

**POL 3021: Western Political Thought  
Spring 2025  
MWF 1:30-2:35 pm, Evans 114**

**Dr. Linda Beail  
Colt 116**

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**Office Hours: MWF 10:30 am – noon, Monday 2:45-4 pm and by appointment**

**Getting in touch with me:** For short questions – email me at [lbeail@pointloma.edu](mailto:lbeail@pointloma.edu). As a general rule, I answer emails during the work day (9-4), and I try to answer emails within 24 hours, except on weekends. If I happen to miss your email, please follow up again with me. I want to make sure I get back to you! For everything else – come to office hours or make an appointment. Office hours are a chance for you to get help on class assignments; go over material covered in class; talk about connections between class material and other ideas; talk about the political science major/possible careers/vocation; and so on. I would love to get to know each of you better and help you succeed in this course, so I encourage you to take advantage of this time.

**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 described as the “art of the possible,” and many 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 who should lead, 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. We can not only better evaluate and critique current political systems, leaders, events and realities – we can better imagine those we need or want to bring into reality. 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.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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

- Identify important 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? How can we attain these things? Are humans virtuous? Who should lead? When is power legitimate? What is the best form of

government? What is the relationship between the community, the individual, and the state? What role should religion play in political life?

- Engage in the imaginative work of normative political theorizing through the Thought Experiment assignment.
- Be better critical and reflective readers of difficult texts, locating main points, arguments and counterarguments within texts and overarching themes in a series of texts.
- Demonstrate skill in speaking with others about political ideals and practices, evaluating others' arguments and challenging ideas in a fruitful, civil and productive manner.

#### **PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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

#### **SPIRITUAL CARE**

PLNU strives to be a place where students grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or if you have prayer requests, you can contact the [Office of Student Life and Formation](#).

#### **INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

#### **PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

#### **PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. 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. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

#### **AI POLICY**

In some class sessions, we may be using personal electronic devices for research. During this time, you can use generative AI tools to enhance your learning and help you explore their benefits and limitations. We'll discuss the implications of these tools together, *but their use will be limited to specific in-class exercises*. I will clearly indicate when and how AI tools can be used.

Allowed in-class activities may include: Brainstorming new ideas, developing outlines or approaches, generating different ways to discuss a problem. However, **students may not use AI tools to generate content for assignments submitted for a grade.**

These tools do not replace the essential skills outlined in the course objectives. Remember that AI-generated content can sometimes be inaccurate or biased. For example, AI tools are typically not able to reach "deep web" sources such as academic peer reviewed journals which are pay walled and need institutional access. You are responsible for all submitted work and must not pass off AI-generated content as your own, as this will be considered academic plagiarism and will result in a zero on the assignment.

### **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

### **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND DISCRIMINATION**

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available through the Title IX Office at [pointloma.edu/Title-IX](http://pointloma.edu/Title-IX). Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, it is required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at [counselingservices@pointloma.edu](mailto:counselingservices@pointloma.edu) or find a list of campus pastors at [pointloma.edu/title-ix](http://pointloma.edu/title-ix)

### **PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

### **FINAL EXAM POLICY**

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

The [PLNU Tutoring Center](#) offers support with everything you need to succeed — whether it's learning study strategies and test-taking techniques, getting help from a tutor, using technology to read and write, or editing a research paper. They also offer individual or small group tutorial sessions and special review sessions before exams for several courses. These services are **free** for PLNU undergraduate students. Some helpful **study strategies** that may assist you in this course can be found [here](#).

**Research librarians** are available to help you with your research papers and projects in Ryan Library. You can reach them by phone at (619) 849-2337, by text at (619)592-8884, or by [email](#). To search the library's databases for books and articles, or to find quick and easy reference to our citation style guide and resources in political science, please visit our department's excellent [research guide](#) from Ryan Library.

[The Wellness Center](#) is available for medical, counseling and nutrition services to students. Many college students experience strained relationships, stress, anxiety, depression, physical health challenges, and other barriers to learning. The Wellness Center offers help and resources to deal with these kind of issues. T

## STYLE GUIDELINES

In political science, the most common form of citations is the **"author-date" format** from the [Chicago Manual of Style](#). Please use this style if using citations in this class – examples are available at the hyperlink. For our short response papers and in-class exams, if you are referring to something from our shared syllabus, simply indicate the author's name or title and where to find the idea/quote in your text – you do not need formal footnotes or works cited. For example: "As Plato says in the *Apology*, "it really is the greatest benefit for a person to converse every day about goodness" (paragraph 38a, p. 19).

Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars, we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice-free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups on any of the above. You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

## 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. **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.

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| <b>Weekly critical reading responses</b> – may be discussion boards, group Google doc, or 1-page essay practice and peer review, assigned in class and posted on Canvas. | 10% of final course grade |
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| <b>Attendance &amp; Participation in Class Discussion</b>                            | 15%  |
| <b>“Thought Experiment” Paper</b> – Theorizing Political Community (Draft and Final) | 25%  |
| <b>Three Midterm Exams</b>   | 36%  |
| <b>Final Exam</b>  | 14%  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | 100% |

**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  |

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Steven M. Cahn, ed. *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*. 4th edition. Oxford University Press, 2022.  
Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow*, Counterpoint 2001.

This course is part of our course material delivery program, **LomaBooks**. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.

You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pickup or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials. For more information about **LomaBooks**, please go [HERE](#).

**COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision by instructor):**

|   | <b>DATE</b> | <b>PREPARATION FOR CLASS</b>   | <b>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b> |
|---|-------------|--|------------------------|
| <b>WEEK 1</b><br><b>Introduction</b>  | January 13  | What is political theory?  |                        |
|   | January 15  | Plato, Introduction & <i>Apology</i><br>( <i>Defence of Socrates</i> )<br>Cahn pp.1-23 |                        |
|   | January 17  | <i>Crito</i><br>Cahn pp. 23-31   |                        |
| <b>WEEK 2</b><br><b>Classical Political Thought: Plato and the Republic</b> | January 20  | <b>Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – no class meeting</b>                               |                        |

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|  | January 22  | <i>Republic</i> Book I (327a-354c)<br>Cahn pp. 31-53<br><br>Listen to “Good in Theory”<br>podcast – link in Canvas                |   |
|  | January 24  | <i>Republic</i> excerpts from Book II (357a -379), Book III (412b-415d)<br><br>Cahn pp. 53-66                                     |   |
| <b>WEEK 3</b>  | January 27  | <i>Republic</i> Book IV (428d – 473d) and Book V (451c - 466d)<br><br>Cahn pp. 66-81  |   |
|  | January 29  | <i>Republic</i> Book VI (487b – 497) and Book VII (514a – 521b)<br><br>Cahn pp. 83-88   |   |
|  | January 31  | <i>Republic</i> Book VIII (555a – 569c)<br><br>Cahn pp. 88-96   | First Draft of <b>Thought Experiment</b> Due in Canvas no later than 11:59 pm, <b>Saturday February 1</b> |
| <b>WEEK 4<br/>Aristotle and<br/>Medieval<br/>Political Thought</b> | February 3  | Aristotle, Introduction & <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i><br>Cahn 97-104  |   |
|  | February 5  | <i>Politics</i> , excerpts from Books I-III<br>Cahn 105-121   |   |
|  | February 7  | <i>Politics</i> , excerpts Books IV-V<br>Cahn 121-127<br><br>Watch short video lecture by Dr. Beail on medieval political thought |   |
| <b>WEEK 5<br/>Machiavelli and<br/>the turn to<br/>modernity</b>    | February 10 | <b>Exam One</b>   | <b>In Class Midterm Exam</b>  |
|  | February 12 | <i>The Prince</i> , dedication and chapters I – XV<br>Cahn 173-185  |   |
|  | February 14 | <b>No Class Meeting</b>   |   |

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| <b>WEEK 6</b>   | February 17 | <i>The Prince</i> , chapters XVII – XXVI<br>Cahn 186-190                                     |                                  |
|   | February 19 | Machiavelli, <i>The Discourses</i><br>Cahn 190-195   |                                  |
|   | February 21 | Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> Part 1: Introduction – Chapter 15 (excerpts)<br>Cahn 196-213 |                                  |
| <b>WEEK 7</b><br><b>The Social Contract</b>                   | February 24 | Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> Part 2: Chapters 17-29 (excerpts)<br>Cahn 213-230                   |                                  |
|   | February 26 | John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , Chapters 1-5<br>Cahn 247-262              |                                  |
|   | February 28 | Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , Chapters 7-29 (excerpts)<br>Cahn 262-279       |                                  |
| <b>WEEK 8</b>   | March 3     | Jean Jacques Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i><br>Cahn 304-323          |                                  |
|   | March 5     | Rousseau, <i>Of the Social Contract</i> , Parts I & II<br>Cahn 323-334; 346-348              |                                  |
|   | March 7     | <b>Exam Two</b>  | <b>In Class Midterm Exam Two</b> |
| <b>SPRING BREAK</b>   | March 10-14 | <b>No class meetings</b>   |                                  |
| <b>WEEK 9</b><br><b>Democratization as Progress or Peril?</b> | March 17    | Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i><br>Cahn 449-465                 |                                  |
|   | March 19    | Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i><br><br>Cahn 395-408           |                                  |
|   | March 21    | Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”<br>Cahn pp. 965-979<br>and    |                                  |

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|   |          | Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self"<br>Cahn pp. 981-987   |                                    |
| <b>WEEK 10</b><br><br><b>Equality and Freedom</b>           | March 24 | Karl Marx, <i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844</i> and<br><i>The German Ideology</i><br>Cahn 542-560   |                                    |
|   | March 26 | Karl Marx, <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i> and<br><i>Value, Price and Profit</i><br>Cahn 560-584   |                                    |
|   | March 28 | Mill, <i>On Liberty</i><br>Cahn 594-608  |                                    |
| <b>WEEK 11</b>  | March 31 | Mill, <i>On the Subjection of Women</i><br>Cahn 609-616  |                                    |
|   | April 2  |  |                                    |
|   | April 4  | Begin reading Wendell Berry, <i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 1-9 (pp. 3-106)   |                                    |
| <b>WEEK 12</b><br><b>Embodying Theory and Praxis: Berry</b> | April 7  | Watch Bill Moyers' <a href="#">profile of and interview with Berry</a> (40 minutes)<br><br>Read <i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 10-18 (pp. 109-200)  |                                    |
|   | April 9  | Read <i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 19-25 (pp. 201-282)<br><br>Listen to poems: " <a href="#">Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front</a> " (6 minutes) -- full text <a href="#">here</a> if you want to read along, but as with all poetry -- it's better aloud! -- and " <a href="#">The Country of Marriage</a> " |                                    |
|   | April 11 | Read <i>Jayber Crow</i> chapters 26-32 (pp. 283-363)   |                                    |
| <b>WEEK 13</b>  | April 14 | <b>Midterm Exam Three</b>  | <b>In Class Midterm Exam Three</b> |



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|   | April 16                                  | <b>Western Political Science Association Meetings, Seattle – No Class Meeting</b>                                | Work on final draft of Thought Experiment   |
|   | April 18                                  | <i>Easter Break – no class meeting</i>   |   |
| <b>WEEK 14<br/>Postmodern<br/>Despair and<br/>Possibility</b> | April 21                                  | <i>Easter Break – no class meeting</i>   |   |
|   | April 23                                  | Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i><br>Cahn 617-631   |   |
|   | April 25                                  | Michel Foucault, <i>Power/Knowledge</i><br>Cahn 767-783  | Final Draft of <b>Thought Experiment</b> Due in Canvas by 11:59 pm, Saturday April 26 |
| <b>WEEK 15<br/>Contemporary<br/>Challenges</b>                | April 28                                  | Listen to Lyndsey Stonebridge, <a href="#">The Moral World in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt for Now</a> (49 minutes) |   |
|   | April 30                                  | Hannah Arendt, <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism</i><br>Cahn 647-662   |   |
|   | May 2                                     |  |   |
| <b>Final Exam</b>   | <b>Wednesday<br/>May 7,<br/>1:30-4 pm</b> | <b>Final Exam</b>  | <b>In-person final exam</b>   |