecture course remotely via synchronous Zoom.** And as John Dewey observes, the teacher "steers the boat, but the energy that propels it must come from those who are learning." This means that the work of the course consists of **reading all assignments, attending class/review sessions and participating by raising questions (10% of course)**. Attendance will be taken via Zoom reports. Students who attend class regularly, but seldom raise questions in chat box will receive between 6-7.5 pts out of 10pt). In general, students who ask questions usually have good lecture notes, and you may **post questions in the chat box** anytime during the lecture either as "public" chats or "private" chats if they wish to remain anonymous. My TAs will assist in bringing your questions to my attention. Students must also complete the scheduled two-part midterm (**30% of course grade**), and the

final (30% of course grade.) **Both midterms and the final exam will be posted on Moodle on the scheduled exam date and will have a hard deadline for completion.** In addition, each student must complete on time an **analytical essay of Orwell, 1984 (35% of course grade.)** Please see attached for instructions on the 1984 paper. Late papers will receive a grade reduction for every day it's late.

*The Writing and Public Speaking Center provides one-on-one tutoring to students at all levels and at any time in the writing process. Visit now. Visit often. We're ready when you are. [www.umt.edu/writingcenter](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter).*

#### *Academic Misconduct*

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University of Montana. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available for review online at: <http://life.umt.edu/VPSA/name/StudentConductCode>.

#### *Accessibility and Students with Disabilities*

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please present the instructor with a letter from Disability Services for Students (DDS), Lommasson Center 154 (243-2243), indicating the existence of a disability and suggested accommodations. The instructor has attempted to make all course materials accessible. If you find course material that has barriers to accessibility, please notify the instructor as soon as possible so the oversight can be corrected as quickly as possible.

#### *COVID-19 note:*

Wearing a mask in class is mandatory. **All students with cough/flu-like symptoms should NOT attempt to come to ANY in-person class.** Although you may still feel able to attend the in-person class, by doing so you put **others around you at risk**. As healthy undergraduates, you are not the most "at risk sector of our population," but it is your responsibility to do your part to make sure that you do not transmit the virus to others who might be at risk (including student peers and many faculty and staff who are older and at much greater risk.) If you are sick or displaying symptoms, please contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330, **please let me know if you are sick and will be missing class meetings on Zoom.** Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from University of Montana Coronavirus Website: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus> UM COVID-19 Fall 2020 website: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/fall2020.php> We strongly encourage you to remain vigilant outside the classroom in mitigating the spread of COVID-19

#### *Tentative Course Schedule:*

1/11- Introduction to the Course; Political Theory  
1/15 Read: *Political Theory & the Human Predicament*: Introduction & Chapter I, Plato, *The Apology*

1/15- Plato's Socrates: Who is the just individual?  
1/25 Read: Chapter II: Plato, *The Republic*, Books I- II

\* \* \* \* \* *Monday January 18, Martin Luther King Jr. Day . . .no class* \* \* \* \* \*

1/25- Plato's Organic Theory of the State  
1/29 Read: Chapter 2: Plato, *The Republic*, Books II-IV

1/29- Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice: Community of Wives

- 2/5 Children, and Property  
Read: Chapter 2: Plato, *The Republic*, Book III, V, VII  
Recommend: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*
- 2/5- Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories  
2/10 Read: Chapter II, Plato, *The Republic*, Book VI, VII
- 2/10- Decline of the Ideal State  
2/12 Read: Chapter 2, Plato, *The Republic*, Books VIII (pp. 96-104)
- \* \* \* \* \* *Monday February 15th, President's Day Holiday. . .no class* \* \* \* \* \*
- 2/17 Review & Discussion of Plato with TAs
- \* \* \* \* \* Friday, February 19th Midterm Part I: Plato's Republic \* \* \* \* \***
- 2/22 Plato v. Aristotle  
Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II (pp. 123-130)
- 2/24- Aristotle: Politics As Science  
2/26 Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I (pp. 113-123)
- 2/26- Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis  
3/1 Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II; Book III (pp. 130-135); Aristotle, *History of Animals*, Book IX (pp. 164-165);
- 3/1- Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions & the Best Practical State  
3/5 Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III (pp. 135-155)
- 3/5- Aristotle on Revolution  
3/10 Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (pp. 155-166)
- 3/12 Review & Discuss Aristotle w/TAs
- \* \* \* \* \* Monday March 15th Midterm Part II: Aristotle's Politics \* \* \* \* \***
- 3/17 Machiavelli: Political Realist or Idealist?  
*Read: Chapter 4: Machiavelli, The Prince; Orwell, 1984*
- 3/19- Hobbes, Locke: The State of Nature & Social Contract Theory  
3/24 *Read: Chapter 5: Hobbes, Leviathan; Chapter 6: Locke, Two Treatises on Government (pp. 229-235; pp. 240-251)*
- 3/24 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution  
Read: Chapter 6: Locke, *Two Treatises*, (pp. 252-263)
- 3/26 Discussion of *1984* analytical essay with TAs
- 3/29- Locke & Property Rights (pp. 235-240)  
3/31 Read: Chapter 6: Locke, *Two Treatises*

\* \* \* \* \* **Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> No Class** \* \* \* \* \*

**\*\*\* 1984 Essay Due Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> \*\*\* See last page of syllabus \*\*\*\*\***

- 3/31- Classical Liberalism: Hume, Smith & "the Automatic Social  
4/5 Mechanism" of the Free Market  
Read: Chapter 7: Hume & Smith; Chapter 8
- 4/7 Utilitarianism: Bentham, James Mill & John Stuart Mill  
Read: Chapter 11: Bentham, *Principles of Morals*
- 4/9- John Stuart Mill & Reform Liberalism  
4/12 Read: Chapter 12 J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (pp. 453-482)
- 4/12- Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism  
4/16 Read: Chapter 9: Burke, *Reflections*
- 4/16- Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism  
4/19 Read: Chapter 13: *Marx, Economic & Philosophical Manuscript* (pp. 509-515)
- 4/21 Marx & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution  
Read: Chapter 13: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (pp. 515-544)
- 4/21 End of Political Theory?  
Recommend: Bell, *The End of Ideology* (1962) & Fukuyama, *End of History* (1992)
- 4/23 Review & Discussion for Comprehensive Final  
Read: Lecture notes & review selected readings.

- **\*\*\*\* Final is Monday April 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:10 am-12:10pm Posted on Moodle \*\*\*\*\***

### **Guidelines for Essay**

**"1984: Politics & Society in the Year 2021?"**

*(35% of course grade)*

#### **I. Purpose**

Objective: Provide an **analytical essay** comparing and contrasting the ideas/themes found in *1984* with the political theories we have covered in the course. An interpretive essay is not a book review or an editorial. A critical essay supports its analysis with direct references to the novel, showing the extent Orwell borrows, satirizes, and/or negates the ideas of other western political thinkers.

#### **II. Content**

Description & Thesis (10% of essay value)

We do not want more than a cursory attempt at describing the content of Orwell's *1984*. Assume that the reader is familiar with the plot of the book. (No more than one paragraph.)

#### **III. Analysis** (55% of essay value)

This part of the paper should constitute the major portion of your work. Look for the ideas that Orwell draws upon in terms of the ideologies covered in the

class. Can you, for instance, identify radical, conservative, and/or liberal ideas in his model community? (i.e. what extend does Orwell borrow from Plato's notion of justice?)

Or you *might* examine his underlying assumptions about human nature, "male" & "female" natures. Is there a class, caste, or elites in this society? What is the role of their political leaders (what legitimizes their authority). Explain. What is the character of the economic system and the nature of social relationships in Orwell's dystopia? What is the value system of the "Oceania" society? Consider, for instance, the political socialization process of the inhabitants: what they are taught, if anything, regarding gender roles, history, community etc.

#### *IV. Conclusion:* (30% essay value)

Finally, does Orwell's vision of a dystopia state offer us a unique contribution to political philosophy or is it merely a hybrid of political theories we have studied in class? Explain

#### *V. Format* (5% essay value)

##### *a. Quotations*

All quotations or paraphrasing in your work from any material must be enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited as to their origin. See a writing manual for consistent format. **Plagiarism:** *Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own* is a violation of the university code of conduct and will result in a grade of F on the paper, please see:  
<http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/documents/StudentConductCode>

##### *c. Bibliography*

You should include a complete bibliography for all outside books used for this paper. Chicago style preferred.

##### *d. Editing:*

Be sure to edit and proof your final copy! Points will be deducted for grammatical and spelling errors.

**Grading sheet (next page)**

**PSC250E: Introduction to Political Theory  
Spring 2021**

**Description & Thesis – 10% (3.5 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

- Clear and coherent thesis statement
- Relevant to materials presented in lectures and throughout course materials

**Analysis – 55% (20 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

- Strong supporting evidence of the thesis
- Relevant information is clearly presented
- Fully developed arguments
- Credit is given to outside sources, where appropriate

**Conclusion - 30% (7.5 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

- Conclusion: a clear restatement of the answer to the central question

**Format, Mechanics & Bibliography - 5% (4 pts)** \_\_\_\_\_

- Format: **5-6 typed, double-spaced pages**, 10-12 point font
- Grammar: Neatness, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and organization
- Bibliography: Follows Chicago/Turabian citation style guidelines

**TOTAL: (35 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Comments:**

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