

PSCI 145: Political Philosophy
(Spring 2021)

This is a draft syllabus and is subject to change

Instructor: Dr. Haskins
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Class: MWF 9:20am-10:30am (Armerding 132)

Student Hours: MWF 1-2pm, TH 1-3pm

Department Mission Statement:

The mission of the Department of Politics and International Relations is to equip students with knowledge about politics and government, with methods for analyzing political actors and institutions, and with the ability to apply biblical and theological perspectives to public life.

i. Course Overview and Objectives

What is politics? How does it relate to human nature and human flourishing? What is legitimate political and non-political (i.e. familial, religious, etc.) authority? What is the relationship between politics, freedom, and justice? Under what circumstances can political systems be challenged, reformed, or overthrown, altogether? In this course, we will seriously consider—from a distinctly Christian perspective—how key authors like Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Tocqueville, DuBois, and Gandhi, among others, answered these questions and the degree to which we might find these arguments persuasive (or not) as they bear on both Christian faith and practice in the world. Some key themes we will explore include human nature, virtue, faith, sovereignty, equality, representation, revolution, and liberty. Through dialogue and writing, students will develop their ability to (1) assess the claims of central texts in the history of political thought in a charitable, yet critical, manner and (2) develop nuanced political arguments through dialogue and writing. In so doing, students will develop a nuanced view of the history of political thought—both within and outside of the global church.

Additionally, this course aims to improve your ability to:

- **Interpret** significant primary philosophical texts subtly and critically, with sensitivity to their logical structure and role in a tradition of thought (PI)
- **Communicate** cogent arguments in defense of philosophical positions, including examining and responding to potential objections (PI)
- **Assess** the merits of varied answers to perennial philosophical questions, recognizing their implications for Christian faith and practice (PI)
- **Demonstrate** understanding of the concepts, theories, and methods employed by political theorists to document and interpret patterns of social phenomena and human behavior (SI)
- **Analyze** social phenomena and human behavior using relevant concepts, theories, and methods of theoretical analysis (SI)
- **Articulate** how analyses of social phenomena and human behavior can shape and be shaped by Christian faith and practice (SI)

ii. Required Texts

Physical copies of the following texts will be available for purchase via the bookstore. Please use these editions of the texts. If you have issues obtaining these texts, please contact me as soon as possible. I will upload the other readings to Schoology.

- Plato, *The Republic*, ed. Bloom (Basic Books)
- Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Gourevitch (Cambridge)
- Gandhi, *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Dalton (Hackett)

iii. Assignments and Grading

Attendance and Participation

20 %

Regular class attendance and active participation facilitate both course learning objectives: critically (though charitably) assessing and formulating original arguments concerning themes within these texts. Thus, attendance and participation in class is mandatory. Absences due to personal emergencies, illness, or other legitimate causes will be excused with advanced notice and proper documentation (e.g. a letter or email from your doctor), where applicable. In light of the ongoing pandemic, class attendance may (at a later point) operate in a “dual modality” format as follows: the class will be divided into two, evenly distributed groups. Group A will meet in-person (with Group B online) on Wednesdays and Group B will meet in-person (with Group A online) on Fridays. Mondays will alternate in-person meeting with Group A in-person in one week (Group B online) and Group B in-person the following week (Group A online). In-person students are expected to log into Zoom for the duration of class discussion and to mute both their Zoom and their computer microphone unless speaking. Online students need only mute their Zoom. Occasional small group work will be done via Zoom breakout rooms. During remote learning (the first few weeks), we will conduct class by Zoom. If Zoom malfunctions, discussion may move fully to Schoology discussion boards and small group work may be done via Google Docs. All classes will be recorded and uploaded to Schoology for students who cannot attend synchronously (e.g. due to time zones, sickness). All students—regardless of synchronous or asynchronous attendance—must submit discussion posts to Schoology which are comprised of (1) a relevant quote from the reading (50-75 words max) and analysis of that quote (100 words max) by midnight (CST) the day of our synchronous class session. Good participation reflects quantity *and* quality of in-class comments (in Zoom or in the Zoom chat) and discussion posts. Students are expected to come to class with texts readily available, having done the reading, posted a relevant quotation/analysis on the discussion board beforehand, and prepared for respectful and substantive discussion. Students are encouraged to monitor the Zoom Chat and bring attention to unaddressed questions or comments that are pertinent to course themes. During the in-person portions of class, after students enter and before they exit the class, they must clean their desks and chairs with available disinfectants. In-person students will be dismissed in a staggered manner each class to lower the chance of transmission. Laptops and accommodation technology are allowed only for course-related activities; other observed activities will result in a grade reduction. Office hours will be conducted online via Zoom. Students can sign up by clicking on the “Student Hours” link above. I am available in office hours for any student (or pair of students) wishing to discuss methods for engaging more effectively in class discussion or for securing a means to access Zoom and Schoology if a student does not possess a computer. In-person students may use the restroom and grab water at their discretion, but they are required to wear their masks at all times and to return to class if restroom occupancy has been met.

In-class discussion – 10%

Discussion Posts – 10%

Quizzes

45 %

Quizzes serve as a brief written means for students to demonstrate their ability to recall class content and assess arguments about class texts. They are also intended to help students develop the writing skills for the essays. There will be seven quizzes this term administered via Schoology with ascending weight in grading (2%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 8%, 10%, 10%). Quizzes will involve two parts and are open book/note, but no websites, etc. are allowed. *In short: when reading, you should physically take notes on your readings in preparation for class discussion and quizzes. If this is cost-prohibitive or will place undue financial pressure on you in any way, please come see me in office hours to discuss a strategy to ensure your access to the course readings.* The first part consists of two short-answer questions that require recalling previous course content. Because students will need to use textual support for these short answers, they are expected to bring the relevant texts to class for that period. A note: I will run checks to see overlap between student answers and online websites; answers that are substantially similar to online sites will receive zero credit. The second part is a take-home essay in which students argue a position based on a prompt. (Prompts are attached to the in-class quiz.) The take home essay should be roughly 500 words

in length (12pt font, normal margins, double-spaced) and is due **by 8:00am CST (by email) the next day (i.e. Thursday at 8:00am, if the quiz is on Wednesday).**

Final Exam

35 %

The final exam gives students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to critically, yet charitably, assess the course material. This must be original work from the student; plagiarism is not tolerated under any circumstance and will result in failure on the assignment and possibly failure in the course or further College sanctions. If students are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, they should consult the Student Handbook and Community Covenant. The final exam will consist of two parts: an essay (~1,000 words) and two short answers. More details about the short answer portion will be provided as the exam nears. I will provide the take-home final exam essay prompts a week in advance of the in-class exam and the take home essays will be due via Schoology the day of the exam. Students who submit a post-assessment survey (to be provided) before the beginning of our last class may elect to have a 24-hour extension on the essay. Final exam take home essays should be 12pt font, normal margins, double-spaced and should answer the prompt. I will not read drafts of take home essays, but I am available to discuss essay ideas before the exam. Late essays will be reduced by one-third a letter grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B) for every day past the due date and I will not accept essays after three days without a legitimate cause substantiated by advanced notice and proper documentation (e.g. a letter or email from your advisor), where applicable.

Grading Range

_____	A: 100-94	A-: 93-90
B+:	89-87	B: 86-84
B-:	83-80	C+: 79-77
C:	76-74	C-: 73-70
D+:	69-67	D: 66-64
F:	63-0	

iv. General Policies and Information

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on Wheaton College's campus with the College. Confidential resources available to students include Confidential Advisors, the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, and the Chaplain's Office. More information on these resources and College Policies is available at www.wheaton.edu/sexualassaultresponse.

COVID-Safe Classrooms

In accordance with the Wheaton College Face Covering Policy and *COVID Safe, Thunder Strong Commitment* signed by each student and faculty member, CDC-approved face coverings and social distancing are required while attending class. Failure to comply with wearing a face covering, wearing the required wristband, or social distancing will result in dismissal from the class session and an unexcused absence. Multiple violations can lead to dismissal from the class. If a student falls ill, they ought to notify me immediately and quarantine. Such students will still need to complete quizzes, discussion posts, and exams on time (remotely), to the best of their ability. If students become too ill to work, grading will be adjusted accordingly.

Inclusive Language

As per the faculty rules, I expect students to use gender inclusive language for human beings.

Learning and Accessibility Services

Wheaton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented learning differences, physical or mental health conditions that qualify for accommodations under the ADA. Any student needing academic adjustments is requested to contact the Learning and Accessibility Services Office as early in the semester as possible. To contact LAS, please email las@wheaton.edu or call

630.752.5615. If you already have an accommodation letter, I am available to discuss how to implement the accommodation.

Writing Center

Writing Center: The Writing Center is a free resource that equips undergraduate and graduate students across the disciplines to develop effective writing skills and processes. This academic year, the Writing Center is offering [online appointments only](#). Learn more about online consultations for [undergraduates](#) and [graduate students](#), and [make an appointment](#).

v. Tips for Success

In my experience, students who follow these tips tend to do well. I encourage you to heed them.

- *Finish the reading at least 24 hours before it is due.* For example, finish Wednesday’s class reading by Tuesday morning. This will require time management, but it allows more time for reflection.
- *Take notes as you read, in the text.* This will allow you to track your reactions to the readings and think (ahead of class) about intriguing or puzzling passages.
- *Come to office hours.* I do not bite. I am invested in you succeeding in this course.
- *Talk with your peers about the readings outside of class.* It helps you process and vocalize your views on the text(s) in preparation for class discussion.
- *Map out the “A-L-E” (Argument-Logic-Evidence) of the text before, during, and after class.* Your reproduction of the “A-L-E” of class texts helps enrich both our class discussion and your written assignments.
- [For any writing assignment] *Outline your argument—section by section, paragraph by paragraph.* If you cannot justify why a section or paragraph should be included in the writing assignment, do not include it.

vi. Reading Schedule

Assignments listed under each day are due for that day.

[Pages of Reading]

Week One

M (1/18): **NO CLASS (MLK DAY, *Complete Pre-Assessment Surveys*)**

W (1/20): Introduction; Plato, *Republic* Book I (327a-354c) [~32]

F (1/22): Plato, *Republic* Books IV (427d-445b), V (449a-471c) [~46]

Week Two

M (1/25): Plato, *Republic* Books V-VI-VII (471c-521b) [~51]

W (1/27): Plato, *Republic* Books VIII (543a-569c), IX (587a-592b) [~36]
****QUIZ 1** (ON PLATO)**

F (1/29): Aristotle, *Politics* Books I.I-II.V [~35]

Week Three

M (2/1): Aristotle, *Politics* Book III [~36]

W (2/3): Aristotle, *Politics* Book VII [~36]

F (2/5): Cicero, *On the Commonwealth* Book I.26-71, Book III.42-48 [~25]

Week Four

M (2/8): Cicero, *On the Law* Book I.17-62 [~18]
****QUIZ 2** (ON ARISTOTLE & CICERO)**

W (2/10): Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics* I-II 91.A.1-A.5, 94.A.1-95.A.2, 96.A.1-97.A4 [~42]

F (2/12): Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics* II-II 58.A.1-A.12 [~19]

Week Five

M (2/15): Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics* II-II 40.A.1, 64.A.7, 104.A.5-A.6, 42.A.2 [~16]
 10.A.11, 11.A.3; CS II D44, IV D37
(PRESIDENT'S DAY BUT CLASSES IN SESSION)

W (2/17): Machiavelli, *The Prince* Preface, Dedicatory Letter, chs. I-VIII [~35]

F (2/19): Machiavelli, *The Prince* chs. IX-XIX [~45]

Week Six

M (2/22): Machiavelli, *The Prince* chs. XX-XXVI [~28]
****QUIZ 3** (ON AQUINAS & MACHIAVELLI)**

W (2/24): Luther, *On Secular Authority* [~47]

F (2/26): Calvin, *On Civil Government (Institutes* Book IV ch. 20) [~40]

Week Seven

M (3/1): Hobbes, *Leviathan* chs. 12-15 [~38]

W (3/3): Hobbes, *Leviathan* chs. 16-21 [~45]

F (3/5): Hobbes, *Leviathan* chs. 29-31 [~35]
****QUIZ 4** (ON LUTHER & CALVIN)**

Week Eight

M (3/8): Locke, *Second Treatise* chs. 1-5 [~37]

W (3/10): **NO CLASSES**

F (3/12): Locke, *Second Treatise* chs. 9-10, 19 [~29]
END OF A-QUAD

Week Nine

M (3/15): Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* [~64]

W (3/17): Rousseau, *Second Discourse* pt. II & Notes [~36]
****QUIZ 5** (ON HOBBS & LOCKE)**

F (3/19): Rousseau, *Social Contract* Books I-II [~41]

Week Ten

M (3/22): Rousseau, *Social Contract* Book III, Book IV ch. VIII [~49]

W (3/24): Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> I.II.6-7 (pp. 277-295), I.II.9 (pp. 331-364)	[~53]
F (3/26): Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> II. Preface, II.I.1-2, II.II.10, II.II.13	[~55]
<u>Week Eleven</u>	
M (3/29): Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> I.II.10 (pp. 365-419)	[~56]
QUIZ 6 (ON ROUSSEAU & TOCQUEVILLE)	
W (3/31): Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> chs. I-II	[~51]
F (4/2): NO CLASS (GOOD FRIDAY)	
<u>Week Twelve</u>	
M (4/5): Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> chs. III-V	[~60]
W (4/7): Mill, <i>The Subjection of Women</i> chs. I-II	[~47]
F (4/9): Marx, "On the Jewish Question"	[~27]
<u>Week Thirteen</u>	
M (4/12): Marx, "Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts"	[~40]
W (4/14): Marx, "Fetishism of Commodities" (<i>Capital</i>), "Communist Manifesto"	[~43]
QUIZ 7 (ON MILL & MARX)	
F (4/16): Du Bois, <i>Souls of Black Folk</i> Forethought, chs. I, III-VI	[~53]
<u>Week Fourteen</u>	
M (4/19): Du Bois, <i>Souls of Black Folk</i> chs. IX-XI	[~31]
W (4/21): Du Bois, <i>Souls of Black Folk</i> chs. XII-XIV	[~32]
F (4/23): Gandhi, <i>Selected Political Writings</i> pp. 27-49	[~23]
FINAL EXAM ESSAY PROMPTS OUT (ON DUBOIS OR GANDHI)	
<u>Week Fifteen</u>	
M (4/26): Gandhi, <i>Selected Political Writings</i> pp. 49-91	[~43]
W (4/28): Gandhi, <i>Selected Political Writings</i> pp. 97-151	[~55]
F (4/30): **WRAP UP CLASS & IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM (SHORT ANSWER)** ESSAYS & Post-Assessment Surveys Due (before class)	