

**San José State University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**POLS 3: Introduction to Political Thought, Section 1, Fall 2022**

Instructor: Dr. Sara Benson  
Office Location: Clark 406G  
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Office Hours: 9:30–10:30 MW in person or on Zoom: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/91088094738>  
Class Days/Time: Mondays/Wednesdays, 1:30–2:45 pm  
Classroom: DMH 160  
GE/SJSU Studies Category: C2 Humanities

### **Course Description**

Thinking critically about the classic problems of politics; learning how to interpret, discuss and write about historical and contemporary political thought.

This course introduces students to the study of power with close readings of significant texts in the history of political thought. We begin with a broad overview of power and its many forms and then examine competing formations of equality, democracy, and justice. As we examine works of human intellect and imagination, we engage with historical context and a set of readings that reflect a diversity of perspectives in political thought.

### **Course Format**

This course meets in person. All of your work will be submitted for feedback via Canvas.

### **Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

As a required core course for the political science major, this course is also part of the general education curriculum. It satisfies the C2/Humanities requirement. This means that we will read and write about works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance. It also means we will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline of political science.

#### General Education Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to:

*GELO 1:* analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;

*GELO 2:* explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;

*GELO 3:* analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines;

*GELO 4:* research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination.

Course Learning Outcomes

*CLO 1:* compose textually grounded essays and short responses to works of significant intellect and imagination in the history of political thought;

*CLO 2:* compare and contrast theories of power and the state.

Department/Program Learning Outcomes

The Department of Political Science has the following goals in mind for this course:

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

*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 issues and organizations.

*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.

*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.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>GELO</b>	<b>CLO</b>
Critical Synthesis 1	GELO 1	
Critical Synthesis 2	GELO 4	
Critical Synthesis 3	GELO 3	
Quizzes (3x)	GELO 2	CLO 1
Final Exam		CLO 2

## Required Texts/Readings

Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon, *Princeton Readings in Political Thought* (hereafter indicated as *PRPT*)

ISBN: CLOTH 0691036888 PAPER 9780691036892 (either is fine)

All other required readings are posted on Canvas.

## Course Requirements, Assignments, Grading Policy

Assignment	Percentage of Grade	Word Count
Critical Synthesis 1	15 percent	500 words
Critical Synthesis 2	15 percent	500 words
Critical Synthesis 3	15 percent	500 words
Quizzes 1–3	25 percent	250 words
Final Exam	30 percent	1000 words

Your grade in this course is based on five key assignments. No extra credit is available.

### Critical Synthesis Papers

Students will craft three critical responses (*each ~500 words*) over the course of the semester. These short responses are designed to get you thinking affectively and analytically. As you respond to the text, you should engage at least two specific passages in your critical response. Each of these assignments will focus on a specific theme and you should choose from the set of readings indicated in the course schedule on this topic.

A critical response is not about criticizing the authors; instead, you are responding to your own encounter with the text or tracking your own encounter with the text. Your response should include three components: thinking about the text on its own terms (what does it say), thinking about the text in terms of your own relationship to its ideas (how you relate to it personally or politically), and thinking about the text analytically.

In other words, your response should address the text literally, personally, and analytically.

- *literally* (What does it say? How would you summarize its meaning? Which key passages are most important to understanding that meaning?)
- *personally* (How did you connect to this work? How did you read it? How do your own experiences inform your reading of the text? What draws you to the text or a particular passage?)
- *analytically* (What larger themes/questions/political moments/concepts does this make you think about? What questions do you have? What connections can you make between these ideas and ideas from other readings and authors in this course?)

You do not necessarily need to structure your response in three separate sections, but each of these components should be present somewhere in your writing. To sum it all up, think of the critical responses for this class as reflection pieces that track what you read, how you read it, and what kinds of analytical connections these readings allow you to make.

Students should write clearly and effectively on a topic of their choosing. Your writing will be assessed for grammar, clarity, conciseness, and coherence.

### Reading Quizzes

Reading quizzes are designed to draw your attention to certain passages for analysis. Some of the questions are multiple choice and others are open ended/short answer questions. These quizzes will also help prepare you for the final exam because you will be asked to identify the author and text and to unpack passages from the text by explaining it in their own words and making connections to the larger themes of the class.

### Final Exam

For this exam, students will be asked to identify the author and text of five passages from the readings. After identifying the author and title of the work, students should unpack the quote by explaining it in their own words and making connections to the larger themes of the class. The take home final exam is cumulative and comprehensive. Your task is to show that you have synthesized course lectures, concepts, and readings. Do not use outside sources. Your writing will be assessed for grammar, clarity, conciseness, and coherence.

## **Grading and Late Policy**

In this course, deadlines are important because they keep us on track and provide structure and continuity in the class. All deadlines are listed on Canvas. If you fall behind, you can submit late work and do not need to provide documentation. However, once you submit an assignment, it will be graded once (unless it is part of a scaffolded or sequenced assignment involving rough drafts and final drafts).

*No extra credit is available.*

## **Grading Scale**

93 to 100	A
90 to 92	A minus
87 to 89	B plus
83 to 86	B
80 to 82	B minus
77 to 79	C plus

73 to 76	C
70 to 72	C minus
63 to 69	D
60 to 62	D minus
less than 60	F

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

*Please review the information about university policies on plagiarism contained above, which may result in a failing grade. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.*

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## Classroom Protocol

*Students should attend all class meetings and participate in class exercises. Please be respectful of your colleagues in class discussions and during peer review exercises. Discussion board discourse should always be professional, respectful, and even generous in this writing community.*

## Political Science Departmental Writing Policy and SJSU Writing Center

The political science librarian at SJSU is Esse Barosso-Ramirez ([esse.barosso-ramirez@sjsu.edu](mailto:esse.barosso-ramirez@sjsu.edu)).

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](http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm).

For assistance with writing, please see me or visit the SJSU Writing Center located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

### Political Science 3: Introduction to Political Thought, Fall 2022

*The schedule is subject to change with fair notice.*

<b>Dates</b>	<b><u>Topics, Readings, Assignments</u></b>
Week 1	<u>Course Introductions</u>
Week 2	<u>The Study of Power</u> Machiavelli, selections from <i>The Prince</i> (PRPT 167–187) John Gaventa, “Power and Powerlessness” (on Canvas)
Week 3	<u>Power and Organization</u> Michel Foucault, selection from <i>Discipline and Punish</i> (PRPT)  Jeremy Bentham, “Principles of Morals and Legislation” (PRPT 371–374)
Week 4	<u>Social Contract Theory</u> Thomas Hobbes, selection from <i>Leviathan</i> (PRPT 205–242) John Locke, “Second Treatise of Government” (PRPT 243–279)
Week 5	<b>Quiz 1 Due</b>  <b>Critical Synthesis 1 Due</b>
Week 6	<u>Liberalism and Republicanism</u> Alexis de Tocqueville, selections from <i>Democracy in America</i> (PRPT 398–424)  Cheryl Harris, “Whiteness as Property” (on Canvas)
Week 7	<u>Political Status/Individuals and Groups</u>  Film Screening: <i>The Crowd</i> (98 minutes)

<b>Dates</b>	<b><u>Topics, Readings, Assignments</u></b>
Week 8	<u>Freedom and Unfreedom</u> Hegel, selection from <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> (Lordship & Bondage) <a href="http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/ph/phba.htm">http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/ph/phba.htm</a> <b>Critical Synthesis 2</b>
Week 9	<u>Estranged Labor and Political Economy</u> Marx, selected writings (PRPT 435–466) <b>Quiz 2</b>
Week 10	<u>Estranged Labor and Political Economy</u> Marx, selected writings (PRPT 435–466)
Week 11	<u>Social Movements</u> Piven and Cloward, selection from <i>Poor People's Movements</i> (PDF) Chela Sandoval, <i>Methodology of the Oppressed</i>
Week 12	<u>Power and Education</u> Paulo Freire, selection from <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Power of Nonviolence” (on Canvas)
Week 13	<b>Critical Synthesis Three</b> <b>Quiz 3</b>
Week 14	<u>Political Power</u> Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (on Canvas) Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (on Canvas)
Week 15	<u>Theory and Practice/Studying Power</u> <i>Film Screening: Salt of the Earth</i>
Week 16	<u>Course Conclusion</u>

**\*Final paper due on Canvas by Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm.**