***Foundations of Political Thought***

LMU

POLS 2000 Section 05

Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Kye Barker Kye.Barker@lmu.edu

Classroom: UNH 1218 Office: UNH 4135

Class time: TR 1-2:30pm Office Hours: TR 2:40-4:10

Course Website: [**https://brightspace.lmu.edu/d2l/home/99259**](https://brightspace.lmu.edu/d2l/home/99259)

**Course Description**

“Foundations” is a reading, writing, and discussion intensive course that will introduce students to the study of political theory, the history of political thought, and the meaning of “politics” itself. As Wendy Brown wrote, political theory is a meaning-making enterprise. The “meaning” of politics is not something which this class will definitively offer as a piece of information or knowledge, but rather a part of the activity of questioning. Questions which this class will consider include whether politics can provide for a happy life, how freedom can be achieved, whether inequality can be eliminated. However, the questions which students bring with them to the class and generate for themselves in the class will be just as significant. As we see from the examples of Socrates and Antigone from the beginning of the course, the ability to question is not only eminently political, but also may be tied to what makes life worth living.

**Required Texts**

*The following texts are required for this course and are available at the University bookstore. While you are free to seek out cheaper options for purchase, make sure that they are the exact same editions as those assigned below. If in doubt, use the ISBN. The rest of the readings will be available as PDF on the course website*

* Aristotle, *Politics,* translated by Ernest Barker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), ISBN: 9780199538737
* W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk,* Critical Edition,(New York: Norton, 1999). ISBN: 9780393973938
* Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. By Quentin Skinner and Russell Price, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), ISBN: 9780521349932
* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. Tucker, (New York: Norton, 1978), ISBN: 9780393090406
* Plato, *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, Revised by C.D.C Reeve, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), ISBN: 9780872201361
* Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo,* 2nd Edition, translated by G.M.A. Grube, Revised by John M. Cooper, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002),ISBN: 9780872206335
* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, translated by Franklin Philip, (Oxford University Press, 2009) ISBN: 9780199555420
* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, translated by Maurice Cranston, (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), ISBN: 9780140442014
* Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays*, translated by Robert Fagles, (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), ISBN: 9780140444254
* Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, (Oxford University Press, 2008), ISBN: 9780199555468

**Course Overview and Reading Assignments**

**Part I. Introduction**

**Week 1**

T Jan 14 Course Introduction

R Jan 16 Plato, *Apology* in *Five Dialogues*

*\*\*\*Writing Assignment 1: Asking Questions Due\*\*\**

**Week 2**

T Jan 21 Sophocles, *Antigone,* in *The Three Theban Plays*,pgs. 60-90

R Jan 23 Sophocles, *Antigone*, in *The Three Theban Plays*, pgs. 91-128

*\*\*\*Writing Assignment 2: Answering Questions\*\*\**

**Part II. Politics and the Good Life**

**Week 3**

T Jan 28 Plato, *Republic*, Book I (entire) and II (357a-376d)

R Jan 30 Plato, *Republic*, IV (427d-445e), V (471c-480), & VII (514a-521b

**Week 4**

T Feb 4 Plato, *Republic*, Books VIII (entire) & IX (entire)

R Feb 6 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I (entire) & II *\*\*PDF\*\**

**Week 5**

T Feb 11 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III (chapters 6-9), & X (chapters 6-9) *\*\*PDF\*\**

R Feb 13 Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I (chapters 1-7)

**Week 6**

T Feb 18 Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III (chapters 1-16) & Book IV (chapter 11)

R Feb 20 Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (entire) and VII (chapters 1-3 & 13-15)

*\*\*\*Writing Assignment 3: Interpretive Essay 1 due on Friday\*\*\**

**Part III. Virtue and Freedom**

**Week 7**

T Feb 25 Machiavelli*, The Prince*, dedicatory letter, chapters 1-14

R Feb 27 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chapters 15-26

**Week 8**

T Mar 3 Machiavelli*, The Discourses*, First Book (preface, chapters 1-12, 16-20, 24-29, 55 &58)

R Mar 5 Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Second Book, (preface, chapter 1), & Third Book (chapter 1-3 & 8-9) *\*\*PDF\*\**

**Spring Break Mar 9-13**

**Week 9**

T Mar 17 Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Preface and Part 1

R Mar 19 Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Part 2

**Week 10**

T Mar 24 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I & Book II

R Mar 26 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book III & Book IV (chapters 1-2, 5 & 8)

*\*\*\*Writing Assignment 4: Interpretive Essay 2 due on Friday\*\*\**

**Part IV. Inequality**

**Week 11**

T Mar 31 No Classes – Cesar Chavez Day

R Apr 2 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, chapters I-IV

**Week 12**

T Apr 7 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, chapters VII-XII

R Apr 9 No Classes – Easter Holidays

**Week 13**

T Apr 14 Marx, selections from *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in *Marx-Engels Reader*, pgs. 70-105

R Apr 16 Marx & Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Prefaces, Part I

**Week 14**

T Apr 21 Marx & Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Part II-IV

R Apr 23 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, The Forethought-chapter III

**Week 15**

T Apr 28 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chapter IV-VI & IX

R Apr 30 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chapters X-The Afterthought

*\*\*\*Writing Assignment 5: Interpretive Essay* 3 *due on Friday\*\*\**

**Week 16 Finals Week**

**Course Expectation and Goals**

*Reading*

The texts of political theory are not easy to understand, and it is the main challenge of this course to attempt to do so. This is something that will take time and hard work – you will often require multiple attempts to understand a passage, and still not fully grasp it. This is fine and normal. The goal in this respect is learn how to engage these texts, so that you can make sense of them for yourself. The classics of political theory which we read in this course are of a nature that you can return to them for the rest of your life and still be rewarded. You will not only learn how to read these texts, but you will become conversant about the perennial themes of political theory, including the political significance of the good life, the meaning of virtue and freedom, and the challenge of inequality.

*Speaking*

The second and equally crucial way that we engage these texts is through speaking about them with one another. You will learn how to discuss difficult concepts and how to use them to make sense of political life. Our conduct in the classroom will model the rhetorical and analytical modes of political theory, which will serve you in civic life.

*Writing*

Finally, this course will improve your ability to make a persuasive argument in writing about complicated, nuanced subjects. This will be done through analysis and interpretation of major texts of political theory.

**Assignments and Evaluation**

Evaluation for this course will be based on writing and class participation.

*Writing Assignments*

There will be five writing assignments throughout the quarter. The first will be very short, only a page in length; and the second will be only slightly longer at two pages. These are aimed towards learning how to ask questions about the assigned texts and then to begin to answer those questions. The third through fifth writing assignments will be short essays of 4-5 pages in length. Further instructions will be given for each assignment. The *writing assignments are cumulatively worth 70 points of credit.*

*Participation*

Starting in the third week, you will be required to write a question about the text on the discussion board one day of the week (predetermined at the start of the semester) at least 24 hours before class meets and prepare a short answer to another student’s question on another day of the week, which you will print and bring to class. These questions need only be a few sentences long and the response only a paragraph. Each question and each response are worth one point of credit, meaning that *participation is cumulatively worth 30 points of credit.* It is also important to note that you will only receive credit for the questions and written responses if you also attend class.

*Grade Breakdown*

Writing Assignment 1: 5 points | A+ 97-100 C 73-76.99

Writing Assignment 2: 5 points | A 93-96.99 C- 70-72.99

Writing Assignment 3: 15 points | A- 90-92.99 D+ 67-69.99

Writing Assignment 4: 20 points | B+ 87-89.99 D 63-66.99

Writing Assignment 5: 25 points | B 83-86.99 D- 60-62.99

Questions: 15 points | B- 80-82.99 F Below 60

Written Responses: 15 points | C+ 77-79.99

**Additional Information and Campus Resources**

**Availability:** The best way to contact me is by email. I will return your emails as soon as possible, but if I have not responded within 24 hours, please contact me again. I usually only respond to emails during normal work hours, so it will take longer for me to respond to you if you write me during the evening or weekend. If you have a question that you expect will take a few paragraphs or more to answer, the best time to ask it will be during my office hours. If you have a procedural question, it is a good idea to check the syllabus. I am always available to talk during office hours on a first come, first served basis. Students may also make appointments to meet one-on-one via email, although I cannot guarantee that I will always be available. If you are struggling with the readings, assignments, or with lecture, please come talk to me.

**Electronic Devices:** Your cell phones must be turned off and out of sight during class. Only use laptops or other electronic devices for course related material.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter with severe consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests, failing the class, to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has not been authored by the student, such as work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard set forth in the “Academic Honesty Policy” of LMU.

**Special Accommodations**: Students with special needs who require reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, or Psychiatric) needing academic accommodations should contact the DSS Office (Daum Hall 2nd floor, 310-338-4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <http://www.lmu.edu/dss>for additional information.

**Tentative Nature of the Syllabus**: If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications announced or distributed in class or posted on LMU's course management system MYLMUConnect.

**Reporting Requirements of Sexual or Interpersonal Misconduct**: As “responsible employees,” faculty are required to report any case of suspected sexual or interpersonal misconduct and cannot protect student confidentiality. For information about confidential counseling on campus and for general information about consensual relationships, sexual harassment, and sexual assault, please see the LMU Cares website: [http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/lmucares/.](http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/lmucares/)

**Student Self-Care**: No matter if you are a new student or returning student, remember to prioritize your self-care.  LMU has many health and wellness resources available to support you at every step of your journey.  Learn more at [lmu.edu/lionwellness](http://lionwellness.lmu.edu/).

**Emergency Preparedness:**To report an emergency or suspicious activity, contact the LMU Department of Public Safety by phone (x222 or 310-338-2893) or at the nearest emergency call box. In the event of an evacuation, follow the evacuation signage throughout the building to the designated safe refuge area where you will receive further instruction from Public Safety or a Building Captain. For more safety information and preparedness tips, visit [https://publicsafety.lmu.edu/em/.](http://www.lmu.edu/emergency)