

POLS 2700
Issues in Political Philosophy
Fall 2020
TTH 9:30-10:45

Instructor: Professor Christopher M. Duncan, Ph.D.
Office: McGannon Hall 149
Email: chris.duncan@slu.edu
Office Hours: TTH 2:15- 4:00 and by appointment via Zoom or In-Person
Phone: 314-977-9862
Class Meets: 409 DuBourg Hall



Course Description

This course introduces students to the subfield of political theory by examining issues in the history of political thought - such as the idea of democracy; or of freedom; or the relationship between individuals and the state – through close reading of texts. It is not open to students who have taken POLS-1700.

Course Objectives

The political theorist, Hannah Arendt, described the attempt to understand human nature as the equivalent of a person trying to jump over their own shadow. And yet, most political theorists and philosophers must have at least some sense of the kind of beings they are writing about in order to imagine the best sort of political regime possible for us to live under with one another. In this course, we will explore a number of different approaches to the question of human nature as embedded in the work and thought of Western political philosophers ranging from the ancient

period to the Christian era to the early modern world to the postmodern and contemporary landscapes. Along the way we will read a wide range of theorists and philosophers to both understand their particular political projects and their implied answers to the two basic questions that underlie this course:

1. From a social, theoretical, and philosophical perspective what does it mean to be human?
2. What kind of political order is properly suited and sustainable for human habitation?

Course Attributes

Global Local Justice-Theory, Social Science Req (A&S)

Required Texts*

The Trial and Death of Socrates by Plato

The Prince by Machiavelli

The Second Treatise of Government by John Locke

Existentialism and Human Emotions by Jean-Paul Sartre

Augustine: Political Writings by St. Augustine

The Person and the Common Good by Jacques Maritain

Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach by Martha Nussbaum

*Other readings will be provided electronically during the semester.

Requirements

Students will be expected to attend each class session with the required readings done and be prepared and willing to participate thoughtfully in the discussions of them. Grades for the course will be determined based on the following:

(3) Exams	100 points (each)
(1) Final Essay	<u>100 points</u>
	400 points total

Grade Scale in Points

400-368=	A
367-360=	A-
359-348=	B+
347-328=	B
327-320=	B-
319-312=	C+
311-288=	C
387-280=	C-
279-220=	D
Below 220=	F

Examinations

Examinations will be administered through the course's Black Board site. They will open and close at specific times and will consist of short answer questions, multiple choice, and true and false questions.

Civility

A course like this can give rise to strong opinions and even vigorous arguments. That is perfectly acceptable. However, each person and their opinions will be treated with respect and dignity.

The use of cell phones, computers or other electronic devices during class is prohibited except as approved for note-taking. Receiving calls, texting or other behavior that detracts from course material will not be tolerated. Anyone engaging in such behavior will be asked to leave the class and the day will be counted as an absence for the first offense. For the second offense, the person engaging in the behavior will be asked to leave and not return to class for the rest of the semester.

Important Dates

March 11th No Class March Break

Course Outline

Dates

Topic

January 28

Introduction to Political Theory and the Course

Readings:

Jan. 28 Plato's 7th *Epistle*

February 2 – February 4 Socrates and the Good Life

Readings:

Feb. 2 *The Trial and Death of Socrates: The Euthyphro and The Apology* (Plato)

Feb. 4 *The Trial and Death of Socrates: The Crito and The Phaedo* (Plato)

February 9- February 11 Aristotle and the Art of Being Human

Readings:

Feb. 9 *Nicomachean Ethics* [selections] (Aristotle)

Feb. 11 *Nicomachean Ethics* [selections] (Aristotle)

February 16- February 23 Augustine and the Order of Love

Readings:

- Feb. 16 *The City of God*, Books I-VIII (Augustine)
Feb. 18 *The City of God*, Books IX-XXII (Augustine)
Feb. 23 *The Compatibility of Christianity and Politics and War* (Augustine)

Examination One will Open at 5 p.m. on February 24

Examination One will Close at 11 p.m. on February 25

February 25- March 4 Political Realism and Machiavelli

Readings:

- February 25 *The Prince, Prefatory Letter and Books I-XIV* (Machiavelli)
March 2 *The Prince*, Books XV-XX (Machiavelli)
March 4 *The Prince*, Books XXI-XXVI (Machiavelli)

March 9 Thomas Hobbes and the State of Nature

Readings:

None

March 16- March 18 The Liberal State and John Locke

Readings:

- March 16 *The Second Treatise of Government*, Chs. I- IX (Locke)
March 18 *The Second Treatise of Government*, Chs. X-XIX (Locke)

March 23- March 25 Possessive Individualism and Libertarianism

Readings:

- March 23 *The Virtues of Selfishness* (Ayn Rand)
March 25 *Anarchy, State and Utopia* [selections] (Nozick)

March 30-April 1 Beyond Good and Evil: Nietzsche and the Overman

Readings:

- March 30 *Homer's Contest and Aphorisms* (Nietzsche)
April 1 *The Genealogy of Morals* [selections] (Nietzsche)

April 6- April 8 **Freedom, the Death of God, and Responsibility**

Readings:

April 6 *Existentialism and Human Emotions* [all] (Sartre)

April 8 *Existentialism and Human Emotions* [all] (Sartre)

Examination Two will Open at 5 p.m. on April 9

Examination Two will Close at 11 p.m. on April 10

April 13- April 20 **The Difference Between “Something” and “Someone”**

Readings:

April 13 *The Person and the Common Good*, Chs. 1-3 (Maritain)

April 15 *The Person and the Common Good*, Ch. 4 (Maritain)

April 20 *The Person and the Common Good*, Ch. 5 (Maritain)

April 22-April 29 **Labor, Work, and Action: Human Nature?**

April 22 *The Human Condition* [selections part 1] (Arendt)

April 27 *The Human Condition* [selections part 2] (Arendt)

April 29 *The Human Condition* [selections part 3] (Arendt)

May 4-May 6 **An Ethic of Care and Human Well-being**

May 4 *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Chs. 1-4 (Nussbaum)

May 6 *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Chs. 5-7 (Nussbaum)

Examination Three will Open at 5 p.m. on April 8

Examination Three will Close at 11 p.m. on April 9

The Final Essay will Open on May 10 at 8 a.m.

The Final Essay will Close on May 18 at 12 noon.

Academic Integrity and Honor Code

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate

endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at Disability_services@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to disability accommodations. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean's office.

Student Success Center:

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about: Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor. University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Discrimination Policy:

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form

of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (Du Bourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at https://www.lighthouse-services.com/_StandardCustomURL/LHILandingPage.asp To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: SLU's Title IX Policy (formerly called the Sexual Misconduct Policy) has been significantly revised to adhere to a new federal law governing Title IX that was released on May 6, 2020. Please take a moment to review the new policy and information on the following web address: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you>. Please contact the Anna Kratky, the Title IX Coordinator, with any questions or concerns.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory in person for those who are registered for in-person classes. Any student with more than **2** absences automatically has his or her total points reduced by 10 points. All subsequent absences reduce the grade by **10 points** each time. For those students who have either opted to take the class virtually or find themselves at some point in the semester unable to attend in person, they are required to join the class via the Zoom Link. If for some reason the nature of the student's illness or other events outside of their control prevents the student from participating as required they should contact the instructor immediately to make alternative arrangements for fulfilling the course requirements.

Course Zoom Policies

Only students who have registered for the online version of the course are permitted to participate in the course via Zoom. Exceptions to this policy include students who have determined that they are too ill to attend the class sessions in-person. Those students must **seek the permission** of the instructor before joining the class session remotely, and then must only do so until they are well enough to return to in-person classes. Permission should be sought well in advance of the class session (preferably 24 hours prior to the class meeting) unless an acute emergency has arisen.

Students enrolled in the online modality for the course are **required** to have their video turned on during the class session. Microphones should be muted unless asking a questioning or participating

in the classroom discussion. Because, the instructor will not be able to monitor the chat for the courses, online students who wish to participate should politely interrupt the instructor in order to be recognized.

Class sessions will **not** be recorded and so any students missing class should consult with other students to share notes from lecture and with the instructor during office hours in order to seek clarification of have their questions answered.

Mandatory Statement on Face Masks (Fall 2020)

The University's [Interim Policy on Face Masks](#) governs all students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors in all University-owned, leased, or operated facilities. All persons physically present in any such University facility associated with this course shall comply fully with this policy at all times. Masks must be worn before entry to all such University facilities (as well as outdoors on all University property when six feet of distance is unpredictable or cannot be maintained).

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services or Human Resources to initiate the accommodation process identified in the University's [ADA Policy](#). Inquires or concerns may also be directed to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity](#). Notification to instructors of SLU-approved ADA accommodations should be made in writing prior to the first class session in any term (or as soon thereafter as possible).

As the instructor of this course, I shall comply fully with SLU's policy and all related ADA regulations.

Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to wear masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks at any time during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.

Note: Accordingly, no consumption of any food will be allowed in class.

Students who do not comply with a request by a SLU instructor to wear a mask in accordance with the University's *Interim Policy on Face Masks* may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to the *Student Handbook*. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:

- dismissal from the course(s)
- removal from campus housing (if applicable)
- dismissal from the University

To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with faculty or staff request to wear a mask in accordance with University policy.

Students are strongly encouraged to identify to their instructor any student or instructor not in compliance. Non-compliance may be anonymously reported via the SLU Integrity Hotline at 1-877-525-5669 (or confidentially via the Integrity Hotline's website at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>).

Additional Policies/FAQs

How should a student report an absence?

If you must miss class, please contact your instructor by e-mail to inform them of your absence. Notification should be provided at least one day before class, if possible.

How can a student who is unable to be present in class participate in class remotely?

Students who are unable to physically attend class but are well enough to participate remotely are expected to do so. Please see the previous section on course Zoom policies for further information.

What happens if the course instructor is ill or quarantined?

If your course instructor has to quarantine but is well enough to teach, students will be notified by the instructor via email, and class will meet remotely on Zoom at the regularly scheduled time. The Zoom link is available on the course web page in Blackboard. If your course instructor becomes ill and is unable to continue teaching, an alternative instructor will teach the course for as long as necessary.