

Political Science 5/Philosophy 5:
Political Philosophy
Fall 2022 #60750
Online

Instructor: E. Stefan Kehlenbach

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Office Hours: Thursday at 7pm, by appointment

The instructor reserves the right to modify, add, or remove any course requirement as the individual needs of the semester require. Should such modification occur, the instructor will provide documentation of the change and a new version of the syllabus.

Course Description: This course is designed as an introduction to the study of political philosophy. The course engages prominent works from the history of political thought while addressing the concepts, questions, tensions and problems that guide the study of politics. Among these are: what is justice; what are the goals of a decent society; what is the nature of citizenship and what are its corresponding privileges, immunities, and obligations; what is the nature of political obligation and are there limits to that obligation; what is the appropriate division between rights and responsibilities; how should liberty and equality be balanced? To this end, Political Philosophy examines classic, modern, and contemporary works from the tradition of political thought. PS 5 is also listed as PHIL 5; credit will be given in either area, not both.

Course Materials:

I will provide all of the course material on the course Canvas page. If you use an accessibility device to read texts, please reach out to me to ensure that you are able to get access to the texts. The online PDFs are formatted to allow for screen readers, but it may be easier to use other file formats that I can provide.

In this course we will be reading the following:

The Republic **Author:** Plato

The Politics **Author:** Aristotle

The Prince **Author:** Niccolo Machiavelli

The Leviathan **Author:** Thomas Hobbes

Two Treatise Of Government **Author:** John Locke

The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality **Author:** Jean Jacques Rousseau

The Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals **Author:** Immanuel Kant

The Communist Manifesto **Authors:** Karl Marx

A Theory of Justice **Author:** John Rawls

The Enumeration of the Sciences; The Attainment of Happiness **Author:** Abu Nasr Al-Farabi

Hind Swaraj **Author:** Mahatma Gandhi

Discipline and Punish; Truth and Power **Author:** Michel Foucault

The Sexual Contract **Author:** Carole Pateman

The Racial Contract **Authors:** Charles Mills

Undoing the Demos **Author:** Wendy Brown

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Comparative Political Theory: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to analyze and compare two prominent political theories from the history of political thought.
 2. Theory Evaluation: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to evaluate a prominent political theory in terms of its assumptions, logical consistency, evidence, historical significance, and contributions to contemporary currents in political thought.
 3. Textual Interpretation: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to take a passage from a text in the history of political thought and analyze its historical meaning and significance.
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Assignments:

Assignment	Importance
Writing Assignments	****
Weekly Discussion Posts	***
Final Self-Evaluation	**
Weekly Self-Reflections	*

Ungrading - An Alternative to Strict Grades:

"It was woven into [the school] through a constantly repeated ritual of power. The examination enabled the teacher, while transmitting his knowledge, to transform his pupils into a whole field of knowledge."

"The examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them."

"In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production"

(Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish)

- *Grades are not good incentive or effective feedback*
- *Grades are not good markers of learning*
- *Grades encourage competitiveness over collaboration*
- *Grades pit students and teachers against each other*
- *Grades are mechanisms of institutional control*
- *Grades aren't fair*

(Jesse Stommel)

This class uses a qualitative approach, not a quantitative approach, to grading. We will discuss these approaches extensively in class, both in reference to your own work and to the work that we are studying. I will be giving you qualitative feedback in the form of comments, suggestions, and questions about your work throughout the semester.

The primary goal of this class is to encourage the creation of a scholarly environment where you, as a student, are empowered to learn in a meaningful and impactful way. A secondary element of this is to ensure that you receive a grade in accordance with the administrative requirements of this school. These two elements do not need to be in opposition to each other, although they often are. In this class, I am aiming to create an open, non-hierarchical learning environment where you, the student, aim to learn based on your own intrinsic motivations—your desire to know more, your innate curiosity, rather than imposed extrinsic motivations—

the pressure of grades, the demands of the instructor, the social pressures of academic success (Ryan and Deci 2000)

Strict, quantitative grades have been shown to diminish a student's interest in what they are learning, incentivize a path of least resistance (where a student takes the easiest path to an "A", rather than the most interesting) and reduce the quality of a student's thinking. (Kohn 2011) It also serves to incentivize cheating (Anderman and Murdock 2011). Even when specific education is critically important, as is the case in Med School, removing strict quantified grades and replacing them with pass/fail options increased learning (White and Fantone, 2010.)

In this class we aim to avoid these issues by engaging in a long-term dialogue about your learning in this class. You will complete a number of self-reflections and self-evaluations so that we can turn the one-sided conversation about grades into a discussion about learning. At the conclusion of the class, you will be asked to complete a final self-evaluation where you will give yourself an overall grade and justify why you deserve this grade. If all goes well, this will be the grade you receive in this class. However, I reserve the right to continue this conversation, and ultimately assign you the grade that I think is appropriate. But I hope that we will be able to come to an agreeable conclusion.

Such an arrangement requires a form of mutual trust and respect. Much of education is predicated on a one-way network of trust, you the student must trust that I, the instructor has your best interest at heart. That I am not going to play favorites or bog you down with unnecessary or irrelevant information. You also must trust that I will be fair in distributing my grades and not use arbitrary measures to assess your work. However, I, as the instructor do not need to have the same trust in you. In fact, much of education is predicated on this trust not existing. Multi-million dollar corporations bank on the distrust sown between instructor and student, offering me innumerable ways of turning this distrust in to surveillance, exploited data, or other money-making technologic enterprises. All of this is interwoven in a hierarchical web of discipline, punishment, categorization and power famously described by Michel Foucault. Moving towards a new way of teaching that eschews these traditional elements, a new critical pedagogy, requires the rebuilding of this mutual trust.

By empowering you to take control of your own learning, by attempting to remove the hierarchical power structures that dominate the traditional classroom, and by including you in the process of your own assessment, I hope to work towards a classroom environment that is built on trust rather than suspicion. But this also requires you to trust that I am doing the best that I can, and to come to me if you are feeling anxious about this development, or if you have any questions about anything in this course.

Tips for Close Reading: This course is one centered around reading texts and discussing them. There are no objective answers in this class, no facts to memorize. Therefore, doing the assigned readings in advance and being prepared is one of the most important requirements for the course.

Tips for reading thoroughly and successfully in advance of each class:

- Preparing for each class session by reading thoroughly in advance is possibly the most important thing you can do to ensure your own success in this course. Each of the assigned readings will be addressed in depth during class, and seminar participants will be asked for their detailed reactions to and reflections upon each reading. I may call on people during the seminar to answer questions or share reflections, so be prepared for this.
- Cutting corners or skipping readings will most likely reflect in your participation during that week's session, so budget enough time accordingly to get through the readings for each week's session.
- Read in the precise order that items are listed on the syllabus. Every week, you will receive several questions to guide your reading for the following week. These will indicate which passages, ideas or concepts you should be focusing on as you read, so pay attention to these questions before you begin, and allow them to guide you.
- As you read, highlight and/or make marginal notes. Ask yourself (and be prepared to answer) the following questions: How should we interpret exactly what this author saying? What is the central point or idea of this reading? What are the important concepts within this reading? What are the implications of these ideas and concepts, if we take them seriously?
- If something strikes you as interesting/important/worth talking about, make a note of it. Chances are that this will be an important thing for you to bring up during discussion in class. We will often spend time focusing on interpreting specific passages or excerpts from the texts, so highlighting during reading will help you with this skill.
- If you encounter something you do not understand, flag it. Whether it is a proper name, a concept, a theory, or an idea, use the considerable resources available to you online to look it up. If you are still puzzled or unclear, bring your question to class. Chances are you are not the only one with that question, and at least some of your classmates will appreciate the chance to clarify it too.

Assignments:

Discussion Questions and Attendance

Each week, the student is expected to respond the discussion board in Canvas, as well as respond to two (2) other student's postings. These responses are due each Friday, by 11:59 pm. These responses should be critical evaluations and interpretations of the text and should utilize direct references and quotations. They are not mere "topics for class discussion."

Writing Assignments

There are seven writing assignments throughout the course. These are shorter (500 words) assignments that nevertheless require you to think deeply and critically about the texts and formulate an original argument. These require not only argumentative writing but direct citations and usage of the texts. Each assignment has its own specific prompt, but if you have a topic you wish to explore, please reach out to me, I am open to adjusting the prompts on a case-by-case basis.

Self-Assessments

In addition to the discussion questions and the writing assignments there are quarterly self-assessments. These will occur roughly every 4 weeks throughout the course. The purpose of these self-evaluations is to provide a "check-in" about your progress in the course, and to give you an opportunity to participate in your own evaluation. I view the self-evaluations as an ongoing discussion between you, the student, and myself, the instructor. It is through these evaluations, and the discussions that follow, that we will discuss your progress and the class, and ultimately your grade.

Class Decorum and Other Policies:

- **General**

- Cheating or plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated and will be punished with the most severe penalty available. All incidents of cheating or plagiarism will be documented and reported to the dean.
- Email Etiquette: Keep in mind that tone can be easily misconstrued during email correspondence. All emails should be written in a polite, courteous, and formal manner.

- **Attendance**

- Students who do not participate in the first week of class may be considered "no-shows" and dropped from the class.
- Students who are deemed by the instructor to be excessively absent after the withdrawal deadline may be assigned a grade of "FW." The "FW" is used in calculating the grade point average.

- **Adding the Class**

- Students wanting to add this section will need to be provided with a four digit add/authorization code. If you receive an add authorization code, you are responsible for completing the add process before the deadline to add. This deadline can be found in the Schedule of Classes available online. Add codes can be processed through your WebAdvisor account. If you fail to add the class by the deadline, you are not officially enrolled and college policy prohibits you from continuing to attend class.
- Be aware that your failure to pay fees/fines, to document prerequisites, to clear academic holds, or to navigate personal problems may hinder you from adding this section. Please allow sufficient time to take care of these issues before the deadline to add. Adding this course after the published deadline will require documented extenuating circumstances involving severe illness, accident, or death.
- The use of an add/authorization code issued to another student violates the Student Code of Conduct and the student will be referred to the Dean of Student Life for disciplinary action. The unauthorized use of an add code is grounds for removal from the course.
- You may withdraw from this course by using WebAdvisor prior to the drop deadline. The deadline is available on WebAdvisor by selecting "My Class Schedule/Deadlines" after logging in. If there is a hold restricting use of WebAdvisor for this purpose, you may bring a completed ADD/DROP card to the Admissions counter of the college and complete the process there. It is the student's responsibility to drop this class should they decide no longer to attend.

Academic Honesty Policy: Students are required to adhere to the IVC Academic Honesty Policy. Students assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the academic work they submit. Students are responsible for their OWN work. With the exception of specifically assigned group projects, using another student's work, sharing work, collaborating on tests/quizzes/assignments, and, in general, misrepresenting others' work as your own work, are violations of the Academic Honesty Policy. Resubmission of one's own work for academic credit (i.e., work that has previously been submitted for another class) is a form of plagiarism and is also not acceptable in this class. Any violation of academic honesty will result in a zero for the assignment or test, and may result in dismissal from class, a failing grade, and further disciplinary action.

Students With Disabilities:

Irvine Valley College makes reasonable accommodations for qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), impacts your work for this class, and necessitates accommodations, you should contact Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) at 949-451-5630 or Student Services Center SC 171 for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, and physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders, among others. Students can contact DSPS if they are uncertain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies, or if they feel they may have a learning disability. Students with disabilities and other special needs who require academic accommodations should discuss options with the professor during the first two weeks of class.

Veterans:

IVC has a Veteran's Service Center (SSC120) to provide supportive services to veterans and their families. Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.

Tentative Course Outline:

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. However, you must keep up with the reading assignments.

Week	Content
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction, What is Political Theory?
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plato <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Republic – 327-329d, 336b-344c, 357-362c, 419a-423a, 427d-435b, 443a-445e, 449a-465c, 484a-489a, 500c-521c
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Politics – PDF Selections
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niccolo Machiavelli <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Prince – Pages 1- 80
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Hobbes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Leviathan – Introduction, Chapter XII- Chapter XV, Chapter XVII- Chapter XIX, Chapter XXI – First Self-Evaluation Due
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Locke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Second Treatise of Government – Page 267-318 (Chapter 1- V) Page 330-349 (Chapter VII-IX)
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean Jacques Rousseau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Second Discourse – Selections Online
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immanuel Kant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals – Selections Online
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl Marx <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading assignment: The Communist Manifesto and the German Ideology – Page 1- 46 from the Communist Manifesto – Selections Online from the German Ideology – Second Self-Evaluation Due
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A Theory of Justice – Selections Online

Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al-Farabi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Political Writings - Selections Online
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.K. Gandhi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Political Writings, Hind Swaraj - Selections Online
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michel Foucault <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Truth and Power, Discipline and Punish - Selections Online
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Pateman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Sexual Contract - Selections Online - Third Self-Evaluation Due
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Mills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Racial Contract - Chapter 1 and 2
Week 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendy Brown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undoing the Demos - Selections Online
Finals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Date to Turn In Assignments 12/20 • Final Self-Evaluation Due