

POLS 2700
Issues in Political Philosophy
Spring 2023
TTH 11-12:15

Instructor: Professor Christopher M. Duncan, Ph.D.
Office: McGannon Hall 149
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Office Hours: Please use the following link to make an appointment [Click here](#)
Class Meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00-12:15 in DesPeres Hall 108



Course Description

This course introduces students to the subfield of political theory by examining issues in the history of political thought - such as the idea of democracy; or of freedom; or the relationship between individuals and the state – through close reading of texts. It is not open to students who have taken POLS-1700.

Course Objectives

The political theorist, Hannah Arendt, described the attempt to understand human nature as the equivalent of a person trying to jump over their own shadow. And yet, most political theorists and philosophers must have at least some sense of the kind of beings they are writing about in order to imagine the best sort of political regime possible for us to live under with one another. In this course, we will explore a number of different approaches to the question of human nature as embedded in the work and thought of Western political philosophers ranging from the ancient period to the Christian era to the early modern world to the postmodern and contemporary

landscapes. Along the way we will read a wide range of theorists and philosophers to both understand their particular political projects and their implied answers to the two basic questions that underlie this course:

1. From a social, theoretical, and philosophical perspective what does it mean to be human?
2. What kind of political order is properly suited and sustainable for human habitation?

Course Attributes

Global Local Justice-Theory, Social Science Req. (A&S)

Required Texts*

The Trial and Death of Socrates by Plato

The Prince by Machiavelli

The Second Treatise of Government by John Locke

Augustine: Political Writings by St. Augustine

The Person and the Common Good by Jacques Maritain

Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach by Martha Nussbaum

*Other readings will be provided electronically during the semester. They are marked by an * in the syllabus.

Requirements

Students will be expected to attend each class session with the required readings done and be prepared and willing to participate thoughtfully in the discussions of them. Grades for the course will be determined based on the following:

(3) Exams	<u>100 points (each)</u>
	300 points (total)

Grade Scale in Points

300-276=	A
275-270=	A-
269-264=	B+
263-246=	B
245-240=	B-
239-234=	C+
233-216=	C
215-210=	C-
209-177=	D
Below 176=	F

Examinations

Examinations will be administered through the course's Canvas site. They will open and close at specific times and will consist of short answer questions, multiple choice, and true and false questions.

Civility

A course like this can give rise to strong opinions and even vigorous arguments. That is perfectly acceptable. However, each person and their opinions will be treated with respect and dignity.

The use of cell phones, computers or other electronic devices during class is prohibited except as approved for notetaking. Receiving calls, texting or other behavior that detracts from course material will not be tolerated. Anyone engaging in such behavior will be asked to leave the class and the day will be counted as an absence for the first offense. For the second offense, the person engaging in the behavior will be asked to leave and not return to class for the rest of the semester.

Important Dates

March 5-7 Spring Break (no classes)
March 28-29 Easter holiday (no classes)

Course Outline

Dates

Topic

January 16 Introduction to Political Theory and the Course

Readings:

Jan. 16 Plato's 7th *Epistle**

January 18 – January 23 Socrates and the Good Life

Readings:

Jan. 18 *The Trial and Death of Socrates: The Euthyphro and The Apology* (Plato)

Jan. 23 *The Trial and Death of Socrates: The Crito and The Phaedo* (Plato)

January 25- January 30 Aristotle and the Art of Being Human

Readings:

Jan. 25 *Nicomachean Ethics* [selections] (Aristotle)*

Jan. 30 *Nicomachean Ethics* [selections] (Aristotle)*

February 1- February 8 Augustine and the Order of Love

Readings:

- Feb. 1 *The City of God*, Books I-VIII (Augustine)
Feb. 6 *The City of God*, Books IX-XIX (Augustine)
Feb. 8 *The City of God*, Books IX-XIX (Augustine)

Examination One will Open at 5 p.m. on February 8

Examination One will Close at 11 p.m. on February 15

February 13- February 20 Political Realism and Machiavelli

Readings:

- Feb. 13 *The Prince, Prefatory Letter* and Books I-XIV (Machiavelli)
Feb. 15 *The Prince*, Books XV-XX (Machiavelli)
Feb. 20 *The Prince*, Books XXI-XXVI (Machiavelli)

February 22- February 29 The Liberal State and John Locke

Readings:

- Feb. 22-27 *The Second Treatise of Government*, Chs. I- IX (Locke)
Feb. 29 *The Second Treatise of Government*, Chs. X-XIX (Locke)

March 12- March 19 Beyond Good and Evil: Nietzsche and the Overman

Readings:

- March 12 *Homer's Contest and Aphorisms* (Nietzsche)*
March 19 *The Genealogy of Morals* [selections] (Nietzsche)*

March 21- March 26 Freedom, the Death of God, and Responsibility

Readings:

- March 21 *Existentialism and Human Emotions* [all] (Sartre)*
March 26 *Existentialism and Human Emotions* [all] (Sartre)*

Examination Two will Open at 5 p.m. on March 26

Examination Two will Close at 11 p.m. on April 4

April 2- April 9

The Difference Between “Something” and “Someone”

Readings:

- April 2 *The Person and the Common Good*, Chs. 1-3 (Maritain)
April 4 *The Person and the Common Good*, Ch. 4 (Maritain)
April 9 *The Person and the Common Good*, Ch. 5 (Maritain)

April 11-April 23 Labor, Work, and Action: Human Nature?

Readings:

- April 11-16 *The Human Condition* [selections part 1] (Arendt)*
April 18 *The Human Condition* [selections part 2] (Arendt)*
April 23 *The Human Condition* [selections part 3] (Arendt)*

April 25- May 2 An Ethic of Care and Human Well-being

Readings:

- April 25 *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Chs. 1-2 (Nussbaum)
April 30 *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Chs. 3-4 (Nussbaum)
May 2 *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Chs. 5-6 (Nussbaum)

Examination Three will Open at 5 p.m. on May 2

Examination Three will Close at 11 p.m. on May 9

Additional Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/academic-integrity-policy.pdf>.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also

must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact CADR, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at accessibility_disability@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from CADR and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to CADR. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to disability accommodations. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean's office.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator that you shared an experience relating to Title IX.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php>.

Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to Title IX. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean's office.

Student Success Center

The Student Success Center (SSC) supports students in reaching their goals in and out of the classroom. Providing a variety of resources, the Student Success Center houses both the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) and Academic Support, which includes Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, University Writing Services, and Student Success Coaching. The Student Success Center is located in the Busch Student Center, Suite 331, and students can make an appointment with any SSC resource via EAB Navigate. To learn more about the Student Success Center and its resources, please visit: <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/index.php>.

University Writing Services

University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations with trained writing consultants who help with everything from brainstorming, outlining, and proposing research questions to documenting sources, revising, and implementing feedback. These consultations can take place in-person, asynchronously, or via Zoom and can be scheduled through EAB Navigate – Student. Getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels on different writing projects (including but not limited to class assignments, conference papers, cover letters, dissertations, group projects, multimedia assignments, personal statements, senior capstone projects, short answer questions on applications, speeches, and theses). For additional information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/university-writing-services/index.php> or send an email to writing@slu.edu.

University Counseling Center Syllabus Statement

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers free, short-term, solution-focused counseling to Saint Louis University undergraduate and graduate students. UCC counselors are highly trained clinicians who can assist with a variety of issues, such as adjustment to college life, troubling changes in mood, and chronic psychological conditions. To make an appointment, call 314-977-8255 (TALK), or visit the clinic on the second floor of Wuller Hall. For after hours needs, please press #9 after dialing the clinic number.

