

Introduction to Political Theory: Reason, Republics, and Resistance

UCLA Political Science 10

Summer Session A, 2018

Kye Barker

Classroom: Bunche 1209B

Class time: Tues & Thurs, 3:15-5:20pm

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Office Hours: Tues, 10:30am-12:30pm

Description

The Western tradition of political theory began roughly 2500 years ago, through a conflict between philosophy and politics. Accused of corrupting the youth of Athens with his teachings, Socrates was condemned to death for his philosophy. Since this original conflict, political theory has struggled with the relationship between reason and politics. In this course, we will examine canonical texts of Western political theory – from Ancient Greece in the 4th century BCE up to the United States in the 20th century CE – in order to pursue some of its foundational questions. May politics ever be made rational? Is it possible for a political regime to embody the ideals of justice? What does it mean to be a virtuous citizen? And to what extent is resistance legitimate? The examination of these texts and questions will be used as an introduction to the subfield of political science known as political theory.

Required Books

The following required books are available at the bookstore.

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd edition, translated by Terence Irwin, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), ISBN: 0872204642
- Aristotle, *Politics*, translated by Ernest Barker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), ISBN: 978-0199538737
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. By Quentin Skinner and Russell Price, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), ISBN: 0521349931
- 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: 0872206335
- Plato, *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, Revised by C.D.C Reeve, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), ISBN: 0872201368
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, translated by Maurice Cranston, (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), ISBN: 978-0140442014

Other readings will be on the course website. <https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/181A-POLSCI10-2>

Course Expectations and Goals

This course will presume no prior knowledge of political science or political theory and will only require an inquisitive and open mind. The texts are the focus of the course and are quite challenging. *It will be absolutely essential that you complete the assigned readings before class.* Although I will begin each class with a lecture meant to aid you in understanding the assigned texts, the second half of class will usually be devoted to discussion. The responsibility for guiding the discussions will largely fall on you. Additionally, and this is crucial, it will be paramount that you treat other participants in discussions with respect. We will often deal with controversial themes and texts, the meanings of which are essentially contestable. You will be encouraged to take a reasoned position on these texts beyond merely having an opinion. Besides these general expectations, there are four learning goals that I have for the quarter:

1. Students will *familiarize themselves with some of the most important themes of ancient and modern political theory*. These will include, as noted above, the role of reason in politics, the nature of justice, the character of a virtuous citizen, and the legitimacy of resistance. In addition to these central themes, we will also encounter supplemental topics, such as the tension in politics between reality and appearance, whether there must always be a supernatural supplement to politics, the connection between human nature and politics, and the importance of questions in political theory.
2. Students will learn to *find and formulate important questions about political life*. The texts which we read do not provide easy answers to the essential questions of politics; rather, they provide guidance for finding the questions that are truly important. Students will explore this both through the lectures, and by learning how to formulate questions about the issues that the texts provoke.
3. Students will learn how to *closely read and interpret complex texts* from the history of political theory. These texts are not simple and understanding them will not happen immediately. The arguments are not laid out neatly, as in a textbook, but arise within the parameters of the genres in which they were written. In this course, we will emphasize close reading and attention to detail in order to better understand these arguments.
4. Students will develop an ability to *discuss abstract ideas in the context of politics*. The second half of most classes will be devoted to discussion.

Grading

Participation – 20%

Quizzes – 15%

Midterm Essay – 30%

Final Essay – 35%

Participation

Participation at all class meetings is crucial to your success in the course. During the lecture half of class, you should take notes and ask questions. During the discussion half of class, you should actively ask your fellow students questions and work together to understand the material. Before

every class, you must finish the readings for that class meeting and take detailed notes. *You also must type and print out two questions for class discussion.* The questions should be about 4-6 sentences long, cite the assigned text for the day, and briefly explain the underlying rationale for the question. Questions might be directed towards clarifying a difficult part of the text, finding how a point made in the text relates to other texts in the class, or connecting the text to a contemporary political problem. Attendance will be taken by handing in your prepared questions at the end of class. *Electronic devices are not permitted during class,* except for assistive devices approved by me. You should bring the printed readings, and written notes to every class.

Quizzes

There will be *four or five short reading quizzes* given throughout the course. The format will be short answer, fill in the blank, and multiple choice. If you closely read and take notes on the assigned texts, these should not be very difficult.

Essays

There are *two essays* that each take the form of an answer to a prompt provided by me. These are each 5-6 pages in length. For both essays, you will be tested on your ability to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired about the ideas and theories of the course in the shape of a reasoned argument that draws upon the evidence of the texts themselves. More information will be provided when the assignment prompts are distributed.

Late papers will be penalized at the rate of one full letter grade per day (A to B). No extensions will be granted without talking to me in advance.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Reason, Resistance, and a Republic, part 1

1. Tuesday, June 26: Plato, *Apology* (entire) and *Crito* (entire) in *Five Dialogues*
2. Thursday, June 28: Plato, *Republic*, Book I (entire), II (357a-376d), IV (427d-445e) & V (471c-480)

Week 2: Reason and Politics, part 1

3. Tuesday, July 3: Plato, *Republic*, Books VII (514a-521b), VIII (entire) & IX (entire)
- * Wednesday, July 4: *Mid-term essay assignment distributed by email.**
4. Thursday, July 5: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I (entire), II (entire), III (chapters 6-9), & X (chapters 6-9)

Week 3: Reason and Politics, part 2

5. Tuesday, July 10: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books I (chapters 1-6) & III (chapters 1-16)
 6. Thursday, July 12: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books IV (chapter 11), V (entire), & VII (chapters 1-3 & 13-15)
- *Friday, July 13: *Mid-term essay due at 5pm on course website and as hard copy to Kye's office**

Week 4: Republics, part 1

7. Tuesday, July 17: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter, chapters 1-3, 6-9, 14-18, & 24-26
8. Thursday, July 19: Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, First Book (preface, chapters 1-12, 16-20, 55, & 58); Second Book, (preface); & Third Book, (chapter 1) *on course website*

Week 5: Republics, part 2

9. Tuesday, July 24: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Books 1 (entire) & 2 (entire)
Wednesday, July 25: Final essay assignment distributed by email.
10. Thursday, July 26: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book 3 (entire) & Book 4 (chapters 1-2, 5, & 8)

Week 6: Reason, Resistance, and a Republic, part 2

11. Tuesday, July 31: Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” *on course website*.
12. Thursday, August 2: Arendt, “Civil Disobedience” *on course website*
Friday, August 3: Final essay due at 5pm on course website and as hard copy to Kye’s office.

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. 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.

Grade Contestation Policy If you wish to dispute a grade on an essay or quiz, you must submit a statement in writing within one week after the essay/quiz was returned to the class explaining the mistake you think has been made. I will not discuss grades with students outside of office hours or appointments, and most certainly NOT by email. If an essay is re-graded, the entire essay will be re-graded. Your grade may be raised, stay the same, or be lowered. If you simply want to understand what you can do to improve your next paper, I will be happy to help you in office hours. Once final grades have been submitted, I will only consider errors in processing.

Academic Integrity Academic integrity is taken seriously at UCLA and by me. The Dean of Students Office is charged with responding when students are accused of committing a violation of policy, which includes cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, and facilitating academic

dishonesty. These violations can result in failing the assignment or even the course. If you are unsure if something goes against University policy, contact me.

<http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/Syllabus.pdf>

The Undergraduate Writing Center offers UCLA undergraduates one-on-one sessions on their writing. The Center is staffed by peer learning facilitators (PLFs), undergraduates who are trained to help at any stage in the writing process and with writing assignments from across the curriculum. PLFs tailor appointments to the concerns of each writer. A61 Humanities: Mon. thru Thurs., 10am-5pm; Rieber 115: Mon. & Wed. 7-9PM. Phone: 310-206-1320. e-mail: wcenter@g.ucla.edu. Book an Appointment: wp.ucla.edu/wc.

Emergencies. In an emergency situation, please call UCPD by dialing 911 from an on-campus phone or (310) 825-1491. Anonymous Reporting Line: (310) 794-5824.

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

- If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the CARE Advocacy Office for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, 1st Floor Wooden Center West, CAREadvocate@careprogram.ucla.edu, (310) 206-2465.
- You can also report sexual violence or sexual harassment directly to the University's Title IX Coordinator, 2241 Murphy Hall, titleix@conet.ucla.edu, (310) 206-3417.
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD at (310) 825-1491.
- Please note that under University policy, all TAs and instructors are mandated **Title IX reporters**. If any of the teaching team is informed of or witnesses sexual violence or harassment, we are required to report this to UCLA's Title IX coordinator. The coordinator is committed to maintaining anonymity of victims and so are we.

Report incidents of BIAS. UCLA is committed to creating a community free from bias and intolerance. If you have experienced a hostile climate, please file a report at <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Report-an-Incident-of-BIAS>.

UCLA Students may contact the **College Academic Counseling office** for help with any academic concerns via <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/counseling/contact-us.html>. Non-UCLA students should contact <http://www.summer.ucla.edu/>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at UCLA offers a range of services including individual and group therapy, referrals, psychological testing, crisis consultation, and psychoeducational programs and workshops. CAPS is located at John Wooden Center West and can be reached at (310) 825-0768. Learn more at <http://www.counseling.ucla.edu>. If you need an immediate response after hours or on weekends please call UCLA CAPS 24-hour access line (310) 825-0768 or call the UCPD 24-hour dispatch line at (310) 825-1491 or dial 911 for your local police.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities If you wish to request an accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Center for Accessible Education (formerly called the Office for Students with Disabilities) as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501 / TDD: (310) 206---6083. Website: <http://www.cae.ucla.edu/>

Under **FERPA**, you have a right to know how you're doing in the course, but **it is a violation of university policy to discuss grades or any private information via email**, because legally, email is not private communication. Any discussion of your performance in the course, including your grade, must take place in person.

For many other summer session questions, go to <http://www.summer.ucla.edu/>, choose "Academic Courses" under the Programs link in the top banner, and then find the category that applies to you on the right side of the page. Click on that, and then on "Important Resources" in the left column of the subsequent page. For questions about deadlines, see <http://www.summer.ucla.edu/academiccourses/UCLAstudent/registrationandenrollment> or www.summer.ucla.edu/calendar.