Introduction to Political Thought: POL-103  
REVISED 1/8/18  
Spring 2018  
MWF, 9:30 am - 10:20 pm  
Johns Hall, 212

Dr. Jenna Storey  
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Course Description

This course addresses the fundamental political questions: What is the best regime? Who should rule? What constitutes a good human life? What is justice? We will examine different perspectives on these questions by reading five of the greatest works of political philosophy, drawn from texts that span the better part of recorded history.

In reading these wide-ranging works, we will find opinions that are intuitively agreeable to us as well as positions that seem strange, difficult, or repugnant. We will endeavor to entertain truly different options, to look curiously at our own opinions in the light of our reading, and to elaborate the implications of the positions we take. Every author we study deserves to be taken with the utmost seriousness. Understanding the disagreements among them will give us insight into the enduring philosophical problems that underlie our ordinary political debates.

Please purchase the following texts this week:  
(excepting the Aquinas, which I will provide)


(Thomas Aquinas, excerpts from the Summa Theologica [1266-1273] and from On Kingship.)


Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America [1835 and 1840], trans. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago).
Syllabus

January 10: Introduction; Plato, *The Republic*, Book I through 336a (p.13)
January 12: Plato, *The Republic*, Book I, remainder, and Book II through 368a (p.44)
January 15: NO CLASS, MLK Day
January 24: Plato, *The Republic*, Book V. **PLATO TEST**
January 26: Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII. (We will not discuss Book VI.)
January 31: Plato, *The Republic*, Book IX.

February 2: No reading; **PAPER DUE BY EMAIL 5:00 PM.**
February 5: Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Chapters 1-7 (Aquinas packet is on Moodle)
February 7: Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Chapters 8-16 and selection from *Summa Theologica*
February 9: Aquinas, Selections from the *Summa Theologica* (see packet for specifics)
February 12: Aquinas, Selections from the *Summa Theologica*
February 14: Aquinas, Selections from the *Summa Theologica*
February 16: Aquinas, Selections from the *Summa Theologica*
February 19: Aquinas, Selections from the *Summa Theologica*, **AQUINAS TEST**
February 21: Aquinas, Selections from the *Summa Theologica*
February 23: Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” **PAPER DUE BY EMAIL 5:00 PM.**


February 28: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters IV-VI
*Discourses* I.9-10, 58 & II.2.

*Discourses* I.11-12, 18 (last two paragraphs only), 26-27.

**SPRING BREAK**

March 12: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters XII-XIV
1 Samuel 17:18-9 (Moodle).

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March 14:  
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters XV-XIX,

March 16:  
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters XX-XXVI.  
*Discourses* III.9.  
**MACHIAVELLI TEST**  
**OPTIONAL PAPER DUE ON MACHIAVELLI, BY EMAIL 5:00 PM**

March 19:  

March 21:  

March 23:  

March 26:  

March 28:  

*Thursday, March 29: OPTIONAL PAPER DUE ON LOCKE, BY EMAIL 5:00 PM*

March 30:  
NO CLASS, Easter Holiday

April 2:  
NO CLASS, Easter Holiday

April 4:  
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Introduction and Chapter 3  
(pp. 3-18 and pp. 45-53).

**April 4:**  
*Required lecture* (CLP)  
Dr. William Deresiewicz  
“College and the Inner Life”  
Watkins Room, 5:00 PM

April 6:  
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume I, Part I, Chapter 2  
(pp. 27-45).

April 9:  
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume I, Part I, Chapters 2-3  
(pp. 27-53). (Repeat of previous readings).

April 11:  
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume I, Part I, Chapter 4 and part of  
Chapter 5; Volume I, Part II, Chapter 6  
(pp. 53-65 and pp. 220-235).

April 13:  
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume I, Part II, Chapter 7 and Volume II,  
Part I, Chapters 1-3.  
(pp. 235-249 and pp. 403-415).

April 16:  
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume II, Part I, Chapters 5-7 and Volume  
II Part II, Chapters 8-9.  
(pp. 417-426, and pp. 500-506).


**APRIL 30: FINAL EXAM, 8:30-11:00 am**

**Assignments**

There are five main components to the assignments for this class:

1. **Reading.** Furman policy states that students should expect 2-3 hours of prep time per class, apart from the time required to write papers. You will likely need the full complement of that time to read these challenging selections well. Often one needs to read these texts twice to understand their meaning and significance. Taking the time to read carefully, make notes on what you’ve read, and think about the questions raised, is essential to learning in this course.
   a. To make sure that you have read for each class, there will be an occasional pop quiz.
   b. There will also be a cumulative test on each book.

2. **Participation:** This is a seminar, and as such depends upon the preparation and participation of the students involved. Come to class every day prepared with at least one question about the reading. Questions about what you have not understood are usually very valuable contributions.

3. **Question assignments:** On one day of each class week, you will be asked to write an email of at least one paragraph detailing something you don’t yet understand about the day’s assigned reading. The class will be divided into three groups corresponding to the three days of the week on which our class meets. Each group should turn in questions for the day’s reading in the text of an email by 8:00 am on the day of their assignment. Question assignments will be graded on the scale of check-plus (A), check (B), check-minus (C), and incomplete (no credit).

4. **Short papers:** you are required to turn in 3 short (2-page) papers over the course of the semester. The papers on Plato and Aquinas are mandatory. You may then choose
whether to write a paper on Machiavelli or on Locke. Papers will follow a question of your own choosing. Please see the paper guidelines and the citation guidelines for more detailed information about this assignment.

5. **Final exam**: The exam will cover material for the entire course. It will consist of an essay on Tocqueville and a section in which you will be asked to identify and explicate quotations from the authors we’ve read. A study guide will be distributed in advance of the exam.

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<th>Breakdown of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tests (5 tests at 6% each)</td>
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<td>Papers (3 papers at 8% each)</td>
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<td>Question assignments:</td>
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<td>Pop Quizzes</td>
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**Policies**

**Attendance:**

After three absences of any kind, every further absence results in the loss of 5% of your final grade. You are required to be in attendance for the entire class hour, so as not to disrupt the discussion. Please plan to arrive on time and be prepared to stay without break through the session. *If you do not bring your book to class, you cannot participate fully; failure to bring your book therefore will be marked as half an absence.* Drinks are permitted in the classroom, but not food.

**Electronics:**

The use of electronic devices in the classroom is not permitted, as it inhibits discussion and has a demonstrably negative impact on the performance of the student using the device.

**Papers:**

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Please see the separate guidelines for paper instructions. You should note that (per the guidelines) more than three sloppy mistakes—misspellings, mistakes in conjugation, missing words or missing marks of punctuation—will result in a downgrade of 5% for the paper.

Academic Integrity: If you consult any source beyond the assigned reading for an assignment, you must cite that source. This includes electronic resources. Quotations or paraphrases from any source that are not accompanied by proper citations constitute plagiarism and will be treated as academic integrity violations. The penalty for such a violation may be failure of the course.

Please note that “secondary sources” such as sparknotes, novelguide, gradesaver, etc. are not permitted for this class. Evidence of use of this type of secondary source in preparing a paper will result in failure of the paper.