SYLLABUS

This course provides students with an overview of the history of political thought by introducing several basic themes in classical, medieval, and modern political thought. We will consider the emergence of political philosophy and political science in the ancient Greek world; the new political problem engendered by the cultural dominance of Christianity in the West; the reaction against ancient and medieval political thought in the early modern period; and the forging of a distinctively modern approach to the study of politics, one from which contemporary “liberal,” constitutional or pluralistic democracies draw their underlying principles.

Although the course proceeds chronologically and is necessarily attentive to the changing historical contexts within which our authors wrote, the course is not primarily a history course. It is, rather, focused on a series of fundamental questions or “problems” that emerge most clearly in the perennial human effort to live together in political community. The course presents several different—indeed conflicting—“answers” or responses to these problems, each of which is powerfully articulated by one of the major authors we will examine in this course. Students are invited to enter into a conversation that begins with a question or problem that arises from within a particular historical and political context, but which points to underlying questions about the nature of reality itself. By trying to understand, articulate and write about the rival perspectives offered by the authors under consideration, students will be challenged and encouraged to enlarge, sharpen, modify, or strengthen their own opinions or convictions about these same questions.

Introduction to Political Thought is a required course for the Political Science major and fulfills the University’s Core requirement in Ultimate Questions (UQ).

REQUIRED TEXTS (in University Bookstore):
To prevent several unnecessary problems, especially (but not exclusively) misleading translations, students are required to use the editions specified below (all are paperbacks and among the least expensive editions available):

- Plato, Republic (Basic Books, Bloom translation)
- Augustine, City of God (Penguin Classics, Bettenson translation)
- Machiavelli, The Prince (Chicago University Press, Mansfield translation)
- Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration (Library of Liberal Arts)
- A short selection from Tocqueville’s Democracy in America will be made available to students for our final reading (no text has been ordered)
SOMewhat Tentative Course Schedule:

Introduction (One Week)

August 24: Introduction, Syllabus
August 26: Introduction, Political Thought and Political Science
August 29: Introduction, Politics and Political Philosophy (Rep. Bk.7 through 521d)

I. CLASSICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT (Seven Weeks)

A. Ancient Greece and the Emergence of Political Philosophy (Four Weeks)

Aug.31: Plato, Republic, Book 7 through 521d
Sept.2: Republic, Book 2
Sept.5: No Class: Labor Day
Sept.7: Republic, Books 2-3
Sept.9: Republic, Books 3-4
Sept.9: Republic, Book 4
Sept.12: Republic, Book 5
Sept.14: Republic, Book 5 and 7
Sept.16: Republic, Book 9 and Conclusion
Sept.19: Plato Conclusion
Sept.21: Aristotle, Politics, Book 3.6-8
Sept.23: Aristotle, Politics, Book 3
September 23: Plato Interpretative Essay due by high noon

B. Late Antiquity and the Emergence of Christian Politics (Three Weeks)

Sept. 26: Christianity and a New Political Problem
Sept. 28: Augustine, City of God, Preface, Book 1.1-3 and Book 14.28
Sept. 30: City of God, Book 5.13-18
Oct.3: City of God, Book 19.1-10
Oct.5: City of God, Book 19.1-10
Oct.7: City of God, Book 19.11-20
Oct.10: City of God, Book 19.11-20
Oct.12: City of God, Book
Oct.14: Classical Philosophy and Christianity
October 14: Augustine Interpretative Essay due by high noon

II. MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT (Seven Weeks)

A. Renaissance Beginnings of Modern Political Thought (Three Weeks)

Oct.19: *The Prince*, Chapters 1-3; re-read Aristotle, *Politics* 3.6-8
Oct.21: *The Prince*, Chapters 3-6
Oct.24: *The Prince*, Chapters 6-7
Oct.26: *The Prince*, Chapters 7-12
Oct.28: *The Prince*, Chapters 13
Oct.31: *The Prince*, Chapters 15
Nov.2: *The Prince*, Chapters 16-18
Nov.4: *The Prince*, Chapters 18-23
Nov.7: *The Prince*, Chapters 24-26
Nov.9: *The Prince*, Chapters 24-26
Nov.11: Plato, Augustine, and Machiavelli
**November 11: Machiavelli Interpretative Essay due in class.**

B. Enlightenment Underpinnings of Contemporary Politics (Two Weeks)

Nov.14: Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*
Nov.16: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
Nov.18: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
Nov.16: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
Nov.18: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
No. 21: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
Nov.23: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
**November 23: Locke Interpretative Essay due in class.**
*November 24-27: No class (Thanksgiving Break)*

C. Democracy and the Democratic Mind (One Week)

Nov.28: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Introduction (Moodle)
Nov.30: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 2.1.1-2 (Moodle)
Dec.2: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*,
Dec.5: Course Retrospective and Culmination

*Students are now in the best position to complete Student Opinion Surveys*

**FINAL EXAM: PSC 103-01: THURSDAY, DEC 8 at 8:30 a.m.**
**FINAL EXAM: PSC 103-02: MONDAY, DEC 12 at 8:30 a.m.**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
Attendance and active participation in class
- Since this is a text-based course, all students are required to bring the text under discussion to class on a daily basis
- This is an unplugged course. No computers are to be used during class-time, unless there is an extenuating circumstance, which must be cleared with me ahead of time
Written Papers
- All students will write 2-3 Interpretative Essays and at least one Reading-Reflection.

Pop Quizzes
Final Exam
- No cell phones or technological devices may be used or taken out during the final exam. Failure to comply will result in an F for the exam.

GRADING:
Your grade will consist of three elements: Participation, 2-3 Interpretative Essays and a Final Exam. Each component will be equally weighted (20% or 25% each) to determine the core grade for the course. On occasion, this grade can be raised one notch due to steady improvement.

Participation Grade: This part of your grade is composed of four elements: attendance, active participation in class, pop quizzes, and any announced Reading-Writing Essay.
- Attendance at every class meeting is expected. After 2 unexcused absences, every further absence results in the loss of one partial letter grade (B becomes B-, B- becomes C+, and so on).
- If a student arrives after attendance is taken, they are likely to have been marked absent. It is your responsibility to remind me at the end of class that you were in fact present.
- You are expected to be present not only physically but also mentally: perfect attendance without active class participation amounts to a C for this portion of your grade; the addition of regular participation earns a B; frequent, helpful, intelligent participation earns an A.
- All students are graded weekly on the quality (and quantity) of their active engagement with course materials for that week. Participation grades can be seen at any time, based on student request.
- Quizzes are typically unannounced. Students will be given 5-10 minutes to answer a question or summarize the reading for that day. I recommend preparing for quizzes by doing the reading carefully and then taking a few minutes to summarize what you have read.
- Reading-Reflections are announced ahead of time and typically require a summary of a particular argument in the reading assigned for that day. These short summaries are handed in at the beginning of class and cannot exceed one page.

Interpretative Essays: Every student will write 2-3 Interpretative Essays for this course. Every student is required to write an Interpretative Essay on both Classical Political Thought (Plato or Augustine) and Modern Political Thought (Machiavelli or Locke). Students also have the option of writing a third Interpretative Essay.
- Students will turn in a hard copy of all essays by the dates and times specified in the Course Schedule.
- See Writing Guidelines below
Final Exam: The final exam will have two components: It will cover our final author, Alexis de Tocqueville, and require an essay comparing several of the authors on one theme. Let's make sure we cover the major themes in the course as a whole.

OFFICE HOURS:
I am in my office a lot and students are encouraged to see me with any questions or concerns they may have. The best way to set up a meeting is to send me an email, although students are also welcome to drop by.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:
Students who need academic accommodations should contact Judy Bagley at the Student Office of Accessible Resources (SOAR) (294-2320), located behind (and below) Earl Infirmary in Room 002. After this meeting, please set up a meeting with me. It is in your interest to attend to this EARLY in the term.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
Honesty, respect, and personal responsibility are principles that guide academic life at Furman, in and out of the classroom. Academic misconduct in any form (plagiarism, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, and other efforts to gain an unfair academic advantage) threatens the values of the campus community and will have severe consequences, such as failure in the course, and/or suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any question about what constitutes plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, it is your responsibility to speak with me so that we can dispel any and all ambiguity. Given the severity of the consequences, it is crucial that you fully understand what is expected of you in this regard. If you have any doubts, just ask! You should also be familiar with the information available at www.furman.edu/main/integrity.htm. A copy of Furman's policy on academic dishonesty can also be found at this site.

WRITING GUIDELINES: INTERPRETATIVE ESSAYS

You will write at 2-3 short interpretive essays over the course of the term. Interpretive essays will show that the student (1) understands the text to be interpreted and appreciates its significance; (2) has asked and answered a genuine question or made the case for a contestable yet defensible thesis; (3) has organized his or her essay with an introduction, a conclusion, and a logical sequence of paragraphs that advance an argument from the introduction to the conclusion; (4) has marshaled specific evidence from the text to support his or her argument in a manner that demonstrates independent engagement with the text; (5) has carefully edited and proofread his or her writing to produce a compact and compelling style.

Length: Interpretive Essays must be no less than two and no more than three pages in length.
Standards used for Evaluation:

A: An outstanding essay, marked by unusual clarity of description, force of argument, richness and precision of language, inventiveness, or wit. Shows substantial reflection on the theme and makes a compelling argument to answer a question or defend a thesis. Carefully organized and well-written, usually the result of several drafts and extensive polishing. Makes reference to the text at key points in the argument.

B: A good essay that makes a consistent case for a thesis or the answer to a question. The writing is competent, but undistinguished. “B” papers tend to be more informational than thoughtful, but they do evidence substantial specific knowledge of the text.

C: A lackluster essay that fails to ask and answer a genuine question or make the case for a contestable yet defensible thesis. Deficient in understanding, textual specificity, or quality of writing.

D: Falls to make an argument or makes it in a completely unconvincing way. May contain some relevant points, but they are hard to recognize. Typically lacks understanding, textual specificity, and polish.

F: No evidence of serious work.

NOTE BENE: For all papers written in PSC-103, please underline the overall thesis or question of your paper and italicize the thesis of each paragraph (that is, your topic sentence). This requirement is intended to help you organize your writing and discipline your argument.

WRITING GUIDELINES: BE YOUR AUTHOR’S LAWYER

The texts we read in this course have been consistently earning readers’ respect—albeit grudging respect, in some cases—for over 2,000 years. Your objective in this course is not (initially) to judge our authors, but to demonstrate that you understand why these books have come to be regarded as “Great Books.” In this, you will be following the example of a great philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who describes his own great books education, acquired without teachers in a remote farmhouse, in the following way:

I began with some book of philosophy, such as the Logic of Port-Royal, Locke’s Essay, Malebranche, Leibnitz, Descartes, and so on. I soon noticed that all these authors were in almost perpetual contradiction with each other, and I formed the chimerical project of reconciling them, which tired me out very much and made me lose a lot of time. . . . Finally renouncing this method also, I acquired an infinitely better one, to which I attribute all the progress I have been able to make, in spite of my lack of capacity; for it is certain that I have always had extremely little for study. While reading each Author, I made it a law for myself to adopt and follow all his ideas without mixing in my own or those of anyone else, and without
ever disputing with him. . . . Then when trips and business deprived me of the means of consulting books, I amused myself by thinking over and comparing what I had read, by weighing each thing in the scale of reason, and sometimes by judging my masters. I did not find that my faculty of judging had lost its vigor because it had been put into use late, and when I published my own ideas, I was not accused of being a servile disciple. (Rousseau, *Confessions*, tr. Christopher Kelly [Dartmouth: UPNE, 1995], 199)

**NOTE BENE:** However, after having made your best case for the position of the author you considering, you must step out of your role as lawyer in a short final paragraph, and state whether or not you agree with the argument you have just presented and provide a reason for your position. This is an essential requirement for all papers in PSC 103.

**WRITING GUIDELINES: ARGUMENTS AND OUTLINES**

**A. Arguments**
The purpose of writing an outline is to help you think through the argument of your paper, which will form the paper's principle of organization. What is an argument? For our purposes, an argument is a contestable yet defensible proposition about the text in question. As such, an argument is different from a topic sentence, which merely states a subject to be treated. You may shape your argument around either a thesis that states the argument in compact form, or as the answer to a genuine question you pose in your opening paragraph.

**Examples:**

1. Topic Sentence (Incorrect): “This paper will discuss self-knowledge in Montaigne’s *Essays*.”

2. Uncontestable Argument (Incorrect): “Montaigne’s *Essays* deal with self-knowledge.”

3. Indefensible Argument (Incorrect): “Montaigne’s *Essays* were actually written by me in a previous life.”

4. Contestable Yet Defensible Argument (Correct): “Despite his protestations of orthodoxy, the chapter Of *Repentance* makes clear that Montaigne’s conception of the self is profoundly irreligious.”

5. Genuine Question (Correct): “How does Rousseau separate the natural from the artificial in the constitution of man?”

6. Tee-Ball Question (Incorrect): “Does Tocqueville think equality of conditions is an important fact about America?”
B. Outlines

**Argumentative Structure:** An outline should consist of a series of arguments: contestable yet defensible propositions about the text in question. The argument of each body paragraph should support the main argument of the paper, the thesis, or respond to the paper's question. As a whole, the paper should consist of a logical sequence of paragraphs that advance an argument from the introduction to the conclusion.

**Examples:**

Outline I (Incorrect):
1. Rousseau presents his quest for self-knowledge in autobiographical form.
2. Self-knowledge is an important subject of the Confessions.
3. Rousseau's meeting with Mme de Warens is very important to him.
4. The Confessions is an autobiography.

Outline II (Correct):
1. Whether Socrates is discussing love, madness, or rhetoric, the soul is always the true subject of Plato's Phaedrus.
2. Socrates' discussion of love is really a discussion of the soul, because, for Socrates, the soul is love.
3. Socrates' discussion of madness is also, in truth, a discussion of the soul, because, for Socrates, the soul is not fully intelligible, and therefore looks mad to us.
4. Socrates discussion of rhetoric, finally, is also a discussion of the soul, because rhetoric is "an art of leading the soul by means of speech" (261b).
5. The unity of the Phaedrus, which scholars have wondered about for so long, is readily apparent when we understand that love, madness, and rhetoric—indeed, all truly human things—are all about the soul.

C. Paragraphs

**Paragraph Organization:** The paragraph is the logical unit of meaning in written prose. In each paragraph, you should: (A) spell out the logical connection between the previous paragraph and the present one. (B) state
the main argument of the paragraph. (C) give reasons and evidence to support that argument.

WRITING GUIDELINES: THE ART OF QUOTATION

Principle: A sentence containing a quotation should be as grammatically complete and readable as any other sentence.

Tools:
1. Quotation marks, double (“”) and single (""). Double quotation marks are more common, and mark the beginning and ending of a series of words taken from another author. Single quotation marks are used to indicate quotations within quotations.
2. Ellipses, three dot (…) and four dot (…). Ellipses indicate elisions: that words from the original have been left out of a quotation. Three dots indicate words dropped from a single sentence; four dots indicate that a period or other end punctuation has been dropped.
3. Square brackets ([ ]). Brackets are used to indicate the insertion or change of words within a quotation.
4. Indentation: for quotations of 4 lines or more, use a separate, indented paragraph, without quotation marks.
5. Forethought: think about how the quote will fit into the grammar of your sentence before you begin to write it.

Examples:
1. (Incorrect): Adam learns that he will get his bread “by the sweat of your brow,” and, worse, that “dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

2. (Correct): Adam learns that he will get his bread “by the sweat of [his] brow,” and, worse, that “dust [he is], and to dust [he] shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

3. (Incorrect): Adam learns that: “till you return to the soil, for from there you were taken” (Genesis 3:19).

4. (Correct): God drives a wedge between human and animal nature: “And the Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed be you of all beasts of the field. . . . Enmity will I set between you and the woman, between your seed and hers’” (Genesis 3:14-15).

5. (Incorrect): The Babylonians build their tower, “. . . let us build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, that we may make us a name, lest” (Genesis 11:4).
6. (Correct): God’s first words to Abram are demanding and mysterious: “Go forth from your land . . . to the land I will show you,” which God leaves pointedly unspecified (Genesis 12:1).

WRITING GUIDELINES: PUNCTUATION WITH PARENTHEtical CITATIONS

Principle: Parenthetical citations go at the end of your sentence, after your end quotation marks, but before your closing punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point). Closing punctuation that forms an integral part of the quoted material (such as a question mark or exclamation point) goes within the quotation marks but before the parenthetical citation.

Examples (all correct):

1. According to Pascal, “we do not prove that we should be loved by displaying in order the causes of love. That would be absurd” (s329, 91).

2. As Montaigne remarks, “how many condemnations have I seen more criminal than the crime!” (III.13.999).

3. Pascal makes his argument against philosophy in rhetorical questions: “Shall it be the philosophers, who propose the good within us as our good? . . . Have they found the remedy of our ills? Does placing man as the equal with God cure his presumption?” (s182, 46).

4. What does Tocqueville mean when he claims that “America is one of the countries of the world where the precepts of Descartes are least studied and best followed” (II.i.1.699)?