

THE NATURE OF POLITICS

790:101:16 ~ Spring 2017

Instructor Information

Dr. Noah R. Eber-Schmid
Dept. of Political Science
Email: noahres@rci.rutgers.edu
Office: Hickman Hall, Room 602

Course Information

Meeting Times: T/TH 6:10–7:30 PM
Location: Murray Hall, Room 210
Office Hours: M/W 3:30–5:00 PM
& By Appointment

I. INTRODUCTION

This course will introduce students to core concepts and enduring debates in political thought by exploring selected texts from across the canon of Western political theory. Throughout the semester we'll use these texts to investigate a variety of political questions including: what do we mean by "politics?" how do we *do* political theory or think *politically*? what is the function of government and what should guide how we govern? how should political communities be organized? what does it mean to be a citizen? what are liberty, justice, and equality? and how do politics and economics shape each other? Organized thematically around theories of citizenship and authority, equality and justice, freedom and liberty, and the relationship between politics and economics, students will use key works of historical and contemporary political thought as a foundation to clarify the meaning of some of the key concepts we use to think about politics, and to critically examine and normatively reevaluate the political world around them.

This course fulfills the following Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes for Areas of Inquiry: Social Analysis (SCL)

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

II. COURSE OVERVIEW

Required Materials: The following texts will be used during this course and students should acquire them in advance. Some of the assigned readings may be found in alternate editions to those listed here. Shorter selections will be made available on reserve in the library and/or through Sakai when possible. If there are any questions regarding the use of alternate editions, please contact the instructor.

- Aristotle. *The Politics* (Oxford), ISBN: 978-0199538737
- Niccolò Machiavelli. *The Prince* (Hackett Publishing). ISBN: 978-08722203167
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Discourse on Inequality* (Oxford). ISBN: 978-0199555420
- Sophocles. *The Burial At Thebes, A Version of Sophocles' Antigone*, translated by Seamus Heaney (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). ISBN: 978-0374530075

Course Format, Expectations, and Grades: This course will take the form of a modified lecture, combining instructor-led presentations, in-class discussions, in-class group work, and written assignments. Bring the assigned reading with you to class and come prepared to talk and ask questions about what you've read. You will be responsible for completing occasional in-class reading quizzes and group assignments, short take-home writing assignments, a midterm exam, a midterm take-home essay, and a final exam. Assignments must be completed on time. Late and missing assignments may be penalized.

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Attendance & Participation	5%
Reading Quizzes & Class Work	15%
Short Writing Assignments (3)	30%
Midterm Exam	15 %
Midterm Essay	15 %
Final Exam	20%

III. COURSE POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION

Attendance: Students must attend all scheduled course meetings and abide by the university's attendance policies regarding absences. This means that **you must arrive to class on time and stay for the duration. If you have 4 or more unexcused absences, you are at risk of failing this course.** All students must report absences using the university's self-reporting absence system (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>). The university's policy on absences for religious observances is as follows:

"It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.47B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting."

It is the responsibility of the student to provide timely notification about necessary absences for religious observances. Students are also "...responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule." All make up exams must be arranged with me prior to the missed exam.

Participation: This class depends on the active involvement of each student. Your participation is essential to discussing and learning about the subject matter. Participation will be taken into

account when determining your final grade and you will have a variety of ways to earn credit for your participation. Aside from impacting your final grade, active participation and in-class discussion is central to getting the most out of this course for yourself and your peers.

Email, Announcements, and Classroom Technology: You are required to regularly check your RU student email account and the Sakai course site. Failure to regularly check your student email account is not an acceptable excuse. You may contact me with questions and concerns through my email address, noahres@rci.rutgers.edu. Please be advised that you must allow 24 hours (Monday–Friday) or 48 hours (Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays) from the time your email is sent to receive a response. The use of phones and other mobile devices to make or receive, calls (telephone or other), text messages, tweets, snapchats, status updates, or any communication with your physical, digital, or imaginary social network during class is strictly prohibited. Your phone, computer, or tablet should only be used for taking notes during class or working on in-class assignments. The use of smartphones, tablets, netbooks, laptops, etc. during class is at my discretion. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of technological devices if they prove disruptive or distracting, and to request electronic copies of your notes.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: All students should be familiar with and abide by the University’s policy on academic integrity. Information and resources on this policy are available online at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. Plagiarism and the University’s policy on academic integrity can be complicated. You are expected to make an effort to learn about plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, as well as how to avoid them. Taking the time to do so will help ensure that you do not violate the University’s policy. Keep in mind that accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty in any form on any assignment is prohibited.**

Office Hours: I will be holding regular office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. If you would like to attend office hours but are unable to do so at the regularly scheduled time, please email me to make alternative arrangements. I am happy to answer any questions you may have during the semester and always enjoy the opportunity to discuss your thoughts on the material we’ll be covering.

Students with Disabilities: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disability Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 that mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please register with the Office of Disability Services for Students, which is dedicated to providing services and administering exams with accommodation for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services for Students can be contacted by calling (848) 445-6800 and is located on the Livingston campus at the following address: 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite a145, Piscataway, NJ 08854.

The Writing Center: Rutgers University Writing Centers provide tutoring for enrolled students at centers located on College Avenue, Cook/Douglass, and Livingston campuses. Writing Center staff can assist you in the writing process, from brainstorming to organizing and developing your ideas, to citing sources to proofreading. Staff work with students from across the university on a

variety of different written assignments and projects to improve the quality of student writing. Both long-term tutoring and drop-in sessions are available. For more information, including hours of operation and instructions on how to make an appointment, please visit wp.rutgers.edu.

Please Note: This syllabus is subject to change and students should regularly check the Sakai course site for the most recent version. Readings and assignments may be removed, added or modified at my discretion. All major changes will be announced in class and through the course site.

IV. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND READING SCHEDULE

Readings marked with an asterisk "*" will be made available on Sakai or through library course reserves. All other readings appear in the texts listed above under "required materials."

January 17 Introduction: Defining "Politics"

I. CITIZENSHIP AND AUTHORITY

January 19–24 Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation"*

January 26–31 Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

February 2–9 Aristotle, *The Politics*
Book I: Chs. 1–3, 5–6, 13
Book III: Chs. 1–2, 4–9, 11, 12
Book IV: Chs. 1–2, 4, 8–9, 11
Book V: Chs. 1 & 9
Book VII: Chs. 1, 2-5, 13-15

February 14–21 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Dedication
Part I: Introduction, Chs. 13–15
Part II: Chs. 17–19, 21, 29

II. EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

February 23 Sophocles, *Antigone*

February 28 Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham City Jail"*

March 2–7 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*

March 9	***Midterm Exam*** ***Midterm Essay Assigned***
March 11 – March 19	No Class – Spring Recess
March 21–23	John Rawls, “Principles of Justice”* ***Midterm Essay Due 3/23***
March 28	Martha Nussbaum, “Beyond Compassion and Humanity”*
March 30–April 4	Iris Marion Young, “Democracy and Justice”*

III. FREEDOM AND LIBERTY

April 6–11	J. S. Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> *
April 13–18	Benjamin Constant, “Liberty of the Ancients...”* Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”* Nancy J. Hirschman, <i>The Subject of Liberty</i> *

IV. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

April 20–27	Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> * Karl Marx, “Preface to <i>A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</i> ”* —, “Alienated Labor”*
-------------	---

Grading rubric for all written work submitted in this course

	A	B	C	D/F
Argument/Analysis	Makes clear and compelling argument. Solid reasoning. Offers insightful analysis	Makes clear argument, based on plausible readings. Some effort to sustain argument throughout the analysis.	Attempts to offer a cogent argument and analysis, but argument and analysis are based on faulty reasoning.	Failure to make a cogent argument or to offer sound analysis.
Writing/Grammar	Well-written. Appropriate word choices. Free of grammar and spelling mistakes.	Well-written, but may include a handful of grammar, spelling, or word choice mistakes.	Multiple errors, but still clearly intelligible.	Multiple errors that interfere substantially with comprehension.
Organization/Structure	Clear, easy to follow organization with intro, body, conclusion. Provides reader with a “road map” of essay.	Clear organization with some road map for reader.	Some effort to structure the paper, but organization is problematic or difficult to follow.	Disorganized and difficult or impossible to follow.
Use/mastery of readings	Uses multiple readings and demonstrates mastery of facts and arguments made in readings.	References multiple readings and demonstrates a good degree of understanding.	Minimal use of readings and/or failure to demonstrate adequate mastery of readings.	Failure to use readings