

POL 321: Western Political Thought
MWF 12:15 – 1:20 pm
Fermanian School of Business room 103
Spring 2019

Dr. Linda M. Beail

Office: Colt 116; phone 849-2408

Email: lbeail@pointloma.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-1:30 pm, Fridays 1:30-2:30 pm and by appointment

PLNU MISSION: To Teach – To Shape – To Send. Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Politics is often the “art of the possible,” and most political scientists are concerned with the pragmatic realities of how to gain, keep, and use power – whether in global relationships between states, in war, in policy choices, or even in an election campaign. But all political actions and choices are grounded in theory – whether conscious or more implicit. Our shared (and contested) notions -- of legitimate and illegitimate power, of justice, of the possibilities and limits of human nature and freedom, of the importance of the individual vis-a-vis the community -- all shape the practical choices and evaluations we make concerning how to vote, or when war is justified, or if human rights have been violated, or if a particular public policy is feasible & desirable. As we analyze, describe, predict and judge the political events happening around us, we are relying on our often unspoken understandings of how political life *should* work. This course is an opportunity for those of us who love politics to think deeply and deliberately about the ideas and values that shape our political worldviews. Through close readings of primary texts, as well as analysis of commentary and critique of those texts, we will be able to discover the interaction of theory and praxis in the evolution of political life in the West. By delving into the ideas about politics that many people have embraced and debated over centuries in Western civilization, we will be better prepared to understand contemporary political rhetoric and dilemmas, and to clarify our own political values and commitments.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, you will be able to

- Identify the major theorists in the Western political tradition, from Plato to the present, and describe their major contributions to political thought.
- Compare and contrast political theorists’ answers to essential questions of political thought and action, such as: What is justice? What is freedom? What is the goal of politics? What is the best form of government? How can we attain these things? Are humans virtuous? What is the relationship between the community, the individual, and the state? What role should religion play in political life?

- Assess the particular threats and opportunities of postmodernism for political thought and action.
- Analyze the role of individuals and intersecting identities in the global political community.
- Write and communicate more clearly, persuasively and insightfully.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Construct and evaluate analytical, comprehensive arguments (essays).
- Demonstrate oral communication abilities, particularly to convey complex ideas, recognize diverse viewpoints, and offer empirical evidence of an argument (developed in daily class discussion, demonstrated in oral final exam).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The **main work** of this course is the **careful reading, thoughtful consideration, and engaged discussion of the canonical texts** of Western political thought. Therefore, it is essential that you attend class each day, and that you come prepared to discuss the readings at hand. As an added material incentive, participation in class discussion & activities (along with periodic short writing assignments, announced in class) will be worth 30% of your overall course grade. You may miss two class sessions without your absences negatively affecting your grade; after that, absences and lateness will deduct from your full participation credit. Please note that the university drop policy (if you miss more than 8 class sessions during the semester, you will be withdrawn as failing from the course) will be strictly enforced.

Quality of participation is as important to your grade as quantity; the best participants are not necessarily those that talk the most, but that regularly engage in our conversation with something meaningful and helpful to contribute. Sometimes that may be an insightful question that provokes thoughtful reaction, rather than a profound answer. Making space for others' voices and perspectives, as well as bravely and wisely offering your own, are good political skills that we will practice.

Students will also be responsible for signing up for one class session to lead the discussion on the day's text.

Essay midterm exam – 25% of course grade

Essay and oral final exam – 25%

Class participation, leading one class session, and short writing responses/summaries – 30%

Popular culture analysis – 20%

Exam dates are noted on the syllabus, and writing assignment due dates will be given in class. Please make special arrangements with the instructor ahead of time if you have a problem completing any of the requirements at the scheduled time, as absolutely no make-up exams will be given. Any written assignment that is turned in late will be penalized one letter grade (10% of the assignment's worth) for each calendar day that it is late.

Grading Scale:

A	93-100%	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings (four classes), the faculty member has the option of filing a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent (eight classes), the student may be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for further information. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with all of these policies. Please be aware that I take any sort of academic dishonesty very seriously: **Academic dishonesty in any form, including cheating and plagiarism, are grounds for failing the course and disciplinary action by the dean.**

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students must request that academic accommodations by filing documentation with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

STYLE GUIDE AND INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In political science, the most common form of citations is the “**author-date**” format from the **Chicago Manual of Style**. Please use this style in any work for this class. Examples can be found at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Because of the changing standards of English usage, language that refers appropriately to all persons (inclusive of gender) should be used whenever possible. Some simple guidelines include replacing "man" or "mankind" with "humanity," "humankind," "persons," or "people." "He," "him" and "his"--when not referring to an actual male person --can be replaced with "he or she," "him or her," or "hers or his," or the singular “they,” “them,” and “their” is also grammatically appropriate. Gender specific terms may be replaced by their current alternatives: for example, "Congressman" has been correctly replaced by "Congressperson" or “member of Congress," etc. As it is becoming more prevalent and more considerate to refer to persons by the gender pronouns they prefer, when possible, I appreciate your kindness in using gendered language that feels respectful and hospitable to each person.

IN-CLASS EXPECTATIONS

While coming to this class will hopefully be an enjoyable experience, it is not like attending a movie, viewing a sporting event, or watching television; your respectful behavior and engaged attention is expected at all times. Class time is precious. It is our opportunity to interact, discuss, and create knowledge together. It is not a passive experience, but one that you should be ready to participate actively in.

In this spirit, here are a few basic expectations to make the most of our class time together: Please be on time to class each day. Cell phones should be turned off during class time, and no electronic devices (including laptop computers and iPads) may be used to surf the web, check email, text, network on Instagram/Facebook/Twitter/etc., play games, or engage in other multi-tasking activities during class; this is distracting to your classmates and the instructor. Because of this, and because of research showing the greater value of taking notes by hand rather than using a computer (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>), **I am asking students NOT to use laptops during class at all**. Please see me privately if there are extenuating circumstances that you feel might necessitate using a computer during class and we can discuss possible limited adjustments to this policy.

Please do not leave the room (for a drink, to use the restroom, etc.) unless it is absolutely necessary. No one is allowed to leave the classroom for ANY reason whatsoever during exam periods. My expectation is that we will all strive to treat one another with respect, kindness and professionalism, which includes listening carefully and responding thoughtfully and with grace to the thoughts and opinions of our colleagues. All of these behaviors will lead to a more fruitful learning environment for all of us.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Steven M. Cahn, ed. *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2014.
Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow*, Counterpoint 2001.
Articles, essays and podcasts as assigned, available online via our POL321 Canvas site.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision by instructor):

January 8	Introduction	
January 9	Plato	Cahn 5-30
January 11	Plato	Cahn 31-70

January 14	Plato	Cahn 70-90
January 16	Plato	Cahn 105-136
January 18	Plato	Dale Hall, "The <i>Republic</i> and the Limits of Politics"
January 21	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – no class	
January 23	Aristotle	Cahn 142-165
January 25	Aristotle	Cahn 165-197
January 28	Aristotle	Cahn 197-222
January 30	Medieval thought	Cahn 239-251
February 1	Machiavelli	Cahn 268-292
February 4	Machiavelli	Cahn 293-308
February 6	Machiavelli	
February 8	Machiavelli	Hannah Pitkin, <i>Fortune is a Woman</i> (excerpt)
February 11	Hobbes	Cahn 309-330
February 13	Hobbes	Cahn 330-343
February 15	Locke	Cahn 360-379
February 18	Locke	Cahn 380-400
February 20	Rousseau	Cahn 418-454; 458-463
February 22	Edmund Burke	Cahn 603-619
February 25	Mary Wollstonecraft	<i>Rights of Women</i> (excerpt on Canvas)
February 27	Alexis de Tocqueville	Cahn 644-666
March 1	MIDTERM EXAM DUE 5 pm – no class meeting	
March 4-8:	SPRING BREAK – no class meetings	
March 11	Karl Marx	Cahn 696-714
March 13	Karl Marx	Cahn 714-737; W. Booth, "Gone Fishing"
March 15	John Stuart Mill	Cahn 738-740; 747-807
March 18	John Stuart Mill	Cahn 808-824
March 20	Elizabeth Cady Stanton (both on Canvas) Simone de Beauvoir	
March 22	Friedrich Nietzsche	Cahn 825-840
March 25	Michel Foucault	Cahn 970-987
March 27	Frederic Jameson/Jean Beaudrillard (excerpts)	
March 29	Iris Marion Young	Cahn 1054-1070
April 1	Hannah Arendt	Cahn 841-856
April 3	Hannah Arendt	<i>The Human Condition</i> (excerpt)
April 5	Hannah Arendt	Listen to <i>On Being</i> podcast with Lyndsey Stonebridge

April 8	Wendell Berry	<i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 1-9
April 10	Wendell Berry	<i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 10-22 (Recommended, not required: watch profile and interview with Berry at http://billmoyers.com/segment/wendell-berry-on-his-hopes-for-humanity/)
April 12	Wendell Berry	<i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 23-32
April 15	Andrew Dobson	“Thick Cosmopolitanism”
April 17	Work on theorizing in pop culture project – no class meeting	
April 19	EASTER BREAK - no class meeting	
April 22	EASTER BREAK - no class meeting	
April 24	Sarah Ahmed	<i>The Promise of Happiness</i> (excerpt)
	ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL THEORY IN POP CULTURE PAPER DUE 5 pm	
April 26	Practice for final exam	

*****FINAL EXAM: Wednesday May 1, 10:30 am - 1 am *****