

## PROPOSAL FOR COURSE CHANGE

**To:** Curriculum Committee  
**From:** Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
**Date submitted:** 19 September 2007  
**Request for:** Course Creation  
**Submitted by:** H. Micheal Tarver  
**Approved by:** Department Head: H. Micheal Tarver  
 Dean of School: H. Duncan  
**Reviewed by:** Registrar: Gammy Gooder  
 Vice President: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Catalog description: *Survey of Western Political Thought*. An introduction to the subfield of political theory, examining the works of major political thinkers from ancient Greece to the present.

Number: POLS 2253

Title for Catalog: Survey of Western Political Thought

\*Title for Course Inventory (24 characters): Western Political Thought

Description: As an introduction to the subfield of political theory, this course uses the works of major political thinkers from ancient Greece to the present to introduce students to the diverse history of Western political thought. The purpose of the course is to introduce students to the basic questions and key political concepts (such as justice, power, authority, and freedom) central to the discipline of political science.

Effective date or term: Summer One 2008

\*Course fees: NONE

## II. Justification and feasibility of course:

- A. What is the need for this course? Who will take it? *This course will serve as a lower-level elective course for students who have an interest in political philosophy. The course will also be a required course for the Political Science minor.*
- B. How does it relate to other work being offered by your department? Is there an overlap with other courses in the department? *The creation of Survey of Western Political Thought will strengthen the offerings of the Social Sciences and Philosophy Department by further broadening the variety of courses being offered. There would be no overlap with other courses in the department.*
- C. Is this course part of any general plan of development within your department? Explain. *Yes. The Department is attempting to broaden its offerings, in an effort to add greater depth and breadth*

Labeled CC 10/22/07  
 App CC 11/19/07

App FS 12/3/07

*to its courses. This course strengthens the Department's efforts at achieving the goals established by the History and Political Science Program Objectives – as detailed in the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy Assessment Plan and the National Council for the Social Studies Matrices.*

- D. How often will the course be offered? *This course will be offered every two years.*
- E. How will the course be staffed? *Dr. Michael Rogers, Assistant Professor of Political Science, will have primary responsibility to teach all new political theory courses. Dr. Jeff Mitchell, Professor of Philosophy, has agreed to be a backup for the various political theory courses.*
- F. When applicable, state with which departments you have specifically coordinated this change? (If unable to identify coordinating departments that change affects, Academic Affairs can offer assistance in identifying course use.)

List Department Head/  
Program Director Consulted:  
(Add to list as needed)

Indicate Support  
for Proposal  
(yes/no)

Date:

1. NONE

If no, please attach explanation from responding Department Head indicating why they do not support the proposal.

**Assessment Note:** *While this course does not directly relate to any specific departmental assessment goal, it does provide an additional course through which the department can continue to assess its students, both majors and non-majors. In specific, the course could be used to assess verbal and written communication skills and the ability to analyze, critique, and synthesize primary and secondary sources. The Departmental Assessment Committee will evaluate the course with the instructor to determine how best to incorporate the class into the Department's efforts at assessment. This course will also help build the Political Science program, as the Department moves toward the eventual creation of a B.S in Political Science.*

\*Updated 8/1/04  
\*\*Updated 9/1/05

# Survey of Western Political Thought

## Course Description

The Survey of Western Political Thought is designed to introduce the student to a sampling of major works and thinkers in the history of Western political thought. As a result, the course moves quickly, covering a time span that begins with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. of Ancient Greece and ends in the contemporary era with a work by Herbert Marcuse. In this course, students will be introduced to a) the important role theory and ideas play in shaping the political system, b) the stockpile of political knowledge that is the foundation for the discipline of political science, c) a general understanding of key trends and tendencies the classical, modern, and contemporary political eras, and d) the origins of key concepts and principles that still play an important role in our political system today.

## Required Readings

- 1) Marcuse, Herbert. *One-dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Beacon Press, 1964.
- 2) All other readings can be found online. The web sites are given in the course outline. **Note:** *If clicking on the link does not open it, try cutting and pasting the address into your web browser. It is also highly recommended that the student print out a hard copy to bring to class for referencing.*

## Optional Readings

- 1) Wiser, James L. *Political Philosophy: A History of the Search For Order*. Prentice Hall, 1983.  
**Note:** This is an optional text that is meant to be a supplement to the actual readings. This text helps explain the contexts in which the writings were produced, as well as highlights the key concepts and principles used and developed by most of the political thinkers covered in this course. ***This text is highly recommended for anyone in the course who is struggling to follow the readings.***

## Course Requirements

- 1) There are **two** major exams, a mid-term and a final exam. Each will comprise 20% of the overall grade. The final exam is not a cumulative exam, although students are encouraged to use information, ideas, and concepts from the first half of the course on the final. **(2 exams: 40%)**
- 2) Each week the student will have a quiz to take online through BlackBoard. Quizzes will comprise 20% of the student's overall grade. Over the course of the semester, the student will have the opportunity to take 12 quizzes, so the lowest 2 quiz grades will be dropped from the calculation of the student's overall quiz grade. **(Best 10 of 12 possible quizzes: 20%)**
- 3) After completing the readings on the Ancient Greeks, the Contract Theorists, and Modern Ideologies, essay questions will be handed out. The student is to write a 4-5 pp. (12 point font Times New Roman double-spaced) essay using the texts to answer the questions. The essays may be handed in at class or e-mailed to the instructor by midnight on the date due. The essays comprise 20% of the overall grade. The student is encouraged to write all 3 essays, but the final essay grade will be based on his/her 2 highest essay grades. **(2 of 3 possible essays: 20%)**
- 4) Students will be broken into groups and periodically assigned the responsibility for leading the class discussions. The group will be responsible for a) providing any background historical context that is applicable and b) developing 4 or 5 questions to direct class analysis and discussion of key elements of the philosopher's theory and arguments. Groups are expected to meet prior to class to prepare. Each group will be responsible for leading 2 class discussions. Development of powerpoints, handouts, etc. is highly encouraged. **(Participation in Groups: 10%)**
- 5) The remaining 10% of the student's grade is based on attendance and participation. Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences. Any additional absences without a documented excuse will result in a deduction of the student's attendance grade. **(Attendance: 10%)**

## Course Outline

### **Section I: Classical Political Thought**

#### **Part A. The Ancient Greeks**

- Jan. 18 Introduction  
The History of Western Political Thought
- Jan. 20 Plato. *The Republic*. Book I & II  
<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight Jan. 21.**
- Jan. 25 Plato. *The Republic*. Book III & IV
- Jan. 27 Plato. *The Republic*. Book V & VI  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight Jan. 28.**
- Feb. 1 Plato. *The Republic*. Book VII & VIII  
Recommended reading: Books IX & X
- Feb. 3 Aristotle. *The Politics*. Book 1 & 3  
<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight Feb. 4**
- Feb. 8 Aristotle. *The Politics*. Book 4 & 5
- Feb. 10 Aristotle. *The Politics*. Book 6  
**First paper topic assigned.**  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight Feb. 11.**
- Feb. 15 The Hellenistic Age  
*Political Philosophy*, Chapter 3

#### **Part B. Christian Theology**

- Feb. 17 St. Augustine and Early Christianity  
*Political Philosophy*, Chapter 4  
**First paper due.**  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight Feb. 18.**
- Feb. 22 St. Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Christianity  
*Political Philosophy*, Chapter 5

#### **Part C. The Origins of Modernity**

- Feb. 24 Machiavelli. *The Prince*. Introductory Letter and Sections I-XIV  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/machiavelli/works/prince/>  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight Feb. 25.**
- March 1 Machiavelli. *The Prince*. Sections XV-XXVI
- March 3 **Mid-term exam**

## Section II: Modernity

### Part A. The Contract Theorists

- March 15      Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Book I, Chapters 1-9  
<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>
- March 17      Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Book I, Chapters 10-16  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight March 18.**
- March 22      Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Book II, Chapters 17-24
- March 24      Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Book II, Chapters 25-31  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight March 25.**
- March 29      Locke. *The Second Treatise on Government*. Chapters I-VIII  
<http://www.liberty1.org/2dtreat.htm>
- March 31      Locke. *The Second Treatise on Government*. Chapters VIII-XIX  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight April 1.**
- April 5        Rousseau. *On the Social Contract*. Book I & II  
<http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm>
- April 7        Rousseau. *On the Social Contract*. Book III  
**Second paper topic assigned.**  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight April 8.**

### Part B. Modern philosophical ideologies

- April 12      Mill. *On Liberty*. Chapter I & II  
<http://www.bartleby.com/130/>
- April 14      Mill. *On Liberty*. Chapter III & IV  
**Second paper topic due.**  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight April 15.**
- April 19      Marx & Engel. *The Communist Manifesto*  
<http://marx.thefreelibrary.com/Communist-Manifesto>  
**Third paper topic assigned.**

## Section III: The Contemporary Period

- April 21      Marcuse. *One-dimensional Man*. Chapters 1-3  
**Third paper topic due.**  
**Quiz to be completed on BlackBoard by midnight April 22.**
- April 26      Marcuse. *One-dimensional Man*. Chapters 4-7
- April 28      Marcuse. *One-dimensional Man*. Chapters 8-10

**Final exam on Wednesday, May 4 from 2-3:50 PM.**

## Bibliography

1. Jenkins, Thomas. *The Nature and Objects of Political Theory* (1955).
2. Kateb, George. *The Uses of Political Theory* (1968).
3. McClelland, J.S. *A History of Western Political Thought* (1996).
4. Nelson, Brian R. *Western Political Thought: From Socrates to the Age of Ideology (Second Edition)* (1996, 1982).
5. Sabine, George. *What is a Political Theory?* (1939).
6. Shklar, Judith. *Political Thought & Political Thinkers* (1988).
7. Strauss, Leo & Joseph Cropsey (Editors). *History of Political Philosophy (Third Edition)* (1987).
8. Strauss, Leo. *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies* (1988, 1959).
9. Vincent, Andrew. *The Nature of Political Theory* (2007)
10. Wiser, James L. *Political Philosophy: A History of the Search for Order.* (1983).
11. Wolin, Sheldon. *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (2004).
12. Zeitlin, Irving. *Rulers and Ruled: An Introduction to Classical Political Thought from Plato to the Federalists* (1997).

## **Addendum to Survey of Western Political Thought Syllabus**

### **Course Objectives**

- 1) To provide an introduction to the history of Western political thought,
- 2) To introduce students to the core philosophical questions (e.g., what is the good life, what is the ideal government, who should rule, etc.) and concepts (e.g., justice, liberty, equality, power, democracy, aristocracy, monarchy, etc.) used in political theory and political science, and
- 3) To develop the students' skills as critical thinkers so they are better able to rationally evaluate the political system in which they live.
- 4) Academically, this course meets an upper-level elective requirement for a history and political science major, history education major, or a political science minor.