

University of Montana
Department of Political Science

PSC 250E
Spring 2024
MWF 9-9:50am, SocS352

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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: This course satisfies the general education requirements for *Group VIII: Ethics and Human Values (E)*. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Correctly apply the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied to ethical issues that arise within those traditions or practices;
2. Analyze and critically evaluate the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the political and ethical standards associated with classical and modern thinkers, including Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Burke and Marx.
4. Identify major ideas and key principles associated with utopianism, classical and reform liberalism, utilitarianism, conservatism, feminism, Marxism, as well as contemporary variations such as neo-Marxism.
5. Provide a clear, well-written analytical 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**, Preliminary 3rd edition, San Diego: Cognella Inc., 2024; can be purchased on-line at: <https://store.cognella.com/97935>

Huxley, **Brave New World** (any edition)

Grading:

The work of the course consists of reading all assignments, participating by raising questions and attending lectures —students who ask questions usually have good lecture notes, completing the scheduled *two-part midterm* (30% of course grade), and the *final* (35% of course grade.) In addition, each student must complete on time **an analytical essay** of Huxley, *Brave New World* (35% of course grade.)* Please see attached for instructions on the *Brave New World* paper. Late papers will receive a grade reduction for every day it's late.

Extra Credit Assessment Essay Exam (2 pts each exam):

University of Montana & Political Science Department is asking you to take an essay exam as part of the University's require Assessment of Student Learning in the Ethics Perspective of General Education.

Your score on the exam will **NOT** affect in any way your course grade or academic standing in the Department or at the University. You will receive *two extra points* for taking the first assessment exam, and two *extra credit points* or taking the second assessment exam during the last week of classes.

Our Social Contract: "Life is short, but there is always time for courtesy," Ralph Waldo Emerson

Emerson believed, as I do, that manners matter a great deal in life. Insofar as our course is concerned, I expect reciprocal courtesy to exist between us. This will be our 'social contract.' For my part, I will take all of my teaching responsibilities with the utmost seriousness. In return, you need to read all of the material with care, to actively listen, to raise questions, and to reflect on what you have learned. In addition, I expect you to come to class on time, to stay for the entire lecture, and to refrain from any behavior that might distract me or the students around you. Please do not talk with your neighbors or read newspapers during the lecture. Please turn off your cell phones. It is imperative that we create an atmosphere conducive to learning. As J.S. Mill reminds us, "what we achieve depends less on the amount of time we possess, that on the use we make of our time."

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 Office of Disability Equity for Students. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please present the instructor with a letter from Office of Disability Equity for Students (ODE), Aber Hall (243-4216), 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.

Tentative Course Schedule:

1/19-	Introduction to the Course & Political Theory
1/22	<u>Read:</u> <i>Political Theory & the Human Predicament:</i> Introduction & Chapter I, <i>The Apology</i>
1/24-	Plato's Socrates: Who is the just individual?
1/26	<u>Read:</u> Chapter II: Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books I- II
1/29-	Plato's Organic Theory of the State
1/31	<u>Read:</u> Chapter 2: Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books II-IV

- 2/2- 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*
- 2/7- Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories
2/9 Read: Chapter II, Plato, *The Republic*, Book VI, VII
- 2/12 Decline of the Ideal State
Read: Chapter 2, Plato, *The Republic*, Books VIII (§544e-566)
- 2/14 Plato v. Aristotle
Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II (pp.118-122)
- 2/16 Review & Discussion of Plato
- ***** **Monday February 19th, President's Day Holiday. . .No class** *****
- ***** **Wednesday, February 21st Midterm Part I: Plato's Republic** *****
- 2/23 Aristotle: Politics As Science
Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I
- 2/26 Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II; Book III (“Citizenship”)
- 2/28- Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions & the Best Practical State
3/1 Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III (“Classification of Constitutions”); Book IV (“Best Practical State”; “Political Stability & the Middle Class”)
- 3/4- Aristotle on Revolution
3/6 Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (“General Causes of Revolution”)
- 3/8 Review & Discuss Aristotle
- ***** **Monday March 11th Midterm Part II: Aristotle's Politics** *****
- 3/13- Machiavelli: Political Realist or Idealist?
3/15 Read: Chapter 5: Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- ***** **March 16th to March 24th ** Spring Break *** Reading Huxley, Brave New World**
- 3/25- Hobbes, Locke: the State of Nature & Social Contract Theory
3/27 Read: Chapter 6: Hobbes, *Leviathan*; Chapter 7: Locke, *Two Treatises on Government* (“Chap. 1-IV; VI-XI”).
- 3/29 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution
Read: Chapter 7: Locke, *Two Treatises*, (“Chap .XVII-XIX”)
- 4/1 Discussion of *Brave New World* analytical essay

- 4/3 Locke & Property Rights (“Chap.V “Of Property”)
Read: Chapter 7: Locke, *Two Treatises*
- 4/5 Classical Liberalism: Hume, Smith & "the Automatic Social Mechanism" of the Free Market
- *** Brave New World Essay Due Friday, April 5th *** Attach last page of syllabus ****
- 4/8 Slack Day/No Class: see readings below.
- 4/10 Utilitarianism: Bentham & James Mill (father of J.S. Mill)
Read: Chapter 11: Bentham, *Principles of Morals*
- 4/12 John Stuart Mill & Reform Liberalism
Read: Chapter 12, J.S. Mill, “*On Liberty*”
- 4/15- Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
4/17 Read: Chapter 9: Burke, *Reflections*
- 4/19 Anti-Feminist Thought v Feminist Political Theory: Mary Wollstonecraft & J.S. Mill
Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *History of Animals*, Book IX ; Chapter 10: Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men & A Vindication of the Rights of Women*; J.S. Mill. “*The Subjection of Women*”
- 4/22- Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
4/24 Read: Chapter 13: Marx, *Economic & Philosophical Manuscript*
- 4/26 Marx & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution
Read: Chapter 13: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
- 4/29 Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
Recommend: Bernstein’s *Evolutionary Socialism* (1899); Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle* (1899); Rosa Luxemburg, selections from *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (1970); Lenin’s *Imperialism* (1917)
- 5/1 End of Political Theory?
Recommend: Bell, *The End of Ideology* (1962) & Fukuyama, *End of History* (1992)
- 5/3 Review for Comprehensive Final
Read: Lecture notes & review selected readings.

****** Final is Monday May 6th at 10:10 am-12:10pm in Soc Sci 352 ******

Guidelines for Essay

"*Brave New World: Politics & Society in the Year 2025?*" (35% of course grade)

I. Purpose

Objective: Provide an **analytical essay** comparing and contrasting the ideas/themes found in *Brave New World* with Plato's *Republic*. 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 Huxley borrows, satirizes, and/or negates the ideas of Plato.

II. Content

Description & Thesis (10% of essay value)

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

III. Analysis (70% of essay value)

This part of the paper should constitute the major portion of your work. Look for the ideas that Huxley draws upon in terms of Plato's ideal city-state. Can you identify radical and/or conservative ideas in his model community? (i.e. what extend does Huxley borrow from Plato's notion of justice? Conversely, what would Plato find objectionable about Huxley's dystopia?)

You might consider these two thinkers regarding their 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 Huxley's dystopia? What is the value system of the "Fordist" 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: (20% essay value)

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

V. Format

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 (including using AI) as one's own work* 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.

Please attach grading sheet (next page)

Please Attach To Your Paper
PSC250E: Introduction to Political Theory
Spring 2024

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:

Huxley