“The most important endeavor is the striving for morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity for life.” Albert Einstein.

“[A] slave, if he lives for virtue and if he keeps alive within himself all that is good, is a free man. But a man who serves evil, even if he be lord over all our sad Earth, is a slave. The evil man does not know he is evil. He thinks he is free, while all the while he is the slave of numerous masters, for he is ruled by many lies and vices.” Dariush in Michael O’Brien’s, *Voyage to Alpha Centauri*.

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples came and said to him: Why speakest thou to them in parables? Who answered and said to them: Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: but to them it is not given. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables: because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.” Matthew 13: 9-13.

“The peculiar manner of being of the best regime—namely, its lacking actuality while being superior to all actual regimes—has its ultimate reasons in the dual nature of man, in the fact that man is the in-between being existing between the life of brutes and that of the gods.” Leo Strauss

“All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes: and without parables he did not speak to them. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 13: 34-35.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Above all, this course is about political philosophy; political philosophy is about the relationship of the city to the soul (soul here should not imply necessarily, religious connotations) of humans. Therefore, it is truly about answering the question: what is the best regime for the maintenance of the philosophical soul? Modern political philosophy (modern usually referring to the time from Machiavelli to Marx) distinguishes itself from ancient and medieval political thought by moving away from ideas of religious salvation and the religious ordering of society. Instead, modern political theory places an emphasis on the self completely ordering ones regime and condition of the soul without assistance from any religious notions of divinity or eternity. Of course, the trouble for modern political philosophers was actually separating the rule of self/regime from religious authority and persecution. Therefore, the objectives of this course are to gain an understanding of the differences between ancient and modern political thought; to help understand the different evolutions of political thought within the modern era; to help you contemplate which idea of the best regime you think is closest to the truth; and of course, finally, to teach you the importance of a well ordered regime—which of course, means to teach you the idea of a well ordered soul. Essentially, then, this course teaches you how to be truly human, and how to live a good life.
To accomplish this task, we start with the political thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. His writings illustrate pre-modern modes of thinking. Then we turn towards Machiavelli, the founder of modern civilization and politics to see what was so important in his thinking that necessitated a shift in conceptual labeling from the terms “ancient” to “modern.” Machiavelli defines all that we are today, politically. But how did he do this and is it “good?” We then move to the state of nature arguments of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to see how they evolve the notions of the best regime from the Machiavellian moment. Finally, we delve into the debate between Tocqueville and Marx on where politics should go from the early social contract theorists. A larger theme to contemplate each author is, “if not rule by God or religion, than what?” If the answer is by reason, then how do we define reason? How do we come to terms with different perceptions of morality and justice? Please focus on these questions in every piece you read. They will help prepare you for the papers.

Intertwined with all this will be the investigation of the differences between esoteric and exoteric political thought, and its relationship in Leo Strauss’ understanding of Modern Political Thought. Unlike most classes, you should leave this semester with more questions than answers. But if this is accomplished, you will be on the road to being a true philosopher, which means being fully free, which means actually being.

Because of the profound nature of our topic, this course requires a significant amount of reading, intense Socratic dialogue, and more, a serious amount of virtue. In addition to the above objectives, you will learn how to think logically, independently, and analytically. My class teaches you how to think and learn, rather than only to memorize, keep this in mind throughout the semester. If you apply your full effort and actively participate, this course will elevate you above your peers. I strive to create an engaging class atmosphere and I will make it as interesting as possible. This is not a class for lazy students. My class is for students that want a challenge and want to rise above the nameless crowd and to be more than just a shadow in a cave.

STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the term, you are expected to illustrate that you:

1. Understand the main themes, content, and ideas comprising modern political thought.
2. Understand the differences between Church (Medieval) thought and modern political thought.
3. Understand the differences between ancient (classical) and modern political thought.
4. Understand the difference between exoteric and esoteric writing.
5. Demonstrate that you know how to write an analytical essay for political science, using its style-guide, and demonstrating breadth and depth of knowledge and critical/creative thinking skills.
6. Have increased your ability to read philosophical text in a deeply cautious manner.
7. Can think analytically, critically, and creatively.
8. Have increased your ability to discuss in a highly scholarly way, deeply political and philosophical issues.
9. You should be able to address the questions, what can contemporary politics/politicians learn from the Moderns, if anything? What would the Moderns say about the US today if they could reflect on it? How would you judge the US according to the Moderns?

COURSE GRADES

Quizzes/On-line assignments: 20%
Class Participation: 20%
Paper I: 15%
Paper II: 20%
Final Paper: 25%
I expect class participation by all students. This goes beyond attendance. Simply coming to class gets you no points. You are required to ask questions and actively engage your classmates and myself. I am strict with participation but I want everyone to earn an A. However, if you do not talk regularly in class, and participate in on-line discussions, your participation grade will be negatively affected. You will have daily quizzes on the reading material. The readings should be completed before the class period for which they are assigned. You can use separate notes that you took from your readings during your quiz.

Additionally, you will have several class days on-line, rather than in class. Therefore, you will have substantial on-line assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will be two-fold: posting discussion points on-line and, more substantial assignments consisting of short-essay questions. These will be timed and no late submissions will be accepted. **If you miss an assignment, I reserve the right to give you an automatic “F” in the class.** These assignments will be posted on our D2L class page and you will be notified of these days on the syllabus below.

You have three papers this semester. You will have about ten days to write each of them, and they will be between 4-6 pages, each. These papers will force you to think creatively and analytically about Modern Political Thought, and will only include materials we have read for the class. **If you miss a paper, you will receive an automatic “F” in the class.** No late papers will be accepted—meaning, if you are late on a paper, I reserve the right to fail you in the class.

The questions contained within this syllabus should guide your reading. You should try to answer each question for every page you read. The three main questions that should guide your readings besides those listed above are: 1) what is justice; 2) what is the best regime; 3) what is the proper place for religion in politics? What place does morality and virtue have in politics? How are these concepts different from those of the Ancients and/or the Church? Also keep in mind, who are the writers actually writing to? Why? For what purpose? What is their hidden truth? What are they afraid of? Finally, you must keep in mind how would each philosopher respond to the American regime? How do we differ from the Moderns? Are we better or worse for it? You must keep America in mind with every reading, and you should always keep the Moderns in mind when contemplating American politics.

**ANY MORE THAN 3 ABSCENCES WILL AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN A FULL LETTER DROPPED FROM YOUR FINAL GRADE AND POSSIBLY YOUR WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CLASS.**

**I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO COUNT ANY TARDIES AS AN ABSENCE; SO, DO NOT COME TO MY CLASS LATE.**

**NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS/PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED; NO MAKE UPS ARE ALLOWED EXCEPT UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, AT MY DISCRETION; FAILURE TO TURN IN ANY ASSIGNMENT MAY RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC F IN THE CLASS AND/OR A WITHDRAWAL.**
REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

NOTE: you must purchase the precise editions listed below. These are specific translations that convey the original author’s original sense without modernist interpretations. I will not accept quizzes or papers based on other translations. All required materials are in the GRU bookstore. There are several readings from books not required; these readings are scanned and uploaded on the D2L course page.


SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Monday, August 18: Introduction to the course and each other
Readings to be completed for today’s class, None.

Wednesday, August 20: Leo Strauss and Learning how to Read
Readings to be completed for today’s class, Strauss, pgs. 7-21 (D2L).

Monday, August 25: Persecution and the Art of Writing/Reading
Readings to be completed for today’s class, Strauss, pgs. 22-37 (D2L).

Wednesday, August 28: Leo Strauss and Modernity
Readings to be completed for today’s class, Strauss, pgs. 81-98 (D2L).

Monday, September 1: Holiday—No Class
Readings to be completed for today’s class, NONE.

Wednesday, September 3 (On-line Class 1): Complete Assignment 1 on D2L and Post Discussions
Readings to be completed for today’s class, Rosen, pgs. 119-136 (D2L).

Monday, September 8: St. Thomas Aquinas: On Laws
Readings to be completed for today’s class, Aquinas, pgs. 10-40.

Wednesday, September 10: St. Thomas Aquinas: Natural Law
Readings to be completed for today’s class, Aquinas, pgs. 40-59.

1 Subject to change at my discretion without much notice. Changes will be announced on-line. Further, you are responsible for notifying me if you see any reading mistakes in the syllabus; in other words, if a reading is missing, or pages are wrong, or you have the same reading listed twice, you need to let me know so I can fix the problem. If you do nothing, you will be held accountable.
Monday, September 15: St. Thomas Aquinas: Justice
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Aquinas, pgs. 97-129.

Wednesday, September 17: St. Thomas Aquinas: On War and Killing
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Aquinas, pgs. 164-172; 186-190.
   PAPER TOPIC I HANDED OUT VIA DROPBOX

Monday, September 22: St. Thomas Aquinas: Church-State Relations and Statecraft
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Aquinas, pgs. 190-211.

Wednesday, September 24: Niccolò Machiavelli
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Machiavelli, pgs. 3-16.

Friday, September 26: PAPER TOPIC I DUE VIA DROPBOX

Monday, September 29: Niccolò Machiavelli
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Machiavelli, pgs. 16-34.

Wednesday, October 1 (On-line Class 2): Complete Assignment 2 on D2L and Post Discussions
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Machiavelli, pgs. 34-53 & Introduction.

Monday, October 6: Niccolò Machiavelli
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Machiavelli, pgs. 54-71.

Wednesday, October 8 (On-line Class 3): Complete Assignment 3 on D2L and Post Discussions
   GRU Middle-School MUN (Please come and observe in-lieu of class time today: agendas will be given later in semester).
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Machiavelli, pgs. 71-91.

Monday, October 13: Niccolò Machiavelli
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Machiavelli, pgs. 91-111.

Wednesday, October 15: John Locke
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Locke, Chapters I-IV.

Monday, October 20: John Locke
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Locke, Chapters V-VII.

Wednesday, October 22: John Locke
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Locke, Chapters VIII-XIII.
   PAPER TOPIC II HANDED OUT VIA DROPBOX

Monday, October 27: John Locke
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Locke, Chapters XIV-FINIS.

Wednesday, October 29: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the “Discourse on Inequality”
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Rousseau, pgs. 37-81.

Friday, October 31: PAPER TOPIC II DUE VIA DROPBOX

   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Rousseau, Books I-II (156-191).

Wednesday, November 5 (On-line Class 4): Complete Assignment 4 on D2L and Post Discussions
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Rousseau, Book III (191-224).
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Rousseau, Book IV (224-252).
Wednesday, November 12: Rousseau: The State of War
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Rousseau, pgs. 254-265.

Monday, November 17: Alexis-Charles-Henri Clérel de Tocqueville
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Tocqueville, Introduction; Author’s Forward; Book 1 (All).

Wednesday, November 19: Tocqueville and the Ancient Regime
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Tocqueville, Book 2, Chapters, 1, 10-12.

Monday, November 24 (On-line Class 5): Complete Assignment 5 on D2L and Post Discussions
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Tocqueville, Book 3, Chapters 2, 5-8.

Wednesday, November 26: Thanksgiving Break (No Class)
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, NONE.

Monday, December 1: Karl Marx and the Communist Manifesto
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Marx, pgs. 218-259 (Only skim 245-253, but make sure you get the gist of it).
   **FINAL PAPER TOPIC HANDED OUT VIA DROPBOX**

Wednesday, December 3: Karl Marx and the Communist Manifesto
   Readings to be completed for today’s class, Marx, pgs. 14-38; Skim 50-73.

**Wednesday, December 10: Final Paper Due in Dropbox by 5:30 PM.**
   You will have extra readings for this paper, so plan your time accordingly.
CLASS ETIQUETTE

As a courtesy to your fellow students and myself, please do not carry on conversations with one another during my lectures. Do not speak unless you raise your hand and I recognize you. I also consider sleeping in class, for any reason, to be inappropriate. Do not use foul, sexual, profane, or any offensive language on-line or in class. These behaviors will be publicly reprimanded and punished with extreme prejudice. Tardiness is unacceptable. This is college – please do not come late to my class unless you have informed me beforehand. I am a compassionate professor, so please come to me beforehand if personal issues or conflicts arise.

Cheating or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated (Review your student handbook on this subject or other concerns and questions). If I even think you are cheating or have plagiarized, you will receive an F in the class and a formal complaint will be filed with the University.

For students with disabilities, please review your handbook for proper procedures and university policies. You must follow University protocol for accommodations.

No cell phone, lap-tops, or any other technologically smart devices allowed during class unless otherwise noted.

Dress code: Style of dress is primarily a matter of individual judgment and taste. However, students are expected to be neat and clean and to exercise good judgment in their appearance pursuant to (or consistent with) our professional setting. Colleges and programs may have a more discipline-specific dress code for students enrolled in that college. Please wear clothing that is appropriate for the classroom setting.

Please be respectful at ALL time and refrain from any types of slander, offensive comments, harassment and or discriminatory comments and or behaviors towards your fellow classmates and towards me. Any offenses against this will result in the most serious punishment possible. Please review your student handbook for more details concerning this. If you have any questions, and/or concerns, please contact me.

I take seriously and follow GRU’s policy on discrimination and harassment which reads:

Georgia Regents University (GRU) is strongly committed to ensuring that its learning and working environments are free of harassment and discrimination because of a person’s race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, genetic information, or disability. GRU shall respond in a swift and effective manner, with a goal of eliminating such conduct.

My classroom and office are Safe Zones and I seek to provide a diverse and all-inclusive environment. Behave accordingly.

If someone in class has seriously offended you regarding this conduct, please notify me immediately.