

**MODERN POLITICAL THEORY
Pols160B – Spring 2021
San José State University**

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Lawrence Quill

LECTURE LOCATION: ONLINE

OFFICE HOURS: T/TR 12-2PM VIA ZOOM, AND BY APPOINTMENT.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to reawaken many of the important debates that shaped our political heritage. The era beginning with the Italian Renaissance and ending with the French Revolution left a deep and lasting impression on our perceptions of the political environment. This period is usually considered the key period in the development of Western political theory. In this course, we will examine war, empire, virtue, liberty, rights, contract theory, democracy, populism, realism, gender, and revolution, among other big ideas.

PREREQUISITES

This course is not designed exclusively for political science students. Students from many other majors have proven that they can do as well in this course as Political Science majors. All students, however, need some background in the critical reading of original texts. Students should be aware that this is a reading (and writing) intensive course. Political Science 3 is the suggested prerequisite, but philosophy, literature, and history courses frequently can provide sufficient practice in reading original sources.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Machiavelli, *The Discourses*
Hobbes, *Leviathan*.
Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*.
Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*.
Rousseau, *Social Contract*.
Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The B.A. in Political Science requires majors to take a minimum of one upper division course in political thought. This course fulfills that requirement, as well as counting towards the normal total of upper division courses.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Essay (40%)
Midterm (15%) Final (15%)

Weekly Quizzes (30%)

Grading Scale

A plus 96 to 100
A 93 to 95
A minus 90 to 92
B plus 86 to 89
B 83 to 85
B minus 80 to 82
C plus 76 to 79
C 73 to 75
C minus 70 to 72
D plus 66 to 69
D 63 to 65
D minus 60 to 62
NP or F 59 or less

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)

BY THE END OF THE COURSE STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

CLO1: PRESENT IN WRITING THEORETICALLY/HISTORICALLY INFORMED OPINIONS CONCERNING THE APPLICABILITY OF DIFFERENT THEORETICAL SYSTEMS TO SELECTED PUBLIC POLICY AREAS

CLO2: PRESENT IN WRITING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE WAY POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES EMPLOY THE APPLICATION OF COMPETING THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN MATTERS OF PUBLIC POLICY AND NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

CLO3: RECOGNIZE SOME WIDELY EMPLOYED THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND BEYOND, ACROSS THE POLITICAL CULTURE MORE BROADLY, UNDERSTANDING THEIR LOGIC AND THEIR SCOPE OF APPLICATION

CLO	ASSIGNMENT	%	DUE DATE
CLO 1,2,3	ESSAY	40	SEE CANVAS
CLO 3	MIDTERM	15	SEE CANVAS
CLO3	FINAL EXAM	15	SEE CANVAS
CLO 3	WEEKLY QUIZZES	30	

CALENDAR: PLEASE SEE CANVAS FOR DETAILS.

Course Requirements

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>."

Because this is a 3-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of nine hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. Careful time management will be required to keep up with readings and assignments in an intensive course such as this one.

For this class, students will complete two in-class examinations, and two full-length research essays, which require detailed review of the primary source material and the application of at least two outside scholarly sources relevant to the research topic.

Assignments

Topics for the Essay

TOPIC 1: Machiavelli

In *The Discourses*, Machiavelli notes that:

'...a republic has a fuller life and enjoys good fortune for a longer time than a principality, since it is better able to adapt itself to diverse circumstances owing to the diversity found among its citizens than a prince can do. For a man who is accustomed to act in one particular way, never changes, as we have said. Hence when times change and no longer suit his ways, he is inevitably ruined.'(Discourse Book 3, 9)

Was Machiavelli correct to assume that republics are better able to cope with change than principalities? Be sure to discuss the role of the citizens, leaders, and the function of institutions to maintaining a republic. Refer closely to *The Discourses* in your answer.

TOPIC 2: Hobbes

Hobbes noted famously in *Leviathan*, Chapter 11, that:

'...a general inclination of all mankind [was] a perpetual and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight than he has already attained to or that he cannot be content with a moderate power, but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.'

Was Hobbes correct in his assessment of human nature? Or does adhering to the Hobbesian position merely perpetuate the cycle of violent power in politics? Refer closely to *Leviathan* in your answer.

TOPIC 3: Locke

Locke noted in the *Second Treatise on Government* the following:

'Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The Labour of his Body, and the Work of his hands, we may say, are properly his.'

Paragraph 27

Does Locke's theory of labor and property acquisition properly reward those who work hard, or does it justify a system of economic and political inequality? Refer closely to *The Second Treatise on Government* in your answer.

TOPIC 4: Rousseau

In Book Two, Chapter Seven of *The Social Contract*, Rousseau noted the following:

'The legislator is the engineer who invents the machine, the prince merely the mechanic who sets it up and makes it go...He who dares to undertake the making of a people's institutions ought to feel himself capable...of changing human nature, of transforming each individual, who is by himself a complete and solitary whole, into a greater whole from which he in a manner receives his life and being.'

In your view, is Rousseau's description of the 'legislator' the beginning of a new kind of political system? In your answer make sure that you explain clearly the function of the legislator in Rousseau's theory and how it relates to concepts like the 'general will.' Refer closely to *The Social Contract* in your answer.

TOPIC 5: Mandeville

In *The Fable of the Bees* (Remark G) Mandeville noted the following:

'The short-sighted Vulgar in the Chain of Causes seldom can see further than one Link; but those who can enlarge their View, and will give themselves the Leisure of gazing on the Prospect of concatenated Events, may, in a hundred Places see Good spring up, and pullulate from Evil, as naturally as Chickens do from Eggs.'

Can selfish individual actions lead to positive effects for society? In your answer, carefully explain the precise relationship Mandeville describes between politics, the poor, and the free market. Refer closely to *The Fable of the Bees* in your answer.

TOPIC 6: Wollstonecraft

Consider the following statement:

'Wollstonecraft's ideas about equality may have been revolutionary for the eighteenth century. Two hundred years on, however, most of what she wanted has now been achieved; at least in the United States. The *Vindication* may, therefore, be regarded as little more than an historical curiosity, nothing else.'

Do you agree with this assertion? Critically discuss this view remembering to draw on *The Vindication* in your answer.

Annotated Bibliography (minimum 300 words)

Students work closely with the professor conducting research assessing the relevance of different scholarly sources for a chosen essay topic. Students are required to write succinct annotations of the sources identifying the relevance to a chosen topic.

Prompt:

1. Read all 6 essay prompts and choose **ONLY ONE**.
(This will be your essay question throughout the course.)
2. [Run a google scholar search \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to find relevant resources.
3. [Write an annotated bibliography \(Links to an external site.\)](#) citing 2 relevant scholarly sources. (This means that the journal article or book chapter must refer to Socrates if you have chosen Topic One, Thomas More if you have chosen Topic Two, etc.). Please check with me in advance so that I may OK your sources.
4. [Use APA formatting throughout. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
5. Click [HERE \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to see an example of a correctly formatted Annotated Bibliography.
6. [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) Minimum Word Count: 250

Students work with the professor to develop a thesis, introductory paragraph, and a detailed outline in response to a chosen topic incorporating relevant scholarly materials in their answer.

Thesis

1. Your thesis Statement. This is your answer to the question in one or two sentences that appears in the first line of the paper.

Outline (minimum 300 words)

Referring to **ONLY** your chosen essay prompt, submit:

2. Your introductory paragraph which includes your thesis statement. This is the 'roadmap' for your paper and should include a clear plan for the essay.
3. [Create an outline for your essay \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
 - a. Include a series of bullet points for each paragraph in your essay (each paragraph should support your thesis). Include a topic sentence for each paragraph. Provide details about the content of each paragraph including fully referenced citations where appropriate.
 - b. Make sure you include references to your two scholarly sources and describe how your use of the articles will support your thesis.
 - c. Include a series of bullet points describing what you wish to include in your concluding paragraph. Include the topic sentence for this paragraph.

Midterm – students are required to sit a multiple choice exam that tests the ability to ascertain the appropriate meaning of textual citations.

Final - students are required to sit a multiple choice exam that tests the ability to ascertain the appropriate meaning of textual citations.

Quizzes – there are weekly quizzes that test knowledge of a particular text.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

PSPLO1: Breadth

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

PSPLO2: Application and Disciplinary Methods

Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political.

PSPLO3: Communication Skills

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

PSPLO4: Citizenship

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The policy on academic integrity can be found with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development at http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

See <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/s90-5.htm> about Academic Senate Policy S90-5

PLAGIARISM

See http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct (Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Dev)

DEPARTMENTAL WRITING POLICY

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count! Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website at http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm.

For assistance, please visit the SJSU Writing Center staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists. Writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. It is your responsibility to arrange a time to meet with the instructors. Consult with your professor in advance to determine whether you need assistance with your writing.

Arguably the best way to improve your own writing is to read quality material on a regular basis. To that end, students are encouraged to read articles from scholarly sources but also newspapers such as The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, The New York Times, and The Economist. These publications also contain articles of direct relevance to their political science classes.

QUESTIONS?

Finally, if you get stuck, feel overwhelmed, or just want to clarify something from the reading or lectures, ask me. I am here to help.