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).

COURSE GOALS:

- Provide students with a general historical framework within which to understand the development of Western and American political thought

- Challenge students to become more thoughtful about fundamental human questions, including but not limited to (1) the underlying and inescapable connection between politics and morality (or immorality); (2) the possibilities and limitations of political justice; and (3) as a course in Ultimate Questions, the fundamental nature of reality itself.
Challenge students to read serious books well and improve their ability to write argumentative and expository essays for a general audience.

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)

SOMEWHERENTENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

INTRODUCTION (One Week)

Jan. 8: Introduction: Syllabus; Political Thought and Politics
Jan. 10: 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)

Jan. 15: MLK day
Jan. 17: Plato, Republic, Book 2
Jan. 19: Republic, Book 2
Jan. 22: Republic, Book 3
Jan. 24: Republic, Book 3
Jan. 26: Republic, Book 4
Jan. 29: Republic, Book 4
Jan. 31: Republic, Book 5
Feb. 2: Republic, Book 5
Feb. 5: Republic, Book 5 and 6 through 497a (163-176)
Feb. 7: Book 6 through 497a (163-176), Book 7 and the end of Book 9 (270-275)
Feb. 9: Putting Plato’s argument together?
February 12: Plato Short Essay due by 5 p.m.

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

Feb. 12: Aristotle, Politics, Book 3.6-9 (handout, time-permitting)
Feb. 14: Augustine, City of God, Preface, Book 1.1-3, Bk. 14.28 and Bk 2.4,14,18,21
Feb. 16: Augustine, City of God, Preface, Book 1.1-3 Bk 14.28 and Bk 2.4,14,18,21
Feb. 19: City of God, Book 5.13-18
Feb. 21: *City of God*, Book 19.1-10
Feb. 23: *City of God*, Book 19.1-10
Feb. 26: *City of God*, Book 19.11-20
Feb. 28: *City of God*, Book 19.11-20
March 2: Classical Philosophy and Christianity, TBA
March 3-11: Spring Break
March 12: *Augustine Short Essay due by 5 p.m.*

II. MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT (Seven Weeks)

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

March 14: *The Prince*, Chapters 1-3; re-read Aristotle, *Politics* 3.6-9
March 16: *The Prince*, Chapters 3-6
March 19: *The Prince*, Chapters 6-7
March 21: *The Prince*, Chapters 7-12
March 23: *The Prince*, Chapters 12-15
March 26: *The Prince*, Chapters 15-16
March 28: *The Prince*, Chapters 16-18
March 30: Good Friday, Passover
April 2: Easter Monday
April 4: *The Prince*, Chapters 18-23
        Deresiewicz Lecture: “College and the Inner Life,” Watkins Room, Trone Student Center @ 5 p.m.
April 6: *The Prince*, Chapters 24-26 (Deresiewicz debrief)
April 9: *The Prince*, Chapters 24-26
April 11: Plato, Augustine, and Machiavelli (or first Locke reading time-permitting)
**April 13: Machiavelli Short Essay due by 5 p.m.**

B. Enlightenment Underpinnings of Contemporary Politics (Four Classes)

April 13: Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*
April 16: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
April 18: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
April 20: *Letter Concerning Toleration*
April 23: Course Retrospective and Culmination
**April 23: Locke Short Essay due in class by 5 p.m.**

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

FINAL EXAM: POL 103-01: FRIDAY, APRIL 27 at 8:30 a.m.
FINAL EXAM: POL103-03; SATURDAY, APRIL 28 at 8:30 a.m.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Attendance and active participation in class
- Since this is a text-based course, 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

Lecture by William Deresiewicz, “College and the Inner Life,” Watkins Room, Trone Student Center, April 4 at 5 p.m.

Written Papers: All students will write 2-3 argumentative or expository Essays

Final Exam: Includes an Essay comparing and contrasting 3 of the 4 major authors (80%) as well as short answer questions (20%).
- 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 Short Essays and a Final Exam. Each component will be equally weighted (20% or 25% each) to determine the core grade for the course. When warranted, this grade can be raised one notch due to steady improvement.

Participation Grade: This part of your grade is composed of three elements: attendance, active participation in class and pop quizzes.
- 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 earns 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 a few minutes to answer a question on 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.

Short Essays: Every student will write an argumentative or expository 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 Essay.
- Students will turn in a hard copy of all essays by the dates and times specified in the Course Schedule.
- See specific Writing and Grading Guidelines for this course
Final Exam: The final exam will have two components: It will consist of a take-home essay comparing three of the four major authors on one of the major themes in the course as a whole (80%) and a short answer section on the material covered in the second part of the course (20%).

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 the Student Office of Accessibility 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.

GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINE: 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. Consult and review the specific WRITING AND GRADING GUIDELINES developed for this course as you write each essay.