

Political Science 240-002
Political Theory
Spring 2011

Meeting Times: TR 2:00pm – 3:15

Office: 1606 Patterson Office Tower

Location: Whitehall Room 238

Office Hours: Tuesday 12pm - 4pm

Instructor: Ralph Schoellhammer

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“The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler a few years back.” (John Maynard Keynes, 1936)

Course Objectives

The Idea of this course is to create an understanding of the role of Political Theory in the modern World. It will try to uncover the underlying assumptions of the different ideological visions of the world contested in modern times. This course will not try to establish which one of the many visions out there is more valid, but to make the inherent logic behind each of these sets of views more clear and understandable. The structure of this course is between the theoretical and the practical, meaning that we will not only deal with the realm of theory, but also take a look at how different political theories translated into practical politics.

Despite its treatment as an unloved member in the different fields of political science, political theory still has the largest impact on our daily lives. Like a scientist who first establishes a theory which then he tries to put into practice, political movements throughout history have attempted to form societies according to their political vision.

How different would China look today if Mao-Tse-Tung would have been an ardent follower of Thomas Jefferson instead of Karl Marx? What would modern Iran be like if the Islamic Revolutionaries would have been majority communists instead of religious ideologues? The ideas and visions to which a society and its leaders subscribe define the structure and institutions of the state. These visions may be moral, political, economic, religious, or social. In these or other realms, we sacrifice for our visions and sometimes, if need be, face ruin rather than betray them. Where visions conflict irreconcilably, whole societies may be torn apart. Conflicts of interest dominate the short run, but conflicts of visions dominate history.

Course Requirements

This course is not a history class! This means that we are not so much dealing with the “history of thought” but much more with the “consequences of thought”. While history gives us the necessary tools to create an account of past events, political theory is concerned with what the

world should look like and how societies could be ideally organized. Therefore your own thoughts and opinions will play a major role in grasping the core of the concepts you will be confronted with. In other words, it is not about memorization, but about understanding.

Class Attendance: Class attendance is expected and necessary, as the lectures are based on the readings, but they are not the same as the readings. In order to create some incentive to show up regularly, attendance will count as 10% of your final grade. Additionally, there will be a single “question of the day” during every session, which will constitute 15% of your final grade. The necessary index cards will be provided by the instructor at the beginning of every meeting. As you can imagine, there will be no grades on the quizzes, but only “correct” and “incorrect”. The more questions you answer correctly during the semester, the stronger it will contribute to an improvement in your grade.

Midterm (Thursday, March 3rd) – 30%: The Midterm will consist of 2 parts: a set of short-answer questions and an essay part. As you will see during the course, multiple choice questions are not suitable for political theory, as most political visions cannot be pinned down to a few characteristics.

Final Exam – 30%: Will have the same format as the midterm exam.

Theory Paper – 15%: I expect you to write a short (8 pages) theoretical paper on (basically) any topic you like as long as it has a relevancy to political theory. Topics can be of a more general nature (feminism, race-relations, war and peace) or a detailed analysis of current political events from a theoretical angle. Your essay will be due on Tuesday, April 30 and you have to tell me your topic **NO LATER THAN March 30.**

Class Participation: Due to class size it is impossible to attach an exact evaluation to class participation, but I reserve for myself the right to use the in-class performance as the decisive factor for students who have an uneven performance on the other assignments. Active participation, however, can only lead to a better, never to a worse grade.

Late Assignments: In case of extraordinary hardships late assignments and make-up exams can be accepted. The earlier you communicate any possible time-problems to me, the easier it will be to come to a solution. So let me know as soon as possible if you have the feeling that you might not be able to meet a certain deadline.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Trade Paperback. (Free Press, 2006).

Ernst Gombrich, *A Little History of the World* (Yale University Press, 2001).

All the other readings will be available as pdf-files via blackboard and JSTOR or you can pick them up at my office to make copies.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (January 13th)

Review of the syllabus, general introduction.

WEEK 2 (January 18th & January 20nd) “The Relevance of Political Theory”

The End of History: Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 (pages xi – 55)

John Lewis Gaddis, *Living in Candlestick Park*, The Atlantic Monthly; Apr 1999 (Blackboard)

Kaplan, *Applying the Wisdom of Ages to the Twenty-First Century* (Blackboard)

WEEK 3 (January 25th & January 27th) “The Idea of the State”

The End of History: Chapters 5,6 and 7 (pages 55 – 89)

Introduction to Plato in: Ian Adams und R.W. Dyson, *Fifty Major Political Thinkers*, 2. Edition. (Routledge, 2007); (Blackboard)

Plato, *Republic*, Books V, VIII and IX (Blackboard)

WEEK 4 (February 1st & February 3rd) “Who shall govern? Philosophers, Citizens, Kings, Orators?”

Introduction to Thomas Hobbes in: Ian Adams und R.W. Dyson, *Fifty Major Political Thinkers*, 2. Edition. (Routledge, 2007); (Blackboard)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 1 – 21 (Blackboard)

WEEK 5 (February 8th & February 10th) “The Question of Rights”

Introduction to John Locke and Nicolo Machiavelli in: Ian Adams und R.W. Dyson, *Fifty Major Political Thinkers*, 2. Edition. (Routledge, 2007); (Blackboard)

H.L.A. Hart, *Are there any Natural rights?* (Blackboard)

The End of History: Chapters 8 to 10 (pages 89 to 126)

WEEK 6 (February 15th & February 16th) “The Question of Equality”

Isaiah Berlin, *The Originality of Machiavelli*, (Blackboard)

F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, Pbk. Ed. (University Of Chicago Press, 1978).
Chapters 5 and 6 (Blackboard)

WEEK 7 (February 22nd & February 23rd) “The Question of Justice”

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Reissue. (Liberty Fund, 1984). Section II: “Of Justice and Beneficence” (Blackboard)

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*; (Blackboard)

WEEK 8 “The Question of Liberty”

Introduction to John Stuart Mill in: Adams und Dyson, *Fifty Major Political Thinkers.*;
(Blackboard)

End of History: Chapters 11 and 12 (pages 126 – 143)

Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty*, (Blackboard)

D. Sidkorski, *The Third Concept of Liberty and the Politics of Identity*, (Blackboard)

WEEK 9 “Democracy and its Limits”

Introduction to Jean-Jacques Rousseau in: Ian Adams und R.W. Dyson, *Fifty Major Political Thinkers*, 2. Edition. (Routledge, 2007); (Blackboard)

Selected parts of Rousseau’s Social Contract (Blackboard)

Joseph Schumpeter, *Two Concepts of Democracy*, (Blackboard)

WEEK 10 “The beginning of Modernity”

End of History: Chapters 13 – 19 (pages 143 – 211)

L. P. Thiele, *Twilight of Modernity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Politics*, (Blackboard)

Isaiah Berlin, *Democracy, Communism and the Individual*, (Blackboard)

WEEK 11 “Marxism”

An Introduction to Marx’s political and economic thoughts (Blackboard)

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, (Blackboard)

End of History: Chapters 20 to 25 (pages 211 – 276)

WEEK 12 “Fascism and Communism – Theories in Practice”

Stanley G. Payne et al, *The sacred in twentieth-century politics: essays in honour of Professor Stanley G. Payne* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Chapters 4 and 7 (Fascism as the Expression... and Marxism-Leninism as a secular religion.

François Furet and Ernst Nolte, *Fascism and communism* (U of Nebraska Press, 2001). Selected Chapters (Blackboard)

WEEK 13 “Critical Theory”

Introduction to Adorno, Horkheimer and Habermas in: Ian Adams und R.W. Dyson, *Fifty Major Political Thinkers*, 2. Edition. (Routledge, 2007); (Blackboard)

Articles are available via JSTOR:

Powell, Jason L. and Harry R. Moody, 2003. “The Challenge of Modernity: Habermas and Critical Theory” *Theory and Science*, 14,1, 1-7

Rocco, Christopher. 1994. "Between Modernity and Postmodernity: Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Against the Grain" *Political Theory* 22, 1, 71-97.

WEEK 14 “The End of History – The End of Europe?”

Finish “The End of History”

Bruce Thornton, *Decline and Fall: Europe's Slow-Motion Suicide* (Encounter Books, 2007). Introduction and Chapter 1 (blackboard)

WEEK 15 “Future Challenges for Political Theory”

Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?,” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

Philip Longman, *The Empty Cradle: How Falling Birthrates Threaten World Prosperity And What To Do About It* (New York: Basic Books, 2004) Chapter 6, Fading Nations

WEEK 16 “Future Challenges for Political Theory” (Cont.)

Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2002). Introduction, Chapter 1 and conclusion.