

Intro to Political Theory (POL2110)  
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Political Science  
Tuesday and Friday: 12.30 – 2.10  
Office Hours: 2.30 – 4.00  
Social Science 1032

## **Intro to Political Theory**

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### 1. Course Description:

When a politician invokes the concept of freedom, what do they mean? Or, when an activist lodges claims in the name of justice, to what standard do they appeal? How have “essentially contested concepts” of liberty, equality, justice, right, security shaped our politics, both historically and in the present moment? This course will offer a survey of canonical political theory, from the ancient polis to today’s digitally networked world, in an effort to interrogate the meaning and influence of political concepts, ideas, and values across time in ways that continue to impact how we see, speak of, and engage with our current world. In particular, we will explore topics such as justice, citizenship, law, leadership, society, contracts, property, debt, morality, race, labor, revolution, freedom, resistance, and sovereignty. Organized by historical epoch, we consider how political theory emerged in the past, how it shapes our present, and how it opens possible futures.

### 2. Course Objectives:

Completion of this course will provide a survey of canonical Western political theory. It will also introduce you to the non-Western ideas and cultures that shaped this tradition. In so doing, it will equip you with a theoretical and conceptual basis for analyzing competing claims to essentially contested concepts. Completion will grant a sustained reflection on the living legacy of political theory in our contemporary world. Finally, skills such as critical reading, analytical writing, and collaborative discussion will be developed, reinforced, and expanded.

### 3. Required Texts and Editions:

It is not enough to simply buy any old copy of the books below, you must also buy the specified edition. Unsure how to buy it? Copy and paste the ISBN number provided into Google to locate multiple suppliers. You will need the first by Week Three.

1. Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Second Edition. Trans. Harvey Mansfield. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998)
  - ISBN: 0-226-50044-6
2. Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The Early Philosophic and Economic Manuscripts of Karl Marx and The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Martin Milligan (Amherst, MA: Prometheus Books, 1988).
  - ISBN: 0-87975-446-X
3. Anderson, William C. *The Nation on No Map: Black Anarchism and Abolition* (Chico and Edinburgh: AK Press, 2021).
  - ISBN: 978-1-84935-434-9
  - <https://www.akpress.org/nationonnomap.html>

All other required texts are available on Perusall, accessible on the course Moodle page.

### 4. Grading (see below for details):

Attendance & Class Participation: 25%	First Paper: 10%
Perusall Annotation & Book Responses: 25%	Second Paper: 15%
	Final Paper: 25%

### 5. Attendance and Class Participation:

This class will be a discussion-driven exploration of our topics of study. Your attendance and participation is essential to the success of this experiment in learning. Attendance means being present in class, having read the assigned course materials that you also have with you to reference. Participation means verbal contributions to class discussion that refers us to a passage in the text, a concept or idea that is under discussion, and/or a question regarding the aforementioned. You are expected to participate every class.

#### *Absences & Zoom*

I know 18 - 22 year olds are not the most health conscious cohort - at least I wasn't at your age. However, now is the time to err on the side of caution. So, if you have a cough, runny nose, sore throat, even just a tickle in your throat, "allergies," or just

feel "off," then **STAY HOME**. You will **NOT** be penalized for prioritizing the health and wellness of your peers.

On such days, if, though likely *as*, they arise, I will make class available in a hybrid manner for any affected student. Simply attend remotely via Zoom if you feel you may even have the hint of something resembling illness. A Zoom link will be easily accessible on the course Moodle page.

However, attending via Zoom is not to become a norm. It is a stop-gap measure to allow us to safely remain in-person. Should you find yourself routinely attending through Zoom without prior consultation with me, this will negatively impact your grade.

#### 6. Perusall Annotations and Book Responses:

Reading the assigned course materials is essential to a successful course. To this end, you are required to do the readings on Perusall, where you are expected to make at least four (4) *substantive annotations* per reading. **Perusall annotations a due on the night before class, by 8pm.**

A substantive annotation can take many forms:

1) Asks a deep question, i.e., “When X says ‘y,’ do they they mean ‘x’ or ‘z’. If ‘x,’ then I think that ‘a,b,c’ follows. If ‘z,’ then I think that ‘d,e,f’ follows.”

Not: “What does this mean?”

2) Makes a deep connection to a previous text or author, i.e., “This reminds me of X, where they argue ‘a,b,c,’ only here the claim is ‘x,y,z.’ I think this formulation is better because ‘1,2,3.’”

Not: “This reminds me of ‘x’.”

3) Poses a hypothetical reply to a passage informed by previous readings or the text’s on premises, i.e., “When X claims ‘a,b,c,’ they do so on the basis of positing ‘1,’ but if we instead take ‘2’ to be our beginning premise, then we see that ‘d,e,f’ follows, which better explains the phenomenon X theorizes.”

Not: “But what about ‘x’?”

4) Extends the argument, i.e., “When X argues ‘a,b,c,’ they do so by addressing phenomenon no. 1. If we apply this argument to phenomenon no. 2, then we can see how ‘a,b,c’ provides a way of understanding ‘x,y,z’ about it that otherwise we would not notice or appreciate.”

Not: “This is old and dated and doesn’t apply to our world anymore.”

5) Puts a complex and possibly unclear portion of the argument in more accessible language, i.e., “When X says, ‘a,b,c,’ they are saying ‘a1,b1,c1.’”

Not: “‘a’ means ‘a’.”

For the books assigned, you are required to **post a response to the assigned reading for each class on the Moodle discussion board by 8pm the night before class.** These responses should take the form of the annotations detailed above and include the page numbers of the passages engaged. There are 13 classes where we will read from books; Discussion Board responses are required for 11. Those who post response to all 13 can choose which 11 will count toward their grade.

**7 (a). First Paper—Critical Reconstruction of an Argument:**

The first written assignment will be 750 – 1000 words in length (approximately 3-4 double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font, **margins justified** pages). Papers either over or under this range will not receive full consideration. The goal of this essay is to reconstruct an argument encountered in the readings and to conclude with a critical evaluation of the argument thus reconstructed. The format of this essay is 75% reconstruction, 25% critical evaluation. To explain the argument here means to reconstruct the argument by clearly stating in your own words its explicit and implicit premises and conclusions. To evaluate the argument means to assess the validity of its premises as well as whether the conclusions follow from its premises. Specific paper prompts will be released in advance.

**7 (b). Second Paper: Critical Reconstruction of an Argument**

The second written assignment will be 1000 – 1500 words in length (approximately 4 – 6 double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font, **margins justified** pages). Papers either over or under this range will not receive full consideration. The goal of this essay shares with the first in being to reconstruct an argument encountered in the readings on ideology and to conclude with a critical evaluation of the argument thus reconstructed. However, you are also expected to incorporate any feedback given in the first paper. The format of this essay is 75% reconstruction, 25% critical evaluation. To explain the argument here means to reconstruct the argument by clearly stating in your own words its explicit and implicit premises and conclusions. To evaluate the argument means to assess the validity of its premises as well as whether the conclusions follow from its premises. Specific paper prompts will be released in advance.

**7 (c). Final Paper: Critical Construction of an Original Argument**

The objective of the final paper assignment is to provide you with the opportunity to construct an original argument using the materials from this course. The final written assignment will 1750 – 2250 words in length (approximately 7 – 9 double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font, and **margins justified** pages). Papers either over or under this range will not receive full consideration.

The goal of this essay is to critically construct an original argument informed by engagement with readings in the class. Specific paper prompts will be released in advance.

8. Intellectual Honesty/Plagiarism:

Simply: *do not* plagiarize. If there are any questions whatsoever about the proper way to cite a source, please consult me or the resources provided by the Learning Center. Plagiarism will lead to automatic failure of the course and will be referred to the College administration for additional sanction.

Learning Center Resources:

<https://www.purchase.edu/offices/learning-center/handouts-and-links/>

9. Unwavering Expectations for Respectful Discourse and Conduct:

Under no circumstances will disrespectful discourse or conduct be welcome in our classroom. We will treat one another with respect, patience, and understanding. Learning inherently involves the risk of allowing knowledge to change your life, and this requires courage. We will all exercise an unwavering commitment to encouraging one another in this process.

*Mask Policy*

**Not all masks are created equal.**

TIME IT TAKES TO TRANSMIT AN INFECTIOUS DOSE OF COVID-19

		PERSON NOT INFECTED IS WEARING			
		NOTHING	CLOTH MASK	SURGICAL MASK	N95 MASK
PERSON INFECTED IS WEARING	NOTHING	15 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes	2.5 hours
	CLOTH MASK	20 minutes	27 minutes	40 minutes	3.3 hours
	SURGICAL MASK	30 minutes	40 minutes	1 hour	5 hours
	N95 MASK	2.5 hours	3.3 hours	5 hours	25 hours

The best line of defense we have against transmission is proper masking.

To this end, an N-95 masks must be properly worn at all times, fully covering nose and mouth, and double masking, per CDC guidance, is strongly encouraged.

Should you not have an N-95 mask, one will be provided for you, which you will be expected to wear properly.

Please consult this video for how to properly wear an N-95 mask:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNkdHbYu6Mw>

There will be no food or drinks allowed in class.

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If you anticipate that honoring this policy will be a problem for you, then this is not the right class for you to take at this time.

10. Accessibility Statement:

The Office of Disability Resources collaborates directly with students who identify documented disabilities to create accommodation plans, including testing accommodations, in order for students to access course content and validly demonstrate learning. For those students who may require accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources as soon as possible, 914-251-6035, ODR@purchase.edu (Student Services Building, #316A), [www.purchase.edu/odr](http://www.purchase.edu/odr).

11. Schedule:

**Political Theories Past**

**Week One: What is Justice?**

Tuesday, February 1, 2022 - Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, “The Melian Dialogue,” Book 5, 84 - 116 (pp. 350 - 357: 7 pages)

Friday, February 4, 2022 - Plato’s *Apology* (pp. 17 - 35: 18 pages)

**Week Two: Citizenship**

Tuesday, February 8, 2022 - Aristotle’s *Politics*, Book VI, 2 - 3 and Book III, 1 - 8 (pp. 145 - 147, 52 - 63: 13 pages)

Friday, February 11, 2022 - Aristotle’s *Politics*, Book III, 9 - 18 (pp. 63 - 83: 20 pages).

**Week Three: Constitutions / Foundations**

Tuesday, February 15, 2022 - Aristotle’s *Politics*, Book IV, 1 - 2, 4 - 9, 11 - 12 (pp. 83 - 85, 87 - 101: 16 pages.)

Friday, February 18, 2022 - Machiavelli’s *Prince* - Dedicatory Letter, Ch. 1, Ch. 5 - 8 (pp. 3 - 6, 20 - 38: 21 pages).

**Week Four: Political Leadership**

Tuesday, February 22, 2022 Machiavelli’s *Prince* - Ch. 9 - 10, 14 - 19 (pp. 38 - 44, 58 - 82: 26 pages)

Friday, February 25, 2022 Machiavelli’s *Prince* - Ch. 21 - 26 (pp. 83 - 106: 26 pages)

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**Political Theories Present**

**Week Five: States of Nature and Social Contracts**

Tuesday, March 1, 2022 - Hobbes *Leviathan*: Book One, Ch. 13 - 14 (pp. 74 - 88: 14 pages).

**First Short Paper Due**

Friday, March 4, 2022 - Hobbes *Leviathan* - Part One, Ch. 16, Part 2, Ch. 17 - 18 (pp. 101 - 118: 17 pages).

**Week Six: States of Nature and Social Contracts, Continued**

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 - Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, Ch. 4 and 5 (pp. 283 - 302: 19 pages).

Friday, March 11, 2022 - Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, Ch. 7 - 9 (pp. 323 - 353: 30 pages).

**Week Seven: Moralities of Debt and Subjugation**

Tuesday, March 15, 2022 – Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, “Second Essay: ‘Guilt,’ ‘Bad Conscience,’ and the Like,” Sect. 1 - 12 (pp. 57 -79: 22 pages)

Friday, March 18, 2022 – Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, “Second Essay: ‘Guilt,’ ‘Bad Conscience,’ and the Like,” Sect. 13 - 24 (79 - 96: 17 pages).

**Week Eight: Economics of Debt and Subjugation / Life in the Veil**

Tuesday, March 22, 2022 - DuBois, *On the Souls of Black Folk*, Ch. 7 - 8 (pp. 103 - 132: 31 pages).

Friday, March 25, 2022 - DuBois *On the Souls of Black Folk* Ch. 1, 9, 13 (pp. 37 - 44, 133 - 147, 172 - 184: 33 pages).

**Political Theories Future**

**Week Nine: Revolutionary Organizing, Emancipatory Critique**

Tuesday, March 29, 2022 - Marx & Engels, “The Manifesto of the Communist Party,” pp. 203 - 243 (40 pages), however I want you to really only focus on pp. 208 - 231 (23 pages).

**Second Short Paper Due**

Friday, April 1, 2022 - Marx *Early Philosophical Manuscripts*, “Alienated Labor” & “Power of Money in Bourgeois Society” (pp. 69 - 84, 135 - 140: 20 pages).

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**Week Ten: Revolutionary Organizing, Emancipatory Critique**

Tuesday, April 5, 2022 - *Early Philosophical Manuscripts*, “The Meaning of Human Requirements” (pp. 115 - 134: 19 pages)

Friday, April 8, 2022 - *Early Philosophical Manuscripts*, “Private Property and Communism,” pp. 99 - 114 (13 pages).

**Week Eleven–Spring Break**

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 – Use Spring Break to get started on Anderson’s *The Nation on No Map*.

Friday, April 15, 2022 – Use Spring Break to get started on Anderson’s *The Nation on No Map*.

**Week Twelve: Black Anarchism and Abolition**

Tuesday, April 19, 2022 Anderson, *The Nation on No Map*, Introduction - Ch. 1 (pp. xxi - 38: 47 pages). Use Spring Break to get started!

Friday, April 22, 2022 Anderson, *The Nation on No Map*, Ch. 2 (pp. 39 - 66: 26 pages).

**Week Thirteen: Black Anarchism and Abolition**

Tuesday, April 26, 2022 Anderson, *The Nation on No Map* Ch. 3 (pp. 67 - 94: 26 pages).

Friday, April 29, 2022 Anderson, *The Nation on No Map*, Ch. 4 (pp. 95 - 118: 23 pages).

**Week Fourteen: Black Anarchism and Abolition**

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 - Anderson, *The Nation on No Map*, Ch. 5 (pp. 119 - 158: 39 pages).

Friday, May 6, 2022 - Anderson, *The Nation on No Map*, Ch. 6 (pp. 159 - 185: 26 pages).

**Week Fifteen: Indigenous Resistance**

Tuesday, May 10, 2022 - Glen Coulthard, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. “Grounded Normativity / Place-Based Solidarity” *American Quarterly*, Volume 68, Number 2, June 2016, pp. 249-255.

Friday, May 13, 2022 - Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller, Noenoe K. Silva. “Sharks and Pigs: Animating Hawaiian Sovereignty against the Anthropological Machine.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 1 April 2011; 110 (2): 429–446. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-1162525>

**Final Papers Due: Wednesday, May 18, 2022**