

UC 12112 12F ✓

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

Undergraduate Council  
 New Course  Course Change  
 Core Category: WID Effective Fall 2014

or

Graduate/Professional Studies Council  
 New Course  Course Change  
 Effective Fall 2013

1. Department: POLS College: CLASS

APPROVED MAR 27 2013

2. Faculty Contact Person: JW Jackson Telephone: 3-3919 Email: jjackson5@uth.edu

3. Course Information on New/Revised course:

• Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:  
POLS / 3310 / Introduction to Political Theory

RECEIVED OCT 12 2012

• Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.)  
POLS / 3310 / INTRO POLITICAL THEORY

• SCH: 3.00 Level: JR CIP Code: 45.1001.0001 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0

4. Justification for adding/changing course: To meet core curriculum requirements

5. Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course?  Yes  No

If Yes, please complete:

• Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

• Course ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date (currently active row): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Authorized Degree Program(s): \_\_\_\_\_

• Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department?  Yes  No

• Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments?  Yes  No

• Can the course be repeated for credit?  Yes  No (if yes, include in course description)

7. Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: lecture ONLY (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)

8. If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title

POLS / 3310 / Introduction to Political Theory

• Course ID: 25012 Effective Date (currently active row): 2012827

9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)

Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: POLS 1336 and 1337 or equivalent, or consent of instructor. Description (30 words max.): Recurring themes and problems in the study of politics; draws upon classical and modern works.

10. Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 10/8/12

Print/Type Name: Dr. Sarah Fishman

## REQUEST FOR COURSES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

Originating Department or College: Political Science

Person Making Request: Jeffrey Church

Telephone: 3-3914

Email: jchurch@oh.edu

Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 9/2/12

Course Number and Title: POLS 3310 Introduction to Political Theory

Please attach in separate documents:

Completed CBM003 Add/Change Form with Catalog Description

Syllabus

List the student learning outcomes for the course (Statements of what students will know and be able to do as a result of taking this course. See appended hints for constructing these statements):

1. Students will carefully analyze a political text so as to understand its argument, identify its major premises and conclusions, and comprehend its conditions and qualifications. The student should be able to evaluate critically this argument and assess its substantive claims and rhetorical context and strategy.
2. Students will be able to write well—at a minimum, to write grammatically and clearly. At an advanced level, the student should be able to articulate precisely and with some sophistication a political question, problem, issue, or debate and to analyze and evaluate it in a systematic way.
3. Students will discuss and debate intelligently fundamental political questions and ideas: to understand their historical roots and evolution, as well as their contemporary significance. To comprehend and assess the ethical dimensions of civic life, our roles as citizens, and alternative political views and principles.

Component Area for which the course is being proposed (check one):

Communication

American History

Mathematics

Government/Political Science

Language, Philosophy, & Culture

Social & Behavioral Science

Creative Arts

Component Area Option

Life & Physical Sciences

Competency areas addressed by the course (refer to appended chart for competencies that are required and optional in each component area):

X Critical Thinking

Teamwork

X Communication Skills

X Social Responsibility

Empirical & Quantitative Skills

X Personal Responsibility

Because we will be assessing student learning outcomes across multiple core courses, assessments assigned in your course must include assessments of the core competencies. For each competency checked above, indicated the specific course assignment(s) which, when completed by students, will provide evidence of the competency. Provide detailed information, such as copies of the paper or project assignment, copies of individual test items, etc. A single assignment may be used to provide data for multiple competencies.

#### Critical Thinking:

Through a four to five page assignment, students will analyze and discuss the arguments of the texts, critically assess those arguments, and understand their rhetorical context and strategy.

Sample Essay: Your essay should be 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, with standard margins.

1. In his *Second Treatise of Government*, Locke criticizes Hobbes' argument about the right of nature, and Locke defends his own alternative notion of natural rights. Hobbes would undoubtedly object to Locke's view. Adjudicate the dispute. In doing so, be sure that you (a) clearly state your argument (not your opinion) about who is right in your introduction, and (b) outline the arguments of Hobbes and Locke on the right of nature (this involves, for instance, eliciting the assumptions about human nature that both thinkers make, and then showing how they reason from these basic assumptions to their conclusions).
2. In his *Second Treatise of Government*, Locke criticizes Hobbes' argument about the nature of government—whereas Hobbes makes a case for the absolute rule of the sovereign, Locke defends limited government. Adjudicate the dispute. In doing so, be sure that you (a) clearly state your argument (not your opinion) about who is right in your introduction, and (b) outline the arguments of Hobbes and Locke on the nature of government (this involves, for instance, eliciting their view of the root or basis of political authority and showing how they reason from this basis to governmental power itself).

#### Communication Skills:

Through the above essay, students will articulate in written form complex moral and political arguments and to entertain sympathetically alternative answers to fundamental questions of moral and political life.

#### Empirical & Quantitative Skills:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

#### Teamwork:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

#### Social Responsibility:

In the above essay, students will examine the historical and theoretical roots of major ideas of the Western tradition of political thought. They are expected to comprehend the relation of these ideas to

political practice and civic life and to assess the claims of different moral and political views, both ancient and modern. Honors sections of this course also fulfill a requirement in the interdisciplinary Phronesis program in politics and ethics.

Personal Responsibility:

By engaging these seminal works of moral and political thought in the above essay, students come to understand better their own ethical and political frameworks, the role of different principles in their decision-making and choices, and the principled reasons for alternative views.

Will the syllabus vary across multiple section of the course?     Yes                       No

If yes, list the assignments that will be constant across sections:

Every section will require a paper of an interpretive and analytical character. As a Writing in the Disciplines course, every section will require assignments totaling at least 3000 words (including papers and exams). At least one piece of work will be done outside of class and returned to the student prior to the end of the semester (with comments on content, grammar, and style.)

Inclusion in the core is contingent upon the course being offered and taught at least once every other academic year. Courses will be reviewed for renewal every 5 years.

The department understands that instructors will be expected to provide student work and to participate in university-wide assessments of student work. This could include, but may not be limited to, designing instruments such as rubrics, and scoring work by students in this or other courses. In addition, instructors of core courses may be asked to include brief assessment activities in their course.

Dept. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ 

## Introduction to Political Theory

POJS 3310-07, #30811

Spring 2010

Agnes Arnold Hall 205

TuTh 1-2:30pm

Jeffrey Church  
447D Phillip G. Hoffman Hall  
Office Hours: M 2-4:30pm, or by appointment

[jchurch@uh.edu](mailto:jchurch@uh.edu)  
(713)743-3914

### Course Synopsis

Most of us think that we live in a good regime—it's liberal, it's democratic, so what more could you ask for? Yet if its goodness is so obvious, why do we have such difficulty convincing our detractors? This course will ask the questions we rarely pose in our daily political lives—what is the good regime, the ideal against which we can measure what is our own? Does a good regime foster a good or full human life? At the same time--acknowledging that the messiness of politics forces us to moderate our ideal expectations--we will ask, what are the challenges to achieving the good regime? How much goodness can we expect out of a regime? Finally, perhaps there is no good regime at all—is everything a matter of bargaining, power, and struggle? Does might make right? Or can right be mighty?

### Required Texts

Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature* (Hackett)  
Plato, *Gorgias* (Oxford)  
Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Hackett)  
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett)  
John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government and Letter Concerning Toleration* (Dover)  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Dover)  
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (International Publishers)

### Learning Objectives

1. Students will carefully analyze a political text so as to understand its argument, identify its major premises and conclusions, and comprehend its conditions and qualifications. The student should be able to evaluate critically this argument and assess its substantive claims and rhetorical context and strategy.
2. Students will be able to write well—at a minimum, to write grammatically and clearly. At an advanced level, the student should be able to articulate precisely and with some sophistication a political question, problem, issue, or debate and to analyze and evaluate it in a systematic way.
3. Students will discuss and debate intelligently fundamental political questions and ideas: to understand their historical roots and evolution, as well as their contemporary significance. To comprehend and assess the ethical dimensions of civic life, our roles as citizens, and alternative political views and principles.

### Course Format

This course is primarily discussion based. I will lecture on some occasions to give necessary historical background, but every class will consist of a good deal of discussion. This means that you will have to read each text carefully and thoroughly. The reading assignments are all quite short, so my expectation is that you will read actively—that is, you should read and take note of what intrigues you about the text, what you find puzzling or frustrating or downright wrong. You should approach the text with the discussion questions I pose below and come to class prepared with a well thought-out answer.

Our discussion will generally have **three parts**: **first**, we will examine the argument the author is putting forth. For instance, we may ask, what are the assumptions the author brings to the table? What evidence does the author use to support his claims? **Second**, we will then assess the arguments. Is the author warranted in making this assumption? Is there a better way of looking at this problem than the author does? What kind of bias does the author possess and does this distort his thinking? **Third**, we will apply these arguments to contemporary problems and issues in our liberal democracy. Do Plato's concerns about democracy still hold true today? How would Locke respond to the recent, unprecedented government intervention during the economic crisis?

### Assignments and Grading

**Reading Quizzes (10% total)** I will periodically give "pop quizzes" at the beginning of class. I will drop your lowest two quiz grades. An unexcused absence results in a 0 for that day's quiz.

**Essays (20% each)** Two 4-5 page papers are required over the course of the term. I will distribute paper topics well in advance of the due dates. Late papers are penalized 5 points for every day they are late. Please submit these papers to the course blackboard website.

**Exams (20% each)** The midterm and final will consist of both short answer-identifications of key concepts or arguments and essays. I will distribute a study guide in advance of each exam.

**Participation (10%)** Attendance is essential for success in a participation-based class such as this one. Two unexcused absences are allowed, but each additional absence will lower your grade by one letter. Additionally, it is not enough just to show up. I expect regular, high-quality participation in classroom discussion. In order to participate intelligently, it is important to read actively, to interrogate the text and to come to class with questions, concerns, and criticisms. Extra participation opportunity is available on the course blackboard discussion page.

### Grading Scale

A	100-94
A-	93-90
B+	89-87
B	86-84
B-	83-80
C+	79-77
C	76-74
C-	73-70
D	69-60
F	59-0

### Academic Honesty

*This class strictly adheres to the university's policy on academic honesty.* Please consult the following website for guidelines on the proper citation of sources and for avoiding plagiarism:

<http://www.class.oh.edu/wconline/plagiarism/>

### Reading Assignments and Questions

#### Introduction

1/19 Is there a good regime? If so, what is it, and can it exist on earth?

### The Ancient Alternatives

#### Thucydides' "Realism"

- 1/21 Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature* (HPW), chapters 1-2  
Why is it difficult for the Greeks to agree on what is right or just?
- 1/26 Thucydides, HPW, chapter 3  
Why does Thucydides juxtapose Pericles' funeral oration and the plague?
- 1/28 Thucydides, HPW, chapters 4-5  
What does the Corcyrean civil war reveal about our notions of right and wrong?
- 2/2 Thucydides, HPW, chapters 6-8  
Does "might make right" for Thucydides?

#### Plato's "Idealism"

- 2/4 Plato's *Gorgias* (G), 447a-461b (Socrates and Gorgias)  
What is the purpose of political rhetoric, for Gorgias?
- 2/9 Plato, G, 461b-481b (Socrates and Polus)  
How does Gorgias' student Polus want to use rhetoric?
- 2/11 Plato, G, 481b-488a (Callicles' speech)  
Does "might make right" for Callicles? Why or why not?
- 2/16 Plato, G, 488b-505b (Socrates and Callicles I)  
Does Socrates successfully refute Callicles?
- 2/18 Plato, G, 505c-527e (Socrates and Callicles II)  
How does the myth at the end of the dialogue contribute to Socrates idealistic cause?

\*\*\*\*\*Paper 1 due Monday 2/22 by 5pm\*\*\*\*\*

### The "Selfish" Moderns

- 2/23 Machiavelli, *The Prince* (P), pp. 5-27, 38-42  
Is Machiavelli on Thucydides' side, or Plato's? Or is he introducing a view of the good regime that is entirely different from the ancients?
- 2/25 Machiavelli, P, pp. 47-63, 74-77  
Why does Machiavelli reject "imagined" or ideal regimes?
- 3/2 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (L), pp. 3-11, 27-35, 50-63, 74-100  
What is Hobbes' view of the natural state of human beings?
- 3/4 Hobbes, L, pp. 106-118, 136-145, 172-210  
How does Hobbes' view of government follow from his view of human nature?
- 3/9 Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, on course blackboard  
Why does selfishness help the beehive, while good deeds harm it?
- 3/11 \*\*\*\*\*Midterm\*\*\*\*\*

3/16, 3/18: Spring Break

### The "Moderate" Moderns

- 3/23 John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (S1), pp. 1-12, 23-35  
How does Locke's view of human nature differ from Hobbes'?
- 3/25 Locke, S1, pp. 38-45, 53-60  
How does Locke's view of the basis of government differ from Hobbes'?
- 3/30 Locke, S1, pp. 60-68, 96-112 and Declaration of Independence  
Find the parallels between Locke's work and the first two paragraphs of the Declaration.
- 4/1 Locke, S1, pp. 12-23, *Federalist* 1, 6, on course blackboard  
How do Locke and the Americans transform Mandeville's view of commerce?
- 4/6 *Federalist* 10, 51 on course blackboard

- How does a government with a “separation of powers” actually protect and improve society?
- 4/8 *Federalist* 62, 68, 70-72, on course blackboard  
 Explain in your own terms how human nature and the institution of the U.S. Presidency interact according to Publius.

**\*\*\*\*\*Paper 2 due Monday 4/12 by 5pm\*\*\*\*\***

**The “Moral” Moderns**

- 4/13 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (DOI), pp. 1-13  
 How does Rousseau’s view of human nature differ from Hobbes and Locke?
- 4/15 Rousseau, DOI, pp. 13-27, footnote 15 (on course blackboard)  
 What does it mean that human beings are naturally good but socially bad?
- 4/20 Rousseau, DOI, 27-38, footnote 9 (on course blackboard)  
 Explain in your own terms the psychology of corruption in human society.
- 4/22 Rousseau, DOI, 38-52  
 How does Rousseau envision the basic “contract” of civil society? How can this be construed as a criticism of both Hobbes and Locke?
- 4/27 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (CM), pp. 8-21  
 Who is a bourgeois? What is Marx’s problem with the bourgeoisie?
- 4/29 Marx, CM, pp. 22-31  
 What is Marx’s view of the good regime? How does Marx think it can come about?
- 5/4 \*Make-up day for classes cancelled by the University\*

**\*\*\*\*\*Final Exam Thursday, May 13, 2-5pm\*\*\*\*\***