

SPRING 2017

POLS 335 History of Political Thought

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Western political institutions are ancient constructions, heavy with the baggage of thousands of years of thought, of violence, of history. The way we live today, and the way we think about governance, is reliant on specific and pervasive assumptions about society, ethics, class relations, and morality; about our place in the world. These assumptions, however, find their origin in the works of philosophers that have worked to shape the very societal institutions we consider as natural evolutions of human civilization.

In attempting to focus on the ways in which Western philosophers have shaped Western civilization, this class works to frame modern politics in the context of its own philosophical canon. That is, we'll be focusing on comparative interpretations between what is considered canonical Western philosophy (including Plato, Sophocles, Marx, Locke, Nietzsche, Hobbes, and others), and the modern theorists that use said philosophy to ground their own work.

This class is meant to both emphasize the historical importance of interpretative methodologies, and the ways in which philosophical concepts can lead to hegemonies of thought (that, in turn, lead to the prevalence of certain political and societal practices).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- ✓ Recognize and analyze certain works of Western philosophical canon.
- ✓ Understand the historical genealogy of political thought as related to these thinkers.
- ✓ Analyze how modern political theorists interpret canonical works for their hypotheses/arguments.
- ✓ Be comfortable discussing political theory with peers.
- ✓ Be comfortable with presenting your own interpretations of political thought in a formal presentation.
- ✓ Cooperate with peers while designing a group presentation based off a rigorous analysis of political texts.

ORAL COMMUNICATION DESIGNATION

This course satisfies the UH Manoa General Education definition of an OC (Oral Communication) focus course. OC courses help students develop oral competencies as well as provide students with an environment within which they can better understand course content through structured discussions. UH Manoa undergraduates are required

to complete one (1) 3-credit OC course at the 300 or 400 level in order to meet graduation requirements.

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Discussion Participation (5% of final grade)

Classes will be conducted as hybrid lecture/seminars. While I will guide discussion and give brief presentations, you should be prepared to take an active role in analyzing the assigned readings/texts. To ensure that you are ready for discussion, please come to class with at least three questions or comments about the reading assignment.

Class participation will be graded weekly and released via the Lualima gradebook. Please see the attached rubric “Class Discussion Guidelines” for a more detailed grading system breakdown.

Class Discussion Lead (10% of final grade)

You’ll be responsible for starting off one class with a brief presentation, and then leading that class’s discussion. You can choose to prepare slides, an activity, questions, comments, short videos etc, that are topic appropriate to stimulate creative analysis. I’ll provide a sign-up sheet during the first week and we’ll go with that schedule for the semester.

Grades for class discussion leads will be uploaded to the Lualima gradebook the week of the presentation. Please see the attached rubric “Class Discussion Lead Guidelines” for a more detailed grading system breakdown.

Reading Responses x 4 (15% of final grade)

Throughout the semester, turn in **four** (4) weekly reading responses. While it’s up to you to choose *which* texts and concepts spark your interest, I’ll only accept responses during the week they’re discussed. So, that means, if you’d like to do a response to Plato’s *Republic*, you can only turn it in during the weeks we discuss Plato. As for content:

- 500 words, double spaced, Times New Roman (or easily read equivalent), MLA formatted with attached works cited.
- Use these reading responses to both further expound on issues discussed in class, and to tease out your own research interests pertaining to the midterm presentation and final paper.
- Turn in all reading responses by Sunday, midnight, via email (zvorsino@hawaii.edu).

Individual Presentation (20% of final grade)

Use any of the texts discussed in class (including those planned to be covered during the second half of the semester) to discuss and analyze a research topic of your choice. Two weeks prior to the presentation, email me with your topic and the texts you plan to use for approval.

As this is an OC focus class, your grade will take into account both the content of your presentation, and the presentation itself. Please see attached “Individual Presentation Guidelines” for more detailed grade requirements.

Group Presentation (30% of final grade)

You will be assigned to a group of your peers by the instructor the week after midterm presentations. You will work with this group to analyze and dissect in greater detail the arguments of one concept discussed in class (that is, a section of readings, as listed below). For instance, students assigned to the “State of Nature” section will review and analyze Hobbes’ Leviathan, Lockes’ Second Treatise, Fuller’s Speluncean Explorer’s Case, and Dayan’s the Law is a White Dog, and be able to discuss these texts in conjunction with current issues.

Please see “Group Presentation Guidelines” for a more specific grading system breakdown.

Final Paper (20% of final grade)

Your final paper will act as an extension of your group presentation. In an essay, review and analyze a text from an assigned section of the class. This essay should be:

- ✓ ~3000 words (approx.. 11 pages, double spaced)
- ✓ Properly cited, either in MLA or Chicago format (whichever you choose, keep it consistent)
- ✓ Rigorously researched, with a Works Cited that includes both in-class texts and at least four outside sources.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

GRADING

Class Discussion Participation	5%
Class Discussion Lead	10%
Individual Presentation	20%
Reading Responses	15%
Group Presentation	30%
Final Paper	20%
	100%

FORMATTING

MLA or Chicago formatting is required for all assignments. Include all URLs for web-based resources. Failure to appropriately cite sources results in an automatic point deduction. Some suggestions to make citation easier:

- **Zotero**
- **citationmachine.net**
- **bibme.org**

PLAGIARISM

There is zero tolerance for plagiarism in this class. If you're caught plagiarizing, you will be reported to the UH Office of Judicial Affairs and will receive a failing grade. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- The submission of any copied document from another individual without proper citation.
- The submission of the same document in more than one course without instructor permission.
- Neglecting to cite direct or paraphrased quotes using the proper format.

Please review the UH Student Conduct Code for further information at studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken daily. You can be absent up to 4 times **with prior notice** without affecting your grade. After that, total points will be docked 1% for every day absent. That is, if you finish the semester with a 93% and have five absences, your final grade will be 91 percent.

COMMUNICATION

I'll answer all emails pertinent to class within 24 hours except on weekends. Please use proper email etiquette when writing and responding to any email correspondence — while emojis are useful, and often vastly more entertaining forms of communication, they aren't acceptable for academic writing. To ensure that emails don't get lost in my increasingly chaotic inbox, begin with a subject line that includes your class, plus a word or two that describes your reason for writing (i.e.: POLS 335 Midterm Essay Question or POLS 335 Help).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you require accommodation, please let me know via email and contact the KOKUA program at (808) 956 – 7511 or at hawaii.edu/kokua.

ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES

UHM policy dictates that the faculty and students of UHM are provided consistent and equitable treatment in resolving disputes arising from the academic relationship

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between faculty and student(s). The applicability of this policy is limited to those issues directly associated and concomitant with the faculty member's responsibilities as a teacher and the students' responsibilities as a learner. Resources for students concerning academic grievances are available at <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/publichealth/students/resources-for-student-grievances>

COURSE SCHEDULE/REQUIRED TEXTS

This list represents an incomplete list of readings; a week-by-week schedule will be provided closer to Spring 2017. **This syllabus will be continuously updated to provide for augmented readings, schedules, and assignments.**

PART ONE: Law and Society (Week 1 – 4)

- Plato, *Republic*
- Sophocles, *Antigone*
- Bonnie Honig, *Antigone Interrupted*

PART TWO: State of Nature (Week 5 – 7)

- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
- John Locke, *Second Treatise*
- Lon L. Fuller, *The Case of the Speluncean Explorers*
- Colin Dayan, *The Law is a White Dog*

PART THREE: Marxism (Week 8 – 9)

- Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
- Nick Srinicek & Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future*
- Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminist Manifesto*

MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS:

PART FOUR: Nihilism (11 -12)

- Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*
- E.M. Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*
- Eugene Thacker, *In the Dust of This Planet*

PART FIVE: New Materialism & The Anthropocene (Weeks 13 – 16)

- Steven Shaviro, *The Universe of Things*
- Timothy Morton, *Hyberobjects*
- Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*