

POL 321: Western Political Thought
MWF 8:30 – 9:35 am
Taylor Hall 105
Spring 2017

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Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-1:30 pm, Wednesdays 1-3 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 the individual in the global political community.
- Write and communicate more clearly, persuasively and insightfully.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Construct and evaluate analytical, comprehensive arguments (essays).

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.

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.

March 27	John Stuart Mill & Elizabeth Cady Stanton (on Canvas)	Cahn 808-824
March 29	Friedrich Nietzsche	Cahn 825-840
March 31	Michel Foucault	Cahn 970-987
April 3	Hannah Arendt	Cahn 841-856; <i>The Human Condition</i> (excerpt)
April 5	Hannah Arendt	Origins of Totalitarianism
April 7	Hannah Arendt	
April 10	Wendell Berry	<i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 1-9
April 12	Wendell Berry	<i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 10-22 (Optional: watch profile and interview with Berry at http://billmoyers.com/segment/wendell-berry-on-his-hopes-for-humanity/)
April 14	EASTER BREAK, no class meeting	
April 17	EASTER BREAK, no class meeting	
April 19	Wendell Berry	<i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 23-32
April 21	John Rawls & Martha Nussbaum	Cahn 911-923 Cahn 1024-1047
April 24	Iris Marion Young	Cahn 1054-1070
April 26	Kwame Appiah	Cahn 1073-1085
April 28	ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL THEORY IN POPULAR CULTURE PAPER DUE 8 am	

***FINAL EXAM: Monday May 1, 7:30 am -10 am ***