

Modern and Contemporary Political Theory

Political Science 451, Spring 2022

Instructor: Jeffrey A. Bell, Ph.D.

Time: 11-12:15 MW, in Fayard 239

Office Hours: 9-11:00am, MW, M 3:30-5pm or by appointment, in Fayard 355C.

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Course web page: moodle, and under teaching link at <https://jeffreycbell.net>.

Required Reading:

Texts

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

Louis Althusser – *Lessons on Rousseau*

Louis Althusser – *Politics and History*

Online readings

Montesquieu – *Spirit of the Laws* (Part 1)

David Hume, “That Politics May be Reduced to a Science”

David Hume, “Of the Jealousy of Trade”

Pierre Bourdieu, “Rethinking the State”

Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Society of Control”

Course Objectives

This course will examine some of the central figures in modern and contemporary political thought. A special focus this semester will be upon the emergence and place of inequality in society, and the role the state plays, if any, in establishing and maintaining these inequalities.

Course Requirements

There will be one midterm exam (20%), a final (30%), and two written assignments (25% each). The first written assignment is to be 4 pages long (1000 words, no less). This paper is to discuss one of the themes in the posted topics, relating your discussions to what was covered in class. The second written assignment (1500 words) is to be on a topic of your choosing that is relevant to the course. You may also elect to write one 2500-word essay on a topic of your choice. This paper will be worth 50% of your grade. In the 1500-word and 2500-word paper **you must cite our course readings at least two times** (i.e., any of the required readings), and since it is a research paper **you must cite an outside source at least two times** (see the paper requirements document at moodle). Papers that do not meet either of these requirements will not be accepted and will receive

a zero. I also strongly recommend that you pre-approve your research topics. If you use a computer word processing program, keep a copy of your work on a backup disk and back up your files regularly. Loss of a computer file will not be accepted as an excuse for not turning your work in on time. Deadlines are the same for everyone. No exceptions. **Papers and exams turned in late will be marked down one full letter grade for each day they are late.** Exams will be checked for plagiarism. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and to avoid it. Anyone caught cheating or turning in plagiarized work will fail the course and will be reported to appropriate university officials.

Attendance Requirements

Class participation is an integral part of the course. Regular attendance is a show of respect both to your fellow students and to your instructor. The classroom setting is an opportunity for each of us to work together on the topics and readings for that day. Failure to attend class regularly will harm your final grade, and anyone who exceeds five unexcused absences will automatically fail the course. **Note: the readings will be supplemented with lectures, and material from these lectures will appear on the exams.** Students who are not listed on the official class roll are not properly registered for the course, will not be allowed to attend class, and will not receive a grade for the course under any circumstances. Students bear the responsibility for ensuring that they are listed on the official class roll. Students with disabilities: If you are a qualified student with a disability seeking accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to self-identify with the Office of Student Life, Room 203, Student Union.

Student behavior/classroom decorum: Free discussion, inquiry, and expression are encouraged in this class. Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of students to benefit from the instruction is not acceptable. Examples may include routinely entering class late or departing early; use of cellphones; repeatedly talking in class without being recognized; talking while others are speaking; or arguing in a way that is perceived as "crossing the civility line."

Grading:

At the end of the semester, all students who have completed all the requirements listed above will have a certain number of points out of a hundred (e.g., possible of 20 on midterm, 30 on final, etc.). Students with a grade between 90-100 will receive an A, 80-90 a B, 70-80 a C, 60-70 a D, and below 60 an F. Incomplete (I)

grades: University policy states that the grade of “I” (incomplete) will be given only for work which is of passing quality at examination time but which, because of circumstances beyond the student’s control, is not complete. This means, first of all, that students may receive an “I” grade only in the case of sudden dire emergencies, such as severe and prolonged illness or injury requiring lengthy hospitalization. Students may not receive an “I” grade for prolonged absences over which they do have some control, such as incarceration or court-ordered rehabilitation for chemical dependency. Secondly, instructors may give a student an “I” grade only if the student has completed all required assignments with due dates prior to the date of the emergency, and they have done so with a passing grade. In those rare and extraordinary cases in which an “I” grade is given, the instructor and student must complete an “I” Contract form in the department office and obtain the department head’s approval. No “I” grades can be given after the end of the final exam period. Students who receive “I” grades must follow the procedure for removing the “I” described in the current *Southeastern General Catalogue*, or the grade will become an “F”.

Posting Grades:

During the semester grades will not be posted for this class. All graded assignments will be returned in class, or emailed directly to the student, as soon as they are graded. The instructor is required to keep final exams on file for a year following completion of the course. Final course grades will be posted on the Leonet system. Do not call the department office or the instructor’s office to ask about grades—it is illegal to give such information over the phone.

Reading Assignments

- Jan 19 Introduction.
- Jan 24 Hobbes, *Leviathan* I.i-xi
- Jan 26 Hobbes, *Leviathan* I.xii-xvi
- Jan 31 Hobbes, *Leviathan* II.xvii-xxv
- Feb 2 Hobbes, *Leviathan* II.xxvi-xxxi
- Feb 7 Locke, lecture on *First Treatise*.
- Feb 9 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 1-5
- Feb 14 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 6-10.
- Feb 16 Locke, *Second treatise*, chs. 11-15.
- Feb 21 Locke, *Second Treatise*, finish.
- Feb 23 Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Part 1, Books 1-4
Midterm review sheet posted.

- Feb 28 No class. Mardi Gras
- Mar 2 Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Part 1, Books 5-8.
Review
Paper topics posted
Take home Midterm posted (Due March 4, 11:59pm).
- Mar 7 Hume, “That Politics May be Reduced to a Science”.
- Mar 9 Hume, “Of the Jealousy of Trade”
- Mar 14 Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Question proposed and Part I.
- Mar 16 “ Part II.
Papers due.
- Mar 21 Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, pp. 19-52.
- Mar 23 Online lecture on Marx.
- Mar 28 “ pp. 53-120.
- Mar 30 “ pp. 121-202.
Last day to withdraw from classes: April 1
- Apr 4 Althusser, Lessons on Rousseau, Lecture 1.
- Apr 6 “ Lecture 2.
- Apr 11 “ Lecture 3.
- Apr 13 Althusser, *Politics and History*, Part 1.
- April 15 – April 22 Spring Break.
- Apr 25 “ Part 2.
- Apr 27 “ Part 3.
- May 2 Bourdieu, “Rethinking the State”.
- May 4 Deleuze, “Postscript on the Society of Control”
Review.
Take home final posted
- May 10 (Tuesday) **Final Exam due by 11:59pm**