

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY
Pols3 – Spring 2022
San José State University

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Lawrence Quill

LECTURE TIMES: ONLINE

LECTURE LOCATION: ONLINE

COURSE WEBSITE: CANVAS

OFFICE HOURS: T/TR 2:00-3:00PM VIA ZOOM AND BY APPOINTMENT.

OFFICE LOCATION: CLARK HALL 455

TELEPHONE: (408) 924-5563

EMAIL: lawrence.quill@sjsu.edu

GE Requirement: This class satisfies the C2 Letters requirement at SJSU

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Thinking critically about the classic problems of politics; learning how to interpret, discuss and write about historical and contemporary political thought.

This course will focus on four broad categories of political thought. We begin with the relationship between individual citizens and the societies in which they live. *Is there a fundamental conflict between being a good person and being a good citizen?* Then we will examine political power. *How should we deal with the darker side of politics – the violence and coercion that lies behind the state?* Then we will turn to the subject of justice and equality. *Would we really want societies that were perfectly equal?* Finally, we will consider revolution and change in political life. *How have reformers sought to justify greater equality in the human condition, especially for groups that have been deprived of equal social and political power?*

COURSE FORMAT

This is an Online course. Students will need access to a computer or similar device to view lectures, conduct scholarly research, read assigned material, review worksheets, answer quizzes, midterms, and finals, and submit writing assignments. Office hours will also be held online each week via the Zoom app.

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>.

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](#) on [Spartan App Portal](#) <http://one.sjsu.edu> to learn of any updates.

For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources)
(http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources)

PREREQUISITES

Students should be aware that this is a reading and writing intensive course. All students need some background in the critical reading of original texts. Political Science 3 offers an opportunity to develop the skills required in reading original sources. It is the suggested prerequisite for other theory courses offered in the department.

REQUIRED TEXTS – AVAILABLE ONLINE VIA THE SJSU BOOKSTORE. SOME PDFS PROVIDED.

Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates/The Last Days of Socrates

Al Farabi, Political Regime

Machiavelli, The Prince

Etienne de la Boétie, Discourse on Voluntary Servitude

More, Utopia

Rousseau, Basic Political Writings

Mill, On Liberty

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is a required “core” course for Political Science majors. For minors, this course may be counted towards the 6 units of lower division courses required for the minor, Majors may count this course both for their major and for the GE Core. For General Education, this course satisfies the C2 “Letters” requirement of the GE core. This course is designed both for political science students and those from other majors.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Essay (40%)

Midterm (15%) Final (15%)

Quizzes (30%)

University Policy SI 6-9, Course Syllabi (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SI 6-9.pdf>) requires the following language to be included in the syllabus:

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Grading Scale

A plus 96 to 100

A 93 to 95

A minus 90 to 92

B plus 86 to 89

B 83 to 85

B minus 80 to 82

C plus 76 to 79

C 73 to 75

C minus 70 to 72
 D plus 66 to 69
 D 63 to 65
 D minus 60 to 62
 NP or F 59 or less

This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

Late work will be assigned a numerical score of 0.

GE Learning Outcomes

This class satisfies the C2 Letters requirement at SJSU. Upon successful completion of the course students should be able to:

1. recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns;
2. respond to such works writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses; and
3. write clearly and effectively.

GELO	ASSIGNMENT	%	DUE DATE
GELO 1,2,3 CLO 1,2,3	ESSAY IN 4 PARTS	40	SEE CANVAS
GELO 1,2 CLO 1,2	MIDTERM	15	SEE CANVAS
GELO 1,2 CLO 1,2	FINAL EXAM	15	SEE CANVAS
GELO 1 CLO 3	QUIZZES	30	SEE CANVAS

GELO 1: Recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.

Students recognize, analyze, and evaluate how complex societies in both classical and modern contexts have debated enduring topics like equality, authority, and power.

GELO 2: Respond to significant works by writing both research based critical analyses and personal responses.

Students evaluate and analyze authors independently prior to determining which research topic they wish to pursue in this class. In so doing, they will learn to determine good from bad sources and learn the value of annotating papers/chapters.

GELO 3: Write clearly and effectively.

Writing assignments are assessed for grammar, clarity, conciseness, and coherence. Students submit multiple drafts of each assignment and to work closely with a professor throughout the semester.

The minimum word count for the course is 1500 words.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)

BY THE END OF THE COURSE STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

CLO1: PRESENT IN WRITING THEORETICALLY/HISTORICALLY INFORMED OPINIONS CONCERNING THE APPLICABILITY OF DIFFERENT THEORETICAL SYSTEMS TO SELECTED PUBLIC POLICY AREAS

CLO2: PRESENT IN WRITING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE WAY POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES EMPLOY THE APPLICATION OF COMPETING THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN MATTERS OF PUBLIC POLICY AND NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

CLO3: RECOGNIZE AND EVALUATE SOME WIDELY EMPLOYED THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND BEYOND, ACROSS THE POLITICAL CULTURE MORE BROADLY, UNDERSTANDING THEIR LOGIC AND THEIR SCOPE OF APPLICATION

Assignments

The Essay will be divided into four parts.

The Annotated Bibliography will be a minimum of 300 words.

The Thesis – One to Two Sentences in length.

The Outline will be a minimum of 300 words.

The Final Essay will be 1000 words.

Students are strongly encouraged to submit drafts of each assignment. All assignments follow professional conventions.

Students choose one from the following list of topics:

Topic One

Consider the following from Plato's *Apology*:

"Gentlemen, I am your very grateful and devoted servant, but I owe a greater obedience to God than to you; and so long as I draw breath and have my faculties, I shall never stop practicing philosophy and exhorting you and indicating the truth for everyone that I meet."(29d)

Discuss the above quotation with reference to Socrates' behavior in the *Apology* and/or *Crito* with particular reference to the concept of obligation. To whom, or what, does Socrates owe obedience?

Topic Two

Suppose you had the opportunity to accept an important position in the government. Would Thomas More advise you to accept or reject it? Refer to *Utopia* (especially Book One) throughout your paper to support your answer.

Topic Three

Critically examine the following citation from *The Prince*.

'So, as a prince is forced to know how to act like a beast, he must learn from the fox and the lion... So it follows that a prudent ruler cannot, and must not, honor his word when it places him at a disadvantage and when the reasons for which he made his promise no longer exist.' (Chapter 18)

Must a ruler be 'beast-like' in order to be effective? Must a ruler break their word when it suits their purposes? Refer to Machiavelli's *The Prince* throughout your paper to support your answer.

Topic Four

"Plays, farces, spectacles, gladiators, strange beasts, medals, pictures, and other such opiates these were for ancient peoples the bait towards slavery, the price of their liberty, the instruments of tyranny." (*The Politics of Obedience, Part II*)

Boétie wrote these words in the sixteenth century. Are they any more or less relevant today than they were then? Refer to Boétie's text throughout your paper to support your answer.

Topic Five

Critically discuss the notions of *amour propre* and *amour de soi* as these are developed by Rousseau in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. Do you agree with his analysis of civilization?

Topic Six

Consider the following citation from *Political Regime* by Al Farabi:

'113. The democratic city is the city in which every one of its inhabitants is unrestrained and left to himself to do what he likes. Its inhabitants are equal to one another, and their traditional law is that no human being is superior to another in anything at all. Its inhabitants are free to do what they like. One [inhabitant] has authority over another or over someone else only insofar as he does what heightens that person's freedom.'

Despite this description of the 'Democratic City', Al Farabi still thought that it fell under the category of 'ignorant cities.' Why wasn't the Democratic City a Virtuous City, in his view? Do you agree with his analysis? Refer closely to Al Farabi's text in your answer.

Topic Seven

Consider the following quotation from Mill's *On Liberty*.

The only principle for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise or even right.'

Critically consider Mill's theory of individual liberty and harm as he defends it in *On Liberty*. A century and half after Mill wrote his book, do you think his theory of individual liberty is still valid? Refer to *On Liberty* throughout your paper to support your answer.

Annotated Bibliography (minimum 300 words)

Students work closely with the professor conducting research assessing the relevance of different scholarly sources for a chosen essay topic. Students are required to write succinct annotations of the sources identifying the relevance to a chosen topic.

Prompt:

1. Read all 7 essay prompts and choose ONLY ONE.
(This will be your essay question throughout the course.)
2. [Run a google scholar search \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to find relevant resources.
3. [Write an annotated bibliography \(Links to an external site.\)](#) citing 2 relevant scholarly sources. (This means that the journal article or book chapter must refer to Socrates if you have chosen Topic One, Thomas More if you have chosen Topic Two, etc.). Please check with me in advance so that I may OK your sources.
4. [Use APA formatting throughout. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
5. Click [HERE \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to see an example of a correctly formatted Annotated Bibliography.
6. [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) Minimum Word Count: 250

Students work with the professor to develop a thesis, introductory paragraph, and a detailed outline in response to a chosen topic incorporating relevant scholarly materials in their answer.

Thesis

1. Your thesis Statement. This is your answer to the question in one or two sentences that appears in the first line of the paper.

Outline (minimum 300 words)

Referring to ONLY your chosen essay prompt, submit:

2. Your introductory paragraph which includes your thesis statement. This is the 'roadmap' for your paper and should include a clear plan for the essay.
3. [Create an outline for your essay \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
 - a. Include a series of bullet points for each paragraph in your essay (each paragraph should support your thesis). Include a topic sentence for each paragraph. Provide details about the content of each paragraph including fully referenced citations where appropriate.
 - b. Make sure you include references to your two scholarly sources and describe how your use of the articles will support your thesis.
 - c. Include a series of bullet points describing what you wish to include in your concluding paragraph. Include the topic sentence for this paragraph.

Midterm – students are required to sit a multiple choice exam that tests the ability to ascertain the appropriate meaning of textual citations.

Final - students are required to sit a multiple choice exam that tests the ability to ascertain the appropriate meaning of textual citations.

Quizzes – there are weekly quizzes that test knowledge of a particular text.

Political Science Learning Outcomes

The Political Science Department has the following objectives for its students:

- 1) Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- 2) Application and Disciplinary Methods: Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
- 3) Communication Skills: Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.
- 4) Citizenship: Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

PER [UNIVERSITY POLICY SI 6-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SI6-9.pdf) ([HTTP://WWW.SJSU.EDU/SENATE/DOCS/SI6-9.PDF](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SI6-9.pdf)), RELEVANT UNIVERSITY POLICY CONCERNING ALL COURSES, SUCH AS STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES, ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, ACCOMMODATIONS, DROPPING AND ADDING, CONSENT FOR RECORDING OF CLASS, ETC. AND AVAILABLE STUDENT SERVICES (E.G. LEARNING ASSISTANCE, COUNSELING, AND OTHER RESOURCES) ARE LISTED ON [SYLLABUS INFORMATION WEB PAGE](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) ([HTTP://WWW.SJSU.EDU/GUP/SYLLABUSINFO](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo)), WHICH IS HOSTED BY THE OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION.

MAKE SURE TO VISIT THIS PAGE TO REVIEW AND BE AWARE OF THESE UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES.

CALENDAR - SEE CANVAS

Course Requirements

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of four-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy SI 2-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SI2-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SI2-3.pdf>.

Because this is a 3-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of nine hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. Careful time management will be required to keep up with readings and assignments in an intensive course such as this one.

For this class, students will complete two in-class examinations, and two full-length research essays, which require detailed review of the primary source material and the application of at least two outside scholarly sources relevant to the research topic.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student

Conduct and Ethical Development. The policy on academic integrity can be found with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development at http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

See <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/s90-5.htm> about Academic Senate Policy S90-5

PLAGIARISM

See http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct (Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Dev)

DEPARTMENTAL WRITING POLICY

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count! Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website at http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm.

For assistance, please visit the SJSU Writing Center staffed by professional [instructors](#) and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists. Writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. It is your responsibility to arrange a time to meet with the instructors. Consult with your professor in advance to determine whether you need assistance with your writing.

Arguably the best way to improve your own writing is to read quality material on a regular basis. To that end, students are encouraged to read articles from scholarly sources but also newspapers such as The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, The New York Times, and The Economist. These publications also contain articles of direct relevance to their political science classes.

QUESTIONS?

Finally, if you get stuck, feel overwhelmed, or just want to clarify something from the reading or lectures, ask me. I am here to help.