

POT 4601/5602 MASTERS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT
Fall 2007, Thursdays, 5:30-8:25 p.m., 51/152

Instructor: Dr. Cuzán

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Office Hours:

(It is best if you make an appointment ahead of time by calling 474-2337.)

M & W, noon – 4:00 p.m.

Thursdays (by appointment only for members of this class), 4:45-5:30 p.m.

F, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

At the heart of political science is the study of the what, the how, and the why of government. *What* is government? What are its distinctive characteristics? What does it do that is different from what other institutions or organizations do? What, in short, is its “business,” its *raison d’etre*? More to the point, *why* do we have government at all? Why did it come into being? Is government, like death, ultimately unavoidable, or can there be society without government? Finally, *how* does government operate, with what instruments? How does it make and implement decisions? How, in short, does politics work?

Inquiring into these questions forces us to think about human nature. Is there such a thing as human nature, which implies a set of fixed attributes, including needs and proclivities characteristic of human beings which lead them inexorably into establishing or imposing government? Are human beings “hard-wired” for government? What human needs does it fulfill? Can those needs be satisfied in any other way? Given government, how does the exercise of its powers affect human beings, those who make decisions no less than those subject to them?

This course surveys what several masters of political thought have written about these questions over the last four centuries. The objectives of this course are that you think hard about the same topics they did, comparing and contrasting their ideas with each other, using them as a foil against which to formulate your own thoughts about government and politics. Please note, though, that political science is an empirical (or practical) science. That is, the answers that we give to these questions must be, at least in principle, subject to empirical testing. They must conform to the known facts, to direct or indirect observations, or to experience.

The format of the course is a mixture of lecture and discussion. *You are expected to come to class having read the assignment and prepared to ask and answer questions and deliberate about it.*

Requirements

This course is dual-listed, admitting both undergraduate and graduate students. You will be graded according to two categories of work. One includes three essays and the other encompasses what I call Preparation and Contribution or P&C.

Preparation & Contribution (P&C).

As noted earlier, you are expected to come to class having read the assignment. To insure that this requirement is met, you will write a summary of the reading assignment of no more than 300 words. Each summary should begin with a dense sentence in which you convey the principal points made by the author in a clear and coherent fashion. In the first paragraph you will expand on that sentence and in the rest of the page you will enlarge on the first paragraph. Think of the summary essay as a tree in which the first sentence stands for the tap-root, the first paragraph for the trunk, and the rest for the branches. The summaries are due in the drop box no later than 5:25 p.m. on Thursday. Additionally, you will bring a copy of the summary to class.

Every week you will be assigned a P&C grade of between 0 and 100 as follows. Starting from a base of 80, I will (1) subtract 40 points if you're absent, 40 points if you do not upload a summary, and 80 points if both are true and (2) *if* you are not absent and *if* you posted a summary of the reading, I will add up to 20 points depending on the quantity and, especially, the quality of your contributions to the discussion of the readings for the week. In short, if you come to class and do all your summaries satisfactorily, you earn 80 points that week. If, in addition, you make a meaningful contribution to the discussion you can earn up to a total of 100 points per week.

The essays.

The other graded category consists of essays. These are the equivalent of exams. If you are an **undergraduate**, you will write three of them. The first two essays will run 6-7 pages of text (typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman #12 font or its equivalent, exclusive of title page, tables, figures, and bibliography). The first essay will compare and evaluate key ideas in Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Locke's *Second Treatise*; the second will compare and evaluate **either** Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* and Hobbes' *Leviathan* **or** Locke's *Second Treatise* and Rousseau's *Social Contract*; and the third essay will compare and evaluate Marx & Engel's *Communist Manifesto* and Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*.

If you are a **graduate** student (or an undergraduate student taking this course for honors credit), you will write four essays: the same three essays as the undergraduates, only they will run 9-10 pages each, plus one synthetic essay the requirements for which will be specified in due course. It goes without saying that not only the quantity of your work but its quality should be superior to that of an undergraduate student.

On the e-learning page for this course I will post a format for the essays. Be sure to abide by it.

Course Grade

All the essays are weighted equally, and P&C counts as much as an essay. Thus, for the

undergraduate students, each essay, as well as P&C, will count 25%, and for the graduate students, 20%.

Texts

The following texts are available for purchase at the bookstore.

Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*

John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government*

J. J. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*

J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

F. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*

Additionally, I will assign an on-line, freely downloadable edition of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, by K. Marx and F. Engels.

Although the volume of reading required in this course is not great, much of the material is difficult. It is *not* bedtime reading. You need to read it at a time of day when you are alert, and you will need to read it more than once.

Integrity

It goes without saying, but it bears repeating anyway, that anyone enrolled in this course makes a commitment to act with integrity. As the home page of the Department of Government puts it, this means “conducting ourselves honorably, conspicuously refraining from lying or cheating about our work. There can be no phony excuses for failing to complete an assignment, no turning in another’s work as one’s own, no plagiarism.” Anyone found to have violated this expectation is subject to being assessed a penalty up to and including being assigned an F in the course and reported to university authorities for additional action.

Regarding the last-named offense, here is UWF’s plagiarism policy: “The UWF Student Handbook, Code of Student Conduct, Academic Misconduct, states: ‘Plagiarism. The act of representing the ideas, words, creations or work of another as one’s own.’ Plagiarism combines theft with fraud, and the penalty is correspondingly severe: failure for the assignment and, in some cases, for the entire course. At the instructor’s discretion, she/he may recommend that the student be suspended from the university. Ignorance of the rules about plagiarism is no excuse for it, and carelessness is just as bad as purposeful violation. Students who have plagiarized have cheated themselves out of the experience of being responsible members of the academic community and have cheated their classmates by pretending to contribute original ideas.” (For additional information on plagiarism, go the UWF’s home page, click on keyword search, and enter “plagiarism policy” (in quotation marks), which allows you to download a word document several pages long.) Plagiarism will be penalized with an "F" for the course.

Student Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct sets forth the rules, regulations and expected behavior of students enrolled at the University of West Florida. Violations of any rules, regulations, or behavioral expectations may result in a charge of violating the Student Code of Conduct. It is the students' responsibility to read the Student Code of Conduct and conduct themselves accordingly. You may access the current Student Code of Conduct at <http://www.uwf.edu/judicialaffairs>.

Disability Services

Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), dss@uwf.edu, (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS
(subject to change with notice)

Week 1 (August 30 th)	Introduction to the course. It is highly likely that I will be away at a conference on this day, in which case the class will not meet. Instead, read the syllabus carefully and familiarize yourself with the e-learning page for this course. If I do not attend the conference, I will so inform you by e-mail. <i>Be sure to review your e-mail in-box the day before class for a message from me. The same message will be posted on the announcements page of the e-learning page for the course.</i>
Week 2 (September 6 th)	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chs. 10, 11, and 13-19.
Week 3 (September 13 th)	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chs. 20, 21, 23-26, 29-30.
Week 4 (September 20 th)	Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters I–III, V–VIII
Week 5 (September 27 th)	Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters IX–XIX
Week 6 (October 4 th)	NO CLASS. Essay #1 due in drop box no later than 11:45 p.m. No late essays accepted, no excuses allowed.
Week 7 (October 11 th)	Rousseau, <i>Discourse</i> , pp. 1 – end
Week 8 (October 18 th)	Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i>
Week 9 (October 25 th)	Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i>
Week 10 (November 1 st)	NO CLASS. Essay #2 due in drop box no later than 11:45 p.m. No late essays accepted, no excuses allowed.
Week 11 (November 8 th)	Marx & Engels, <i>The Manifesto of the Communist Party</i> Edition TBA
Week 12 (November 15 th)	F. A. Hayek, <i>Road to Serfdom</i> , Introduction and Chs. 1-5
Week 13 (November 22 nd)	NO CLASS. Thanksgiving.
Week 14 (November 29 th)	Hayek, <i>Road to Serfdom</i> , Chs. 6-10.

Week 15 (December 6th) Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, Chs. 11-16.

Week 16th (December 13th) NO CLASS. Essay #3 (and for graduate students, Essay #4, as well) due in drop box no later than 11:45 p.m. No late essays accepted, no excuses allowed.